Conflict Representations: Constructive and Destructive Approaches to Fighting

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Conflicts can be managed with varying degrees of destructiveness. Whatever the conflict's scale, from intimate marital or family fights, through openly declared family feuds, to the broadest socio-political conflicts, there is a deep difference between forms of conflict management that are guided by attempts to restrain escalation, minimize pain, search for common goals, and preserve the positive elements in the relationship, and forms that are (mis)guided by a willingness to go to extremes, a rejection of any possibility of positive relating, a desire to inflict maximal damage on the adversary, and a readiness to have third parties or even one's own pay the price of extreme suffering and generalized destruction in exchange for the mirage of ultimate victory. Constructive and destructive varieties of conflict management contrast most deeply in their attitude towards violence. The destructive approaches follow assumptions that make violence inevitable, whereas the constructive ones follow assumptions that aim at resisting violence. The practical question, however, is not only how to formulate the destructive and constructive assumptions, but how to lend the constructive assumptions sufficient appeal and power to compete with the destructive ones even in acute situations.

When tempers get hot, values like rationality, tolerance and compassion may be too pale to compete by themselves with the appeal of violent action. In order for these values to have a chance, they must be framed in the context of a concrete and mobilizing program of action. People must feel they are being given an option that answers to their strong emotions, recruits them into a decided struggle, and offers them a real prospect of safety. Without a context of decided action, the partisans of rationality, tolerance and compassion may fall into helpless resignation, or even swing over to violence out of despair. It is the thesis of this article that the approach of non-violent resistance can fulfil this need both on the social and personal levels. Within the context of non-violent resistance, constructive assumptions about the conflict, the adversary, the goals and the methods of fighting may find the ballast they require to make an impact. On the present view, the effective counterpart to violent approaches to fighting is thus not just the avoidance of violence or the avoidance of fighting, but non-violent fighting.

The sources of the present article are varied. For ten years I have conducted a project on the use of non-violent resistance for helping parents to deal with children's violent and self-destructive behaviors (Omer, 2001, 2004). Recently, the parental model of non-violent resistance has been adapted to other settings and kinds of conflict, such as domestic violence against women (Omer, 2004b), and school violence (Omer, Irbauch, & von Schlippe, in press). The approach has been shown to significantly reduce children's violent behavior at home (Weinblatt, 2004), and in the school (Omer, Irbauch, Berger, & Tissona, 2005). In addition, parental outbursts, parent-child escalation, and offensive behavior by teachers or other members of the school staff have been shown to diminish steeply. These programs aimed not only at the modification of outward behavior but also of the underlying assumptions about the conflict. This double attempt at inner and external change lies also at the

heart of the socio-political models of non-violent resistance on which our program was modeled. Leaders like Mahathma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. evolved methods that were aimed at changing both overt acts and inner attitudes. Gene Sharp (1973), the social historian and philosopher of the approach, has systematized the doctrines and strategies of Gandhi and King in ways that make evident the wide scope of the assumptive changes they furthered.

Destructive assumptions

A common denominator of destructive conflicts is the mutual development of a <u>demonic view</u> (Alon & Omer, 2004; in press). The demonic view consists in the belief that a hidden destructive quality is at work in the opponent, conspiring to damage and destroy us[1]. This view amounts to far more than the mere realization that the antagonist behaves towards us in a hostile manner. The demonic view is a causal attribution: it explains our suffering and the opponent's destructiveness as the direct consequence of the assumed negative quality in the other. The demonic view is both an answer to the riddle of suffering and a way of coping with fear. The mental riddle is solved by the belief that suffering comes from evil, and is not the result of chance. Accidental suffering is a "cosmic scandal" that the human mind feels bound to reject. In contrast, suffering that is caused by an evil force is at least understandable: someone or something has willed it. In addition, such an explanation defines a clear enemy and offers a direction in which to strike. Fear is thus channeled into hatred.

The fight against this destructive essence is the believer's chief obligation. Any show of indifference, wavering or doubt is proof of betrayal. The struggle, however bitter, is fanned by the highest hopes, for a total victory, uprooting the evil that causes suffering, may bring salvation. In effect, the more bitter the fight, the stronger the hopes of redemption, and vice-versa. Demonic and millenarian views are thus intimately related. In effect, millenarian movements are often accompanied by outbursts of spontaneous and organized violence against the putative agents of evil (Cohn, 1957, 1975; Guinzburg, 1991).

The demonic view manifests itself not only in religious forms, but also in innumerable lay varieties. Thus the structure of many extremist right-wing or left-wing political ideologies can be quite similar to that of traditional demonology. These ideologies defines a segment of society as being the conveyor of social redemption (e.g., the master race or the working classes) and another segment as being responsible for all its ills (e.g., the Jews or the forces of social reaction); they base themselves on a lore that is given the status of prophetic truth (e.g., a racial theory or a simplified form of Marxist analysis), they develop an apparatus for hunting down the enemy (e.g., the secret police), and a procedure for cleansing society of its influence (e.g., reform, detention or extermination camps); they also envisage a war to end all wars and paint an alluring image of the happiness to come.

The inner logic of demonization leads to a growing readiness to inflict damage and to suffer it, as the necessary price to be paid for victory. Sometimes, the levels of demonization

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[1] The pronouns "we," "they," "us" and "them" will usually used to illustrate the polarizing logic by which the two sides in a destructive conflict tend to view the relationship in terms of an unbridgeable contrast.

and escalation reach such a pitch, that both parties become willing to contemplate not only the enemy's destruction, but also their own. Demonizing conflicts thus show a tendency to turn into apocalyptic wars.

In group forms of demonization, the putative negative essence may be defined in ethnic, biological, social, religious, national or cultural terms. So long as the members of the opposing group remain what they are (e.g., the Moslems remain Moslem, the Jews Jewish, the communists, communists, etc.), the negative essence will remain active. The destructive potential of this negative essence can be neutralized to the extant that this essence is viewed as removable by a voluntary or forced act (e.g., conversion). However, when no such act is available (e.g., when the putative negative essence is an inborn characteristic), the only way to achieve safety is by instituting strict mechanisms of contact avoidance, such as segregation, banishment or physical elimination.

In personal conflicts, demonization often evolves in a different way, because there is often no preconceived idea about the opponent's destructive qualities before the conflict develops. Sometimes, the contrary is the case. Thus some of the most intractable divorce battles begin with very passionate love stories. Harsh disappointment is then the prelude to hatred. One begins by surmising that the other may hide a highly negative core under her seemingly positive surface. Gradually, this core becomes identified with the full person: "That is what she really is!" The language and thought habits of popular psychology may underprop this kind of thinking: one had failed to realize the other's "true" nature because of denial or repression. Perhaps even the antagonist had been unaware of her "true" nature. Like a veritable demonic entity, the hidden destructive essence may thus be assumed to be unknown even to the host. For instance, each spouse in a divorce battle may come to realize that the other was actually ruled by an unconscious hatred against men or women, a repressed self-destructive drive, or a pathological need for absolute control. Parents, in particular, have been often targeted by trendy demonizing terms: "toxic parents," "schizophrenogenic mother", "refrigerator mother" and "Satan worshippers" are some of the terms that have succeeded in gaining a wide currency.

The demonic view entails a number of corollary assumptions:

1) Essential asymmetry – At the root of most destructive conflicts lies a basic assumption of asymmetry: we are good and they are bad. Even if this assumption is not fully present from the start, it develops in the course of the hostilities. It is then as if the fighting had revealed the enemy's true nature. The assumption of the other's basic badness helps to justify our anger and legitimize our blows. This asymmetry occasions a feeling of deep satisfaction that one belongs to the positive group (Eidelson, & Eidelson, 2003; Le Vine, & Campbell, 1972). This "we-feeling" is one of the emotional mainsprings of the demonic view.

The purported asymmetry involves not only a difference in motives, but also in causal processes: whereas their destructive behavior is viewed as being innerly motivated, our aggressive acts are viewed as contextually determined (Pettigrew, 1979). Our war is thus a noble war, a war of self-defense, or a war to end all wars. The enemy is viewed as solely

responsible for the damages, including those that are inflicted upon her. Sayings like "They brought it upon themselves!" or "They have only themselves to blame!" are used to justify the most extreme policies. Even genocide is staunchly believed to be committed in self-defense (Chirot, 2001). The process of escalation is viewed as one-sided: they escalate, we only react. Paradoxically, the assumption of asymmetry leads to a rigorous symmetry in the conduct of hostilities: both sides feel not only justified, but compelled to use the strongest means at their disposal in order to defeat the enemy.

The demonic view postulates that the enemy's negative characteristics are deep and true, but his apparently positive ones are superficial or dissimulative. This belief biases perception and memory: the opponent's negative acts, reflecting his true nature are perceived and remembered, while his positive acts are ignored or minimized. Any voices in the enemy's camp that oppose the violence on their own side are discounted as meaningless. History is equated with our view of events, whereas the enemy's version is regarded as a willful distortion. Achieving a monopoly over history is crucial: any concession to the adversary over the description or interpretation of events endangers our sense of justification. Strong expectations are communicated to all relevant third parties that they should accept the "true" view of history. Any doubts concerning this view, either in our camp or among third parties, reflect ignorance, naïveté, or a perverse distortion.

The attempt to gain a monopoly over the description and interpretation of events is no less evident in personal conflicts. Fighting spouses, for instance, usually present totally contradictory versions of the conflict. Attempts to establish a contractual quid pro quo (i.e., an agreement in which the spouses commit themselves to parallel positive changes in behavior) often fail, because each side tends to view his or her own positive contributions as far more significant than those of the other. Such agreements often stall on the contention: "I have made a big step; now it's your turn!" If the other protests, saying that he or she is the one who has made the really significant step, the complaining side brings up the demonic argument that the other's positive steps were only external, reflecting no inner change. Also in conflicts between parents and children, a malignant system of book-keeping often prevails. For instance, some children carry through life a grudge against their parents on grounds of putative discrimination. The parents' attempts to convince the child to give up her grudge, either by bringing contrary evidence or by attempting to satisfy her claims by offers of compensation are often discounted or viewed by the child as additional proof that the parents are in deep debt to her. Paradoxically, the parents' gifts may deepen the grudge and the sense of entitlement. In one of our cases, a 30-year old woman, who had always claimed her adoptive parents had deprived her materially and emotionally relatively to their biological son, reacted to their gift of a house by taking the house and accusing them of trying to buy her feelings.

2) The obligation to win– In a demonic fight the outcome must be absolutely univocal and the enemy irrevocably defeated. The zero-sumness of destructive conflicts (Axelrod, 1997; Jervis, 1988) is a common consequence of the demonic view, for in a fight with the devil, any concession is fateful. Zero-sum games forbid outcomes like: both sides win, both lose, or one loses little and the other gains much. Such outcomes would invalidate the black-and-white demonic mindset. The zero-sum assumption implies a paradoxical dependence

of the "winner" upon the "loser": since success is only attained with the "loser's" surrender and full acknowledgment of the "winner's" superiority, the "loser" can prevent it by refusing this acknowledgment. Or worse, even a victory that seemed already won can be made to naught if the putative "loser" withdraws her previous acknowledgment. In this way, the "winner" must permanently look for reassurances by the "loser" that her superiority is still in place.

The history of many an ethnic and political conflict shows the zero-sum assumption grimly at work. The obligation to win informs the struggle moment by moment, turning the smallest disagreements into life-and-death issues. The vocabulary of catastrophe comes to dominate the interaction. Even a cursory perusal of the speech of highly belligerent leaders will show that the word "danger" and its synonyms are the salt of their rhetorics.

Also in intimage fights, winning is experienced as an obligation. Expressions like, "If I give in in this matter, she will think I am weak!" or "If I confess to a mistake, he'll think he's right in everything!" are backed by a truculent determination to make a point. The most virulent fights may then develop out of absolutely trivial matters. Actually, no matter is trivial when viewed through the zero-sum assumption, for even the smallest disadvantage may signify ultimate defeat. In an unsuccessful case of ours, the mother of a ten-year-old boy asked for help with her son's verbal and physical violence towards her. He had frequent tantrums in which he cursed her, kicked her, and threw things at her. She often hit him and cursed him back, thus turning the event into a symmetrical bout. Her goal in therapy was to stop the boy's violence. She felt that so long as he kept attacking her, she was compelled to hit back, otherwise he would feel that he had won. In the course of the treatment, she gradually succeeded in resisting the boy's attacks in a non-escalating manner, and for a while it seemed that a change was underway. However, after a quiet interval the boy started making obscene gestures behind her back. The mother viewed this as a most dangerous sign, and the escalation returned in full.

The spirit of symmetry that informs the fight extends beyond the mere "game-score". Thus the sides often develop an attitude of rigorous balance that makes them reject all offers of mediation. The contest must remain a strict duel, otherwise, it will be impossible to know who won and who lost. Even when the spirit of rigorous symmetry manifests itself in a demand of "direct-talks," which seems to imply a readiness to discuss and compromise, the principled rejection of mediation risks turning this demand into a prelude to further escalation. Thus parents often object to offers of mediation between them and the rebellious child by saying: "I can definitely say this to him alone!" In our parent-training project, we have often witnessed how this attitude often makes matters worse.

3) The principle of retaliation – Retaliation is viewed as obligatory and just. It is just, because they deserve it, and obligatory, because failing to retaliate means that we are letting them win. The need to retaliate is experienced as a powerful inner drive. A sense of restlessness persists, so long as retaliation has not occurred. When it does, a harmonious moment of balanced satisfaction may ensue.

The spirit of retaliation is very close to the spirit of revenge. Actually, the one merges into the other: revenge is a form of retaliation in which feelings become more important than consequences. Thus, whereas in retaliation utilitarian considerations still play a part, in revenge they stop doing so. Feelings of revenge are perhaps the only destructive emotions that are experienced with a sense of total moral justification. Revenge is a doubly destructive attitude, for it not only demands the destruction of the other, but also accepts the possibility of one's own destruction as its necessary price. The feelings of guilt in revenge are quite peculiar. In contrast to other manifestations of guilt, where guilt often arouses when one causes pain to others, in revenge guilt is experienced when one fails to do so. Guilt is also felt when one proves unwilling to pay the price, for this refusal signifies the neglect of one's highest duty on petty egoistical grounds. Interestingly, revenge is symmetrical only at the beginning: one starts by demanding an eye for an eye, but ends up all the happier if the enemy pays with two eyes or more. The avenger's peace of mind is guaranteed by the belief of not being a free agent: we were drawn into the fray against our will, therefore only they bear the responsibility.

These assumptions are obvious both at the social and the personal level. In divorce, for instance, the parents often draw the children into the fight without batting an eyelash, in spite of the obvious damage that is inflicted upon them. Surprisingly, these may often not be "bad" parents at all. In other circumstances the same parents can be very loving and responsible. This paradox can be explained by the power of the principle of retaliation to effect a radical cleaning of the parents' conscience: both sides feel that they are acting with the highest moral justification, that they are only reacting to aggression, and that they have absolutely no alternative.

The symmetry of "an eye for an eye" entails a honor code with rulings such as: a) it is dishonorable to leave a fight in the middle; b) offenses can only be cleant by an appropriate expiation, and c) ignoring a slight is utterly dishonorable. Nisbett and Cohn (1996) have linked the prevalence of such honor codes in a given segment of society with the frequency of crimes of passion. The honor code is notoriously linked to blood feuds and family vendettas. Less recognized is the role played by implicit honor codes in fueling escalation between adolescents and their parents (Omer, 2004). In these interactions, each side often assumes that unless the other shows due respect, one loses pride. The offending side must then be forced to change her behavior, or alternatively, be hurt badly enough so as to expiate it. This attitude may be equally common among children as among parents.

4) The need for total control – The outcome of the fight should signify one's total control over the opponent, for anything short than that would leave the underlying demonic entity free to restore its powers and pursue its destructive aims. The need for control is derived from fear, and is experienced as stemming purely from self-defense. Those who strive for total control almost invariably feel to be in the grip of an overwhelming force (Lake & Rotchild, 1998).

In different circumstances, four outcomes may represent the desired degree of control: (a) conversion – by this is meant the full and unconditional acceptance of "the truth" by the adversary. Care should be taken to reject mere external adaptations. Contrition, confession

and acknowledgment of guilt are necessary stages in the process of conversion that show that the proferred acceptance is not only lip-service. When the fight is under way, it is not expected that conversion will occur spontaneously; however, it can result from the other's acknowledgement of her absolute powerlessness and inferiority; (b) <u>subjugation</u> – it is assumed that force is the only language the enemy understands. Most demonic contenders share the strange hope that force will, in fact, bring "understanding".   If, however, the enemy fails to understand, one of the following outcomes may be necessary: (c) <u>expulsion</u> – the negative destructive elements must be purged. In this process of purification the wheat is separated from the chaff and the putative demonic essences are cast off (e.g. in exorcism or banishment) (d) <u>elimination</u> - the enemy should be destroyed.

In personal relations these forms of control may create a continuum of intimate destructiveness. Consider, for instance, the escalatory potential of conversion attempts. Rebellious children or wives, for instance, should be made to innerly accept the parents' or husband's truth. However, most attempts to hammer the truth into the mind of a "stubborn" spouse or child are usually not only ineffective but also escalatory. In these situations, resolute persuasion gives way to threats, threats to punishments, and punishments to retaliation (Omer, 2004). Adolescents are particularly apt at interpreting parental attempts at persuasion as aiming at total control. Thus understood, the parents' attempts are often experienced as even more invasive than the harshest punishment. Also in marital violence, attempts to achieve a change of heart by verbal reprimands may be but the prologue to harsher methods. The battering man often views his violence as the last resource, after all other attempts to bring the woman to the right mind have failed. In these situations, making the woman "understand" is experienced not as an option but as a must. It is precisely this compulsion to convince that turns the persuasive attempt into a non-dialogue, for if the other proves adamant, the use of force is seen as inevitable. The two outcomes (conversion and subjugation) thus merge into one another. When conversion and subjugation fail, the threat of expulsion may come into play. The threatened expulsion may be concrete (e.g., sending the child to a boarding-school, or throwing the spouse out of the house), or psychological (e.g., asking for a specialist's help in obliterating the unwanted attitudes). At the extreme of this continuum, the options of banishment for life or homicide may become relevant.

<u>5. Suspicion and secretiveness</u> – The ruling attitude under the demonic view is one of pervasive suspicion. Suspicion is not merely a spontaneous attitude, but a duty: not to suspect means dropping one's guard and allowing the enemy to take one by surprise. Disbelieving the adversary's seemingly positive acts or declarations is a sign of realistic responsibility; failing to do so is proof of wishful thinking and moral laxness (Kramer, & Messick, 1998). This suspicious attitude can become manifest at an individual, social or even metaphysical level. At the individual level it manifests itself in the search for the insidious ways in which hidden intentions or repressed drives direct the behavior of one's intimate enemy; at the social level, in tracing destructive hidden conspiracies, and at a metaphysical level in unmasking the evil powers that are in league to conquer the world. To detect this everpresent scheming, one must learn to interpret its veiled signs. Some people are held to have a special knowledge or acuity for seeing through the superficial positive appearances to the hidden reality underneath: in the past these were the demon-doctors (inquisitors and exor-

cists), who were believed to be versed in the signs that reveal the presence of witches, heretics and demons. Today, psychologists or psychiatrists are believed to be possessed of tools that detect the presence of dangerous leanings in the unconscious. The lay sign-reader, who interprets the hidden negative meaning of the acts of a spouse or a child, is thus inspired by a hallowed cultural model. In group conflicts there are invariably specialists who are held able to uncover plots. The activities of these specialists' may be directed not only at the opposite party but also at the "enemy within." The secret police is thus a logical corollary of the demonic view.

The emotional appeal of suspiciousness might seem puzzling. After all, trust seems to be a more comfortable attitude. And yet, in situations of conflict, suspicion is not only experienced as perfectly reasonable, but is also a source of emotional gratification. By suspicion, individuals or groups overcome the sense that they are fools or passive victims; they develop a feeling of superiority, as they succeed in "reading" the antagonists' secret schemes; they increase their own sense of justification and entitlement, and they find an ultimative explanation for their ills. Paraphrasing the title of a famous story, one might say that, "A good enemy is hard to find[2]". With the appropriate work of suspicion, however, marvelous enemies can be found.

Suspicion and secretiveness go hand in hand, for dealing openly in a fight with the devil is tantamount to playing into his hands. It is imperative to hide one's goals and strategies, both from the enemy and from potential critics. No one causes greater indignation in the fighter with a demonic mind-set than the inner critic who publicizes the doings within her own party. Washing one's laundry in public is viewed as the grossest betrayal, both in group and in family conflicts. Needless to say, secrecy inspires a symmetrical attitude in the opponent.

6. The immediacy principle – Every moment is crucial and every encounter fateful, for the smallest tilt of the balance might lead to the establishment of a fixed hierarchy. At every instant both sides seem to think: "If I come out stronger right now, I am at the top!" Any delay or hesitation risks giving the enemy a chance to strike first. The smashing blow epitomizes the ideal solution, for attempting to win the fight in a more gradual manner or with lesser force would actually involve more suffering and more risk. If, as it usually turns out, the expected smashing blow proves disappointing, a more decisive blow must be implemented. The belief that each and every encounter determines the winner and the loser leads to a selective blindness to gradual processes. Events that require ripening or growth are ignored, for they do not define the winner on an immediate basis. The history of the interaction becomes the history of its battles, each of which is viewed as ultimative at the time of its occurrence. The immediacy principle thus leads to an extremely narrow time-perspective: all efforts that are not invested on winning the battle here and now are viewed as wasteful. Destructive conflicts thus become a series of "now or never" attempts. Since smashing blows are almost always illusory, the series may prove interminable.

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[2] Flannery O'Connor's "A good man is hard to find."

The emotional appeal of the immediacy principle is linked to the psychophysiology of arousal: arousal makes one ready to strike. A view of the conflict that calls for lashing out with full might at the pitch of one's anger thus receives a clear booster from the hormones. Delaying the strike is like swimming against the stream.

The principle of immediacy supplies the drumbeat of war rhetorics. The principle is also paramount in personal conflicts, where delays are believed to convey weakness. The principle of immediacy often informs the contestants' intuitive learning-theory. On this view, punishment must be administered on the spot, under pain of wasting its learning potential. The interaction thus becomes ruled by a sense of total urgency. Nothing ever has a chance to develop.

The power of the destructive assumptions

In his classic biography of Erasmus, Stefan Zweig drew a bleak picture of the ineptitude of humanist ideals and values to stand against fanaticism at times of social turbulence (Zweig 1935/1982). Zweig described how at such times the winds blow so strong that the world becomes like a cloth that is torn in two by the warring parties. The would-be bystander loses his footing and, for good or ill, must take a clear stand for one of the sides. All humane ideals must then bow to the urgency of fanatic ideals, far-sighted goals pale before immediate ones, and the capacity for ambiguity give way to the need for certainty. At these junctures, only group-rootedness and the hatred of a common enemy seem to provide meaning and enable action.

Besides their ability to galvanize arousal at times of trouble, the destructive assumptions help to create turbulence, transforming otherwise limited conflicts into the total conflagrations for which they then pose as the unique solution. The destructive assumptions thus work as self-fulfilling prophecies that draw more and more wavering bystanders into the widening circle of hatred.

Consider, for instance, the assumption of essential asymmetry: assuming that a hidden negative essence rules the opponent's behavior entails a special yardstick for judging his acts. The negative interpretation is thus self-reinforcing, invariably strengthening the assumption that the enemy is built of a different stuff altogether. These processes create a mood in which safety is only experienced, when one feels one is not being duped. Thus, viewing the enemy's acts in a wholly negative light paradoxically increases one's sense of security.

The assumption of zero-sumness is equally self-reinforcing. On this view, any goal the enemy may happen to pursue must be highly desirable to one's side as well. We may then be convinced to fight for something, only because they want it. One of the bleakest examples of this dynamics is the Battle of Verdun in the First World War (Lidell-Hart, 1934/1970; Taylor, 1966). The original German plan regarding Verdun was to stage a series of sham attacks, so that the French would believe the Germans viewed Verdun as crucial for their war strategy. The French would then react by creating a large concentration of forces in that single exposed area. This would then allow the Germans to bleed the

French through artillery attacks, without offering a comparably vulnerable concentration of manpower. Documents from the German General Command show that, at this stage, the Germans did not view the conquest of Verdun as at all central for their war effort, but only as the ideal place to cause the French as many losses as possible. However, the decision of the French to defend Verdun by all possible means persuaded the Germans that Verdun was really vital. This led to a change in the German plans: they now came to the conclusion that the conquest of Verdun was imperative! Their logic seemed to be: "If the French want it so much, we should want it too!" As the battle progressed, anyone in the German staff who failed to understand that Verdun was worth any sacrifice would be in danger of being demoted.

A similar mental exercise could be conducted with each of the destructive assumptions. In the kind of reality they construct, one comes to view moral scruples as signs of pusillanimity. The total fear that permeates the demonic view creates the need for total blows and the readiness for total sacrifice. The advocates of compromise, dialogue, and conciliation become the targets of hostility and ridicule. Even the enemy deserves more respect than they do. They are the lukewarm, cowardly, spineless crowd, that in Dante's Divine Comedy are equally despised by Heaven and by Hell.

In this atmosphere, the occasional flimmering of humaneness and rationality may end by increasing the hold of the destructive assumptions. Thus, if for a while a chance is given to the apostles of dialogue to try their hand at achieving a solution, a few violent outbursts may suffice as showing the enemy's "true face" A return to the utmost destructiveness is then felt as doubly justified. This backlash of the demonic view after the failure of a peaceful attempt characterizes both socio-political and personal conflicts. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, for instance, once in a while the partisans of compromise are given a chance. However, when violence succeeds in interrupting the dialogue, the sides usually go back to a very lengthy bout of mutual destruction. Endless sacrifices may then be needed until a readiness for dialogue gingerly reappears. A similar process characterizes protracted personal conflicts. In marital conflicts, for instance, a chance may be once and again given to dialogue, acceptance and understanding. However, the smallest breach of the peace may suffice for the fight to erupt again in all its harshness. In the end, the believers in gentle methods may also become convinced believe that only force can do the job.

At times of turmoil, the destructive assumptions thus seem to have a clear edge over the voices of reason. Moreover, since the demonic view aptly stirs up the turbulence it needs in order to thrive, the dice seem to be heavily loaded in its favor. To redress this imbalance, a constructive apporach to conflict management should be able to offer a more full-blooded alternative than the mere advocacy of the ideals of humaneness, tolerance, and rationality. Actually, no less than a highly motivating fighting program could compete with the highly motivating destructive assumptions.

Constructive assumptions

The main challenge for a non-violent approach to fighting is the question whether it is at all possible to effectively resist violence in a non-destructive and non-demonic way. This

assumption might seem questionable, especially when violence and oppression appear in extreme forms. In such cases a highly negative view of the opponent would seem realistic and expedient: realistic, because the opponent obviously holds very negative intentions against us; expedient, because viewing the enemy negatively may be crucial for fighting. After all, one must "see red" in order to strike with all one's might. Fighting without de-monizing could thus be actually harmful.

And yet, an approach to fighting that is non-violent and non-demonic is arguably not only possible, but potentially also more effective and far less destructive than the forms of fight-ing that are informed by the destructive assumptions (Sharp, 1975). The prototypes of this constructive kind of fighting are the socio-political movements of non-violent resistance.

Far from being an esoteric approach that could flourish only in a basically non-belligerent society[3], non-violent resistance has been utilized throughout history by many different so-cial and ethnic groups. The basic idea of non-violent resistance is a very familar one: "I'll defend myself with all possible means but without striking back!" What turns this every-day idea into a most powerul tool is the development of a set of assumptions and strategies that translate it into practice.

<u>1) The obligation to resist</u> – The non-violent counterpart of the obligation to win is the ob-ligation to resist. Although violence should be rigorously abjured, no bones should be made about the fact that non-violent resistance involves power and is decidedly a form of fighting. Gandhi stressed that those who avoid all recourse to power as a matter of princi-ple, actually perpetuate violence and oppression. On his view, demands or entreaties that are not backed by power and by a full readiness to resist have no influence (Sharp, 1960). The attempt to behave towards a violent opponent exclusively by empathic understanding, conciliation and verbal persuasion actually risks making things worse, for these attitudes are often viewed by the violent side as signifying surrender. Surrender increases the ag-gressor's readiness to use threats and force. This kind of escalation has been termed "com-plementary", while the kind of escalation in which hostility engenders hostility has been termed "symmetrical" (Bateson, 1972; Orford, 1986). Non-violent resistance counters both complementary and symmetrical escalation.

Without the option of non-violent resistance, the victims of aggression will oscillate be-tween surrender and violence. Thus, in oppressive societies, periods of total subjugation are usually punctured by violent uprisings. Since the oppressive yoke tends to grow heav-ier in the wake of an uprising, the ground is laid to yet another uprising. This oscillation is no less evident in the personal sphere. Thus, the parents of aggressive children often alter-nate between a policy of appeasement ("buying quiet") and recourse to harsh and often physical punishments (Omer, 2004, Weinblatt, 2005). Non-violent resistance acts as a brake on this harmful oscillation: one resists violence continuously, thus avoiding the de-spair that often unleashes the conflict's full destructiveness.

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[3] Sharp (1975) documented how some of the ethnic groups that embraced non-violent resistance with the greatest determination were notoriously belligerent.

The obligation to resist has received little attention in the field of domestic violence. Answers to domestic violence are either attempts at therapy (of the aggressor, the victim, or both), or attempts to disconnect the victim from the aggressor. When both fail, therapists and other social agents may become helpless. The lack of professional attention to steps of resistance has probably a double cause: an aversion to deal with power issues and a dearth of practical tools. Both can be remedied by an appropriate adaptation of non-violent resistance to the family sphere. In effect, the response of professionals to our program of non-violent resistance to children's violence has been very warm[4]. Apparently the program successfully addressed the double root of professional distancing from actual resistance: it offered a variety of non-violent tools, and addressed the issue of power without the usual dominant stance and emphasis on control (Omer, 2004).

2. Basic similarity and many-voicedness – In contrast to the demonic assumption, according to which they are bad and we are good, non-violent resistance postulates that on both sides positive and negative voices co-exist. Some of these voices, even if temporarily weak or dormant, can be assumed to oppose the use of violence. The violent voices side are in no wise more "essential" or "true" than the non-violent ones. Mahathma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. were past masters at strengthening the anti-violence voices within both camps. To this end they emphasized that the enemy is not the opposing group: one must fight against oppression and violence, not against the British or the whites. Blaming the British or the whites would only increase the power and cohesion of the violent voices in their camp. The same considerations are relevant for dealing with the aggressive spouse, child or parent: viewing the other's behavior as influenced by multiple inner voices allows one to strengthen the non-violent ones, instead of weakening them by discounting them as meaningless.

This vision of the opponent as many-voiced is both optimistic and realistic. It is optimistic in that positive voices, even if hard to discern, are always assumed to be present. It is realistic in the acknowledgment that the non-violent resistor's endeavor cannot bring about the total disappearance of the negative voices. Actually there is no need to do so. It may suffice to tip the balance in favor of the positive ones.

In the field of suicidology, the expression "the parliament of the mind" was coined to indicate that within the potential suicide many voices co-exist, some favoring life. The helper's chief aim should not be the rather unrealistic one of making the potential suicide embrace life unconditionally, but that of gaining a majority for the life voices (Shneidman, 1985). Sometimes, even a minute change in the right direction might suffice. Similarly, in the field of conflict management, regarding the adversary's destructive behavior as a result of a debate within his inner parliament leads to the formulation of a more realistic goal than subjecting violence to root treatment. The new goal is to create a majority for the anti-violence voices.

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[4] This applies to Israel, Germany, Switzerland and Brazil, where the program was presented to professionals, occasioning a high demand for courses, supervision and written material. To date, the program has not yet been directly presented in the English speaking world.

In adopting this assumption, one undertakes not to discount the adversary's positive acts as non-significant, manipulative or dissembling. On the contrary, each positive act is a manifestation of a positive voice that merits our respect and support. One's reaction to these positive manifestations may well determine whether this positive trend in the opposing camp will be strengthened or weakened.

Also in one's own camp a multiplicity of voices is assumed to be present, requiring a continuous effort against the voices of violence. Non-violent resistance demands that violence be abjured not as a tactical move, but as a matter of principle. However, it is assumed that so long as the conflict persists, the violent voices may occasionally gain the upperhand. Occasional bouts of violence may thus puncture one's non-violent stance, requiring a renewed commitment to non-violence. To maintain this commitment, it is necessary to develop endurance and learn to withstand provocations. Interestingly, this ethos of endurance, far from discouraging the resistors, positively motivates them (Sharp, 1975). Also in personal situations, the commitment to endurance proves self-enhancing: parents feel much strengthened when they successfully withstand the child's provocations (Omer, 2004; Weinblatt, 2005). There is thus a pride and a pleasure in endurance that allows it to compete with the releasing effect of violent anger.

The assumption of multi-voicedness has an additional appeal: it sustains the belief that the positive elements in the relationship can be salvaged. In many conflicts, positive memories and present shimmerings stay on in spite of the ruling hostility. The demonic view is threatened by these inklings, and endeavors to eliminate them. The suppression of the positive, however, can be very painful. In this respect, the assumption of multi-voicedness is a boon. It is highly encouraging that the positive is not lost, but can be nurtured and fostered, even while one is most immersed in the work of resisting.

Leaders like Gandhi and Luther King did not settle for the absence of violence alone. They demanded that the acts of resistance be accompanied, as far as humanly possible, by demonstrations of respect and of positive relating. The assumption that the antagonist merits respect and that even at the pitch of resistance one must find place for offers of reconciliation is a logic consequence of the assumption of multi-voicedness. However, the reconciliation offers of the non-violent resistor are very different from what is usually meant by "appeasement". Whereas appeasement consists in conciliating the adversary by giving in to his threats, the reconciliation of Gandhi and Luther King consists of freely chosen offers of positive regard within a context of continuing resistance.

These ideas are perhaps even more relevant for intimate conflicts. In our program for the parents of violent children, the parents are coached to make reconciliation gestures -- e.g., expressing admiration for the child's qualities, offering symbolic treats, proposing to engage in joint activities, expressing regret at their past outbursts, etc. -- even on the very days in which they are most engaged in the work of resistance. Surprisingly, parents often repport that the reconciliation gestures increased their ability to resist. By these steps, they show to themselves and to the child that they are respectful and loving resistors! The mix of resistance with reconciliation has also been shown to reduce escalation (de Waal, 1993; Weinblatt, 2004, 2005). This could be interpreted as meaning that reconciliation steps suc-

ceed in diminishing the pro-violence voices in the "inner parliament" of both sides. Reconciliation represents a move away from the zero-sumness that underlies destructive fighting. In a zero-sum game, if the adversary receives an unearned prize, one's side is disadvantaged. For this reason parents are sometimes stymied by the proposal to engage in reconciliation steps. In a non-zero-sum game, however, both sides may gain from a "non-deserved" reconciliation offer. Thus, as the parents experiment with reconciliation, they gradually get weaned from zero-sumness.

3. Asymmetry of means – Instead of the compelling symmetry of retaliaton, the non-violent fighter opts for a systematic asymmetry of means: violence is met with a decided, but non-violent and non-escalating resistance. In non-violent resistance a violent acts is defined tangibly, as one that is expressly directed towards physically or emotionally damaging the opponent. This definition of violence does not include actions whose aim is to disable the negative activities of the violent side, but do not aim at inflicting direct physical or mental harm. These actions are precisely the ones that characterize the stance of the activists as resistance.

When faced with non-violent resistance, violence tends to become ineffective and self-limiting. Violence is robbed of its strength for various reasons: a) it loses legitimacy; b) it undergoes inhibition by the opponents' non-violent stance (it is harder to attack people who sit quietly than people who swing fists and shout threats); c) its confidence is shaken by the message of endurance conveyed by non-violent resistance, and d) the asymmetry of means brings in support for the non-violent side. By these processes non-violent resistance creates an environment in which violence finds it hard to survive. However, the non-violent side must not assume that renouncing violence will make the antagonist give up violence quickly. Such a belief would turn non-violent resistance into a mere tactical maneuver, to be discarded if the opponent continued to behave violently. The asymmetry of means is a principled choice: in opting for it, one must evolve a readiness to go on resisting without lashing back, also in the face of persisting violence.

The non-violent fighter views escalation as a mutual process. The avoidance of retaliation is therefore seen as a crucial step in breaking its grip. According to the demonic view, escalation is the inevitable result of the enemy's master-plan. Viewing escalation as a mutual process works as an antidote against this belief. The very question "Who is to blame?" or "Who started?" tends to strengthen the demonic mind-set. The question is usually pointless, as there are always two incompatible narratives with different starting-points and sets of facts. Even when there is an obvious aggressor, the symmetrical spirit that demands a strict cancellation of all past hurts may trigger a demonic spiral that far outweighs the original damage. The story *Michael Kolhaas* by Heinrich von Kleist tells of a justice-loving squire who was the victim of an arbitrary act of exploitation: two of his horses were cheated out of him and made to work the fields of the local strong man, who then derisively offered to give them back to him in a decrepit state. Kolhaas, whose initial attempts to get compensation by legal means failed, decided to get his due by force. He gathered a band of desperadoes and led a revolt in the course of which farms and towns were razed to the ground, his wife was murdered, he was sent to the scaffold, and his children were sent

to orphanages. Throughout the story, each time Kolhaas was asked about his demands, he answered: "I want my horses back exactly as they were!"

4. The illusion of control – The belief that one can control the other's behavior or determine her feelings is illusory. One may strive to control one's own acts, but in full consciousness that the opponent's acts depend also from circumstances over which one has no control. The assumption that control over the other is illusory may have a liberating effect: one becomes freed from the compulsion to control by the awareness that control is impossible.

Non-violent resistance contrasts deeply from violent action in that the attempts at control are directed at one's own acts. A typical threat issued in the spirit of violence has the form of a strict logical implication: "If you don't do what I say, I will hit you!" The emphasis is on a full linkage between the acts. The opponent is given two options: to comply or to be punished. In order to maintain his standing, he must refuse to comply, preferably issuing a counter-threat. This usually leads to escalation. In contrast, a typical message in non-violent resistance is: "I will resist, because I must!" The emphasis is placed on the duty of resisting and not on control over the other. If the opponent answers by a threat, the resistor reiterates his obligation to resist.

Gandhi expressed this spirit of determination without control in a letter to Lord Irwin, the British Viceroy, in which he communicated his decision to resist the British salt monopoly. After declaring that India had the duty to do all in her power to free herself from the "embrace of death" of the British Empire, Gandhi announced that he and his followers had no alternative but to initiate a wide-ranging campaign of non-violent resistance against the monopoly. He ended the letter paradoxically: "This letter is not in anyway intended as a threat but as a simple and sacred duty peremptory on a civil resister" (Sharp, 1960, pp. 200-204). The paradox consists in the simultanous announcement of a fighting campaign and the declaration that this was no threat. The paradox may however be resolved, if we compare Gandhi's declaration with an ordinary threat: a) threats do not usually include an explicit declaration of non-violence; b) Gandhi does not say "You will do this, or else…," but " we have no choice, but…"; and c) there is no hint of willfulness in Gandhi's words ("This is what I want!"), but an expression of duty ("The simple, holy duty…"). Gandhi's declaration could be paraphrased as follows: "You are stronger than I am, but my supreme duty is to resist you in a non-violent way!" Gandhi's message can therefore be characterized as "a threat in a non-threatening spirit." Such a message is free of the need to show to the other "who is the boss".

The same dynamics appears in personal conflicts. The need for control and the belief in its possibility leads one to view the relationship in terms of, "Who's the boss?" The more pronounced this tendency, the greater the danger of escalation. Thus parents who tended to view the relationship in terms of "Who's the boss?" were found to be particularly liable to violent outbursts (Bugental et al. 1989, 1993, 1997). This holds true for the control-minded child as well: the more she thinks in terms of "Who's the boss?" the more prone will she be to violent outbursts. If one of the sides in the relationship (in our project, the parent) succeeds in curbing her own control-mindedness, the lower the danger of escala-

tion. In our parent-training program, parents learn to convey messages like: "I cannot control you! But I will resist your violence by all non-violent means at our disposal" or "I cannot defeat you! But I will do my best to protect myself" (Omer, 2001, 2004). The emotional effect of such messages can be considerable. Optimally, both sides may be freed from the compulsion to make a point.

This change in focus from the other to the self has an additional bonus. The demonic state of mind consists of a "negative hypnosis" in which one becomes fascinated and enthralled by the other's bad characteristics. One cannot stop cataloguing the other's negative acts. So long as this litany persists, one does not feel free to act, but is compelled to focus on the other, react to her, and complain of her doings. One's own voice loses power, as the mind becomes filled with the imagined negative voice of the other. In giving up the illusion of control, it is possible to break free from this negative hypnosis: we now focus on our own acts. In our work with parents we often witness a change in the parents' way of talking: whereas in the initial sessions they almost always open the session by a long list of complaints about the child's unacceptable doings, as treatment progresses they report first of all on their own steps of resistance and self-protection.

5. Publicity – Transparency and publicity inhibit violence (on both sides) and allow for the mobilization of support in favor of the anti-violence camp. For this reason movements of non-violent resistance operate in ways that are diametrically opposed to those of underground organizations, opting for publicity and rejecting secrecy. Opting for publicity may be far from simple, but so long as one chooses to keep things secret, one may be contributing to the perpetuation of violence. This is clearest in the family: all forms of domestic violence are abetted by secrecy. Gandhi added another reason for opting unconditionally for publicity: secretiveness stems from fear, and is bound to perpetuate fear. Thus, instead of helping overcome paralysis, the habits engendered by secrecy actually deepen it. Yet another reason for favoring publicity is that it creates a public commitment to abide by non-violence. Publicity is thus a key element not only in the fight against the opponent's destructive acts, but also against one's own.

Publicity is crucial for the mobilization of a support net. The lonely resistor has virtually no power, and is easily the prey of fear and demoralization. The situation changes when the individual breaks out of isolation. Many have marveled at the courage of non-violent activists on the face of extreme repressive measures. Gandhi stressed that this courage is not born out of the lonely individual's soul, but out of the experience of togetherness. The very dialogue that makes victims aware that the oppression is arbitrary is a result of togetherness. Breaking out of isolation is no less crucial in family violence. Victims of family violence are deeply helpless so long as they remain alone and the violence remains hidden. Going open about the violence is an act of revolutionary impact: at one stroke, the forlorness of the victim is shaken off. Protection of the victim and public pressure against the violence become possible.

Publicity is the key to a form of non-violent resistance that is relevant even under the most extreme kinds of oppression: the giving of testimony. The high value of testimony for the oppressed has been shown in extreme political situations, such as among victims of the

military dictatorship in Chile, of racial apartheid in South Africa, or within the starving confines of the Warsaw Ghetto. Giving testimony allows the victims to be acknowledged as victims, and to feel that their suffering has potential meaning to others. Testimony is quite different from therapeutic disclosure: the latter is usually a private event, whereas testimony has a public dimension. This point is seldom understood: the attention of therapists is usually focused on the inner work of "processing", in disregard of the high value of a supportive audience[5]. In our program, we try to persuade victimized siblings, women, and parents, to document their sufferings (in writing or in tape), and present them before an audience of supporters (members of the extended family, friends, other victims, or therapeutic staff). Some of the victims who are reluctant to come into the open sometimes agree to have their testimony circulate anonymously. By these means, they begin to view themselves as resistors. The option of testimony greatly increases the emotional appeal of non-violent resistance (Omer, 2004c; Omer, Shor-Sapir and Weinblatt, submitted). Survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto have described how the ghetto's inmates who came in contact with Emanuel Ringelblum (the historian who documented the ghetto's oppression) were often willing to suffer great hardship in order to amass some significant documentation that would bear witness to the world about what they went through. The effect of this work of testimony on the victims' morale was immense (e.g., Reich-Ranicki, 2003).

The togetherness of non-violent resistance is very different from the togetherness that is fostered by the demonic approach to fighting. The latter is a closed togetherness, built out of the contrasting polarity of us and them. The non-violent variety is an open togetherness that invites third parties and also members from the opposing group to join in. In a project on non-violent resistance in schools, an open front against violence was built through a teacher-parent alliance based on the principle that every act of violence and its disciplinary treatment would be publicized (without the children's names) in a bi-weekly letter to the parents, teachers, and children. Talks were then conducted in each class, in which the children were invited to join the open front against bullying, vandalism and other forms of violence (Omer, 2004; Omer, Irbauch & von Schlippe, 2005). These talks aimed at abrogating the tacit rule of silence, which prevented most children from reporting on the violence they witnessed. All the children, including those that had previously behaved as bullies, could now view themselves as members of the new "we" that actively resisted violence. In effect, some of the kids that had been previously identified as bullies were found to have changed their alliance (Omer et al, 2005).

6. The principle of ripeness – In contrast to the immediacy principle, it is assumed that the contest is not a power-test defining an incontrovertible hierarchy, but part of an ongoing process that continuously redefines the quality of the relationship. Attempts to defeat and subjugate, far from leading to a stable outcome, lead to a deterioration of the relationship. Therefore, the goal of the non-violent resistor is not to achieve an immediate resolution, but to persevere until the positive processes ripen. The non-violent resistor fights tenaciously, but without the expectation that the opponent will desist from violence in the short run. The ethos of endurance of non-violent resistance represents the total opposite of the belief in a decisive blow.

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[5] An important exception is the work of Michael White (1997, 2000)

The principle of ripeness involves a re-education of attention. One learns to attend also to minute positive events, allowing these the opportunity to mature. This contrasts deeply with the "negative hypnosis" of the destructive fighter, in which fascination with the negative leads to a systematic disregard of the positive.

The principle of ripeness involves also a modification of the positive expectations. The tempered non-violent fighter knows full well that attempting to force a positive solution may prove abortive, often leading the sides to swing over to destructive ones. Non-violent resistors school themselves in long-winded endurance, attend to slowly maturing changes, sedulously cultivate potential allies, are suspicious of the mirage of ultimate victory, are skeptical about push-button control, and are modest in their immediate goals. The high hopes that inspire the destructive fighter would probably prove more attractive to many. But the staying power of the non-violent resistor outlives disappointments better.

The power of the constructive assumptions

The high appeal of non-violent resistance is linked to its ability to harness the victims' despair and indignation. This chanelling of pain into resistance contrasts with the relative unpractical character of other humane ideals in situations of acute conflict. Many power-averse apostles of humane ideals fail to mobilize a real fight against violence, thereby being relegated to the status of prophets in the desert. Not so the proponents of non-violent resistance: resistance demands arousal and indignation, which in turn clamor for a channel of active expression. This motivating power has been often demonstrated in the socio-political arena, where movements of non-violent resistance have sometimes reached mass proportions, and where social groups that had been previously viewed as basically subservient or bellicose refuted all expectations, showing an incredible ability to resist and to abstain from violence (Sharp, 1975) Experience with the parents of violent children shows a similar picture: previously helpless and seemingly unmotivated parents react positively when the clear strategies of non-violent resistance are proposed to them. This motivational surge becomes stronger and steadier with the parents' first experiences in resistance. This is attested, for instance, by the extremely low drop-out rate from the program (Weinblatt, 2005). The mobilization of the parents often spreads over to other supporters: friends and members of the extended family join in, fortifying the parents' commitment. In the extremely delicate area of violence against siblings, mobilization of the parents and of other supporters was often followed by the successful recruitment of the victimized siblings. The enthusiastic response of these previously helpless children is a pledge for the wide relevance of the approach (Omer, Shor-Sapir, & Weinblatt, submitted)

Non-violent resistance is not a spontaneous reaction to oppression and violence. There is something more "natural" about hitting back or even about giving in. These two options are, as it were, programmed by evolution, whereas non-violent resistance is a cultural product. Non-violent resistance has to be perceived as an option, planned, organized, and set in motion. Because of these complex demands, it requires a well-trained leadership. The role of the leaders is to acquaint the potential followers with the non-violent ideas, help define the goals of resistance, organize its strategies, reach out for supporters, train the

participants, and guarantee their self-restraint. This is true for the social as well as the family arena. The complexity of these tasks turns non-violent leadership into a quasi-professional role. However, the enthusiasm that is often aroused by its message enables a wide recruitment of potential new leaders.

The strong response aroused by non-violent resistance is partly due to its surprise value. In the cognitive map of most people, fighting and violence belong together, so that the perceived alternatives are usually: "fighting (violently) vs. surrendering", "fighting vs. conciliating", or "fighting vs. talking". Unfortunately, the non-violent alternatives in these pairs may be very unhelpful. The option of non-violent resistance may then have a high impact: reality becomes newly mapped, allowing for significant action where none was perceived before. In this new mapping, the once incompatible pair "fighting" and "non-violence" become joined together. Responses like "Why didn't we think of this before?" or "Why do you call this 'fighting' if it is non-violent?" testify to the surprise evoked by the new mapping. As the compatibility between "fighting" and "non-violence" dawns, a motivational surge often becomes manifest.

The power of this new energy must then be chanelled into a detailed program of action, adapting the ideas of non-violent resistance to the local requirements. The next stage is the training of the resistors. Gandhi remarked that the tempering of the new resistors can be a quick process, as the first experiences of resisting often transform even very resigned victims into decided activists. This transformation is obvious also in the family arena. Thus, after conducting a first "sit-in", parents were often surprised that they were able to manage it. One mother remarked that her muscled had remained tense for the whole duration of the sit-in. Then she added: "But now I know that I have muscles!" Even the experience of physical pain undergoes a metamorphosis. After a few weeks in a program of resistance against her older brother's violence, a twelve-year old girl said: "My brother still hits me, sometimes! But now it doesn't hurt so much!"

The appeal of non-violent resistance is also fed by the changes that appear in the violent side. Often a disorganization of the process of violence becomes evident, showing that the violent side cannot cope well with an opponent who neither hits back nor gives in. This disorganization strengthens the resistors. No less encouraging are the signs that the opponent's ability to continue with the oppression is hindered by the resistance. The first time an oppressive policy is called back is a highly significant historical marker for any movement of non-violent resistance. This is further abetted by the emergence of outspoken voices in the violent side that express respect for the resistors and opposition to the violence. Occasionally, also the clear supporters of violence begin to show a change of heart. We term this process "identification with the non-agressor".

Gradually, the feelings of inferiority that made oppression possible give way to a sense of personal and moral superiority. This is strengthened by publicity and by support from third parties, a process that further increases the commitment to non-violence.

Non-violence resistance is thus a self-reinforcing process. People who have experienced this form of fighting find it hard to return to the ways of violence. The readiness of indi-

viduals and groups to embrace non-violent resistance is a function of their acquaintance with the idea and of the availability of a concrete program of action. Once these conditions are fulfilled, non-violent resistance may compete well with the alternatives of violent fighting and passive resignation. With each new application to the socio-political or the family arena, more people become aware of the option of non-violent resistance. The option of violence, in contrast, is obvious to everyone, and its popularity does not grow by new applications. This expanding consciousness may gradually tilt the balance in favor of non-violent resistance. If we add to this equation the growing awareness that technological progress dramatically increases the destructiveness of violent action, there may be grounds for hope that the appeal power of non-violent resistance will rise.

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