Fellow travelers: global decolonization and Gandhian peace work

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CHAPTER 8

Fellow Travelers: Global Decolonization and Gandhian Peace Work

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Abstract

This chapter shows how Gandhian peace workers connected to international pacifist circles in the 1950s and 1960s, particular the War Resisters' International. Personal relationships forged between pacifists in India resulted in the Africa Freedom Action, an effort to bolster the decolonization process in Tanzania and Zambia. It is, however, also a story of disconnection: of Gandhian peace workers joining method, but not necessarily intent, with the War Resisters' International. This disconnection was caused by the difference in weight that peace workers from different regions attached to decolonization as a prerequisite for world peace. As a result, the project developed a distinct Afro-Asian orientation, with peace workers in Dar es Salaam looking east, rather than west, for support.

Key words: peace movement, Cold War, decolonization, non-violence, internationalism, Afro-Asia

> We are fortunate in India that we are not looked upon as cranks or stoned when we speak of World Peace. But in both cases, whether in the West or in India, as cranks or wise men, we are considered to be a group separated from the general community.
>
> —Asha Devi Aryanakam[1]

The Gandhigram ashram sits nestled between the Sirumalai hills in the east and the Kodai hills in the west. It was founded by a Gandhian couple, Dr. and Mr. Ramachandran, who hoped to implement Gandhi's plan for the "reconstruction of the social order" in the villages of the Dindigul region , in central Tamil Nadu.[2] Despite its remote location, the ashram's trajectory ran parallel to that of the country it sought to serve. Just weeks before independence, Chinnalapatti village had offered twenty-five acres of land to Dr. Ramachandran on which to build the ashram. A few weeks after independence, operations officially started. Like their counterparts in Delhi, the ashram's founders had long been active in the freedom struggle and were now eager to turn their focus to "constructive work," the social uplift program set out by Gandhi. Within a few short years, the Bhoodan land reform movement would claim the attention of both.

Nevertheless, Gandhigram seldom looked towards Delhi, and the ashram's views on freedom were not framed in terms of political power or electoral politics. Their program was more ambitious both spatially and conceptually. Noting the "tidal waves of freedom" across the world in the "century of the common man," the shattering of empires had, according to G. Ramachandran, introduced deeper and wider conceptions of justice into human thought: "One vote for every person is no longer the last word in a democracy. It has ceased to be even the first word of freedom. Political freedom and justice are no longer adequate. Economic freedom and justice are the demands of the new age."[3] In another vein, the organization soon felt disenchanted with the national government. Holding fast to the Gandhian doctrine that "good ends can only be achieved by good means," they privileged method over objectives. Many Gandhians considered the compromises and trade-offs inherent in electoral politics to be fundamentally at odds with that principle.[4] As a result, over the course of the 1950s and 1960s the ashram prioritized connections to local and international organizations with similar methods, even if the intellectual genealogies of that method were sometimes different.[5] These connections shared an existence outside the realm of state power. They also shared a firm commitment to non-violence in principle, and non-violent direct action as method. But their non-violence was informed by Buddhist, anarchist, Quaker, and other strands of thought.

This story starts in Gandhigram but ends in Dar es Salaam. It shows how workers from the Bhoodan and Sarvodaya movements folded into the international peace movement of the 1950s and 1960s, particularly the War Resisters' International and the organizations in its orbit. At its core, it is a story of friendship forged in Gandhigram, which resulted in the Africa Freedom Action, an effort to support decolonization in Tanzania and Zambia under auspices of the World Peace Brigade, an organization conceived at a conference in Gandhigram, made concrete in the outskirts of Beirut, and finally implemented in Dar es Salaam. It is, however, also a story of "productive misunderstanding": of the Gandhian Sarva Seva Sangh joining *method* – non-violent direct action – but not necessarily *intent* with the War Resisters' International. This "productive misunderstanding" was caused by the difference in weight that peace workers from different regions attached to freedom from empire. This issue became pertinent when practical questions arose around the allocation of manpower and resources; or more principled ones, such as the potential for violent escalation. In other words, was the pursuit of political independence a prerequisite for world peace, or did the pursuit of world peace supersede the struggle for political independence? Not every pacifist organization put the emphasis in the same place, and as a result, the World Peace Brigade developed a distinct Afro-Asian orientation, with the peace workers in Dar es Salaam looking more towards the "Asian Bureau" of the organization than to the leaders of the War Resisters' International in London.

In the larger setting of the peace and anti-nuclear movements of the early Cold War years, the issue of how to anchor peace work in active decolonization efforts was a familiar question. Even if most peace workers agreed on the importance of global decolonization, the question of *how* important it was relative to other goals was also raised in the conference halls of the World Peace Council and the organizations in its orbit.[6] Overall, the Soviet-oriented World Peace Council was more explicit in its denunciation of colonialism and more deliberate about engaging the decolonizing world.[7] In India, as in other parts of Afro-Asia, there was considerable institutional overlap between the WPC and the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization when it met in Cairo (1957) and Conakry (1960) and vocally campaigned for Algerian independence.[8]

In other words, when it came to international affiliations, peace workers had a choice. Depending on ideological persuasion, it was possible to pursue peace in different inflections with different international interlocutors. On the surface, the vocabularies of peace appeared similar across organizational lines: terms like "disarmament," "peace-loving peoples," and "brotherhood" marked one as a peace activist but did not necessarily betray institutional affiliation. Beyond the surface, however, there were differences that proved hard to bridge, in spite of many attempts to do so. The pacifist orientation of the international peace movements in which Gandhian groups were active determined not just their international connections, but also the vectors of the peace work itself. If the World Peace Council sought out famous intellectuals and artists, pressured governments, and appealed to the UN in an effort to effect top-down change, the War Resisters' International and its member organizations centered "peace within." World peace would be achieved by instilling a non-violent consciousness and working to strengthen, in the words of Japanese Buddhist pacifist Ananda Gyoryo Maruyama, "the natural human aspiration for peace … by offering bridges of reconciliation."[9] In this reading, peace was a moral good, strengthened by local social work as much as by international organization. In short: more Tolstoy, less Lenin. Naturally, religious groups felt more at home in this corner of the international peace movement.

The archives of Cold War-era peace organizations nevertheless bear silent testimony to the efforts that peace activists from a range of ideological orientations invested in creating an inclusive global peace movement. It is striking how many of those attempts to reach across borders, both material and ideological, were invitations to specific individuals – to old friends, hosts, supporters, and correspondents. Like the term "fellow traveler," the framing of Cold War era-international communities as "friendship" is associated with Soviet outreach to the decolonizing world.[10] It is likewise associated with specific registers of interstate diplomacy, particularly in Afro-Asia.[11] It was precisely the discourse and practice of friendship and intimacy which caused western political analysts to dismiss Afro-Asian diplomacy as overly

emotional.[12] But by definition, any peace work involved critique of the nation-state, as well as its counterpart: an internationalist reflex. The emotional world of peace workers was an international one, but those emotional ties cut across political lines. In place of "friendship," this chapter therefore conceives of "fellowship," both as a nod to the concept of fellow travelling as well as to the centrality of "fellowship" to international pacifist communities.[13]

However, petitions to governments, embassies, universities and other organizations for the inclusion of friends from across Cold War lines were mostly fruitless. From inside the peace movement, any fellow peace activist was a would-be "fellow traveler," but the pursuit of peace nevertheless ended up divided along lines that resembled those of the Cold War itself.[14] The War Resisters' International and the World Peace Council were among the larger international bodies on their respective sides of the line. With the destination similar at least on the surface – an end to Cold War, nuclear weapons, and colonial empires – affiliation nevertheless decided one's fellow travelers for the road. But as shown by the three-act story of Afro-Asian decolonization efforts told below, institutional affiliations could hide considerable differences as well. The question that must therefore be asked of every fellow traveler is: how far will he go?[15]

Act I: Gandhigram, 1960

The "road" existed in more than a metaphorical sense, and in either case it was long and full of obstacles. In late 1956, the War Resisters' International (WRI) set out to revitalize its links between Gandhians and international pacifists. They were hoping to build on long-standing – particularly Quaker – connections to India, several of which had found a degree of institutional solidification through Visva Bharati in West Bengal, culminating in a World Pacifist Meeting there in December 1949.[16] The task of establishing contacts strong enough to get a WRI conference off the ground in India from halfway across the world fell to Arlo Tatum, the WRI's London secretary. Arlo Tatum had been born into an Iowan Quaker family who had come of age right as the United States entered the Second World War. As a conscientious objector, he spent three and a half years in federal prison in Minnesota. Blessed with a deep baritone voice, he studied music after his release and had some professional success as a soloist before serving another term in prison when a new draft law was passed.[17] Tatum moved to London in 1955 to become the Secretary of the War Resisters' International and limited his musical career to the writing of peace and protest songs. His first letter to Gandhigram in that capacity, therefore, was truly a "cold call." He had few personal contacts in India. It was here that the presumed kinship between European pacifists and Gandhians offered a start. "Dear friend," he started, "… I know that as a Gandhian you are well disposed towards the WRI."[18]

By 1959, after more than two years of exchanging correspondence, the tone of the correspondence between G. Ramachandran and Arlo Tatum had become far more informal, enticing Tatum to travel to India several months ahead of the conference to work alongside his Gandhian colleagues. He decided to travel by boat rather than flying "so that I can read up recent issues of *Bhoodan* and *Sarvodaya* and in other ways try to get myself a bit more educated about the current activities and ideas of the Gandhian movement."[19] On the way, Tatum toured Ceylon to meet with religious representatives – Buddhists in Panadura, an ashram at Chunnakam, and a church near Jaffna. His visit received considerable attention from the local press. An interview that Radio Ceylon had planned with Tatum did not quite materialize – instead, listeners were treated to Tatum's pacifist songs, accompanied on autoharp.[20]

The Gandhigram conference was a conscious attempt on the part of the WRI to extend the geographical scope of their activities, but for Arlo Tatum this was also an opportunity to further develop his own "non-violent consciousness." This was not a one-sided process, however: Arlo Tatum also received many unsolicited letters from India, eager to connect Sarvodaya efforts to international pacifism. One Ramesh Vyas from Ahmedabad wrote that "all the peaceloving people of the world should come on one platform. Sarvodaya wants to do this and has an idea of Sarvodaya International, an organization of peace-loving people … Myself is interested [sic] in your movement as a peace lover. I invite you to visit our place, where Gandhi and Vinoba had stayed. We, the believers of one-world should come together."[21] This is how connections were made: Ramesh Vyas' letter resulted in an invitation from the WRI for him to attend the Gandhigram conference, which he promptly forwarded to a colleague from the Bhoodan movement.[22]

Financing the conference likewise required considerable reciprocal investment. Gandhigram turned to the *Gandhi Smarak Nidhi*, the Gandhi National Memorial Fund, for financial assistance.[23] Connections to the fund were easily made, as G. Ramachandran was also its secretary. The Gandhi Smarak Nidhi made the considerable sum of 10,000 rupees available to the Conference to ensure that all participants receive free hospitality over the six days of the conference.[24] The WRI likewise invested significant funds, only to be faced with further difficulty: when the chartered plane that was to take British and European delegates to the conference failed to turn up in the week before the conference, refunding participants who had signed up to the charter sank the organization deeply into debt.

However, not all participants relied on the chartered plane. Individual pacifists also invested considerable time and effort. Arlo Tatum noted ahead of the conference that six of the younger pacifists had decided that the most cost-effective way to reach the conference was to purchase a second-hand van and drive to Gandhigram.[25] One Pierre Ovaldé, a French peace activist from Paris, requested his

invitation letter several months early so that he could travel to India by bicycle.[26] Max Heinegg, a delegate from New Zealand, travelled by ship to Bombay, and from Bombay by train across the south. He spent his entire life savings on the trip – from his diary, it does appear he considered it worth the expense, even if "exhausted by the heat, and itching from countless bedbug and mosquito bites, I left India like a refugee."[27]

There is good reason to delve into the material aspects of the Gandhigram conference, since it is in the material realm that the distinction between organizations pursuing the path of non-violent direct action and those pursuing international disarmament and peace accords becomes most pronounced. For one, their funding streams were vastly different – the former relying mostly on donations, the latter directly or indirectly on state funding. The WRI tended to meet in schools or other sites with dormitories; the World Peace Council typically convened in large hotels in major cities. It would go too far, however, to attribute the difference to funding streams alone. There was a performative element as well. Pacifist movements, irrespective of regional or religious origin, propagated living simply and soberly. The World Peace Council, by contrast, effectively functioned as a foreign-policy tool of the Second World and sought out high-profile conference spaces to project an image of international diplomatic legitimacy and respectability. One was a realm of sleeping bags and flashlights, the other of banners and parades.

Finally, the lack of material comfort in Gandhigram served to strengthen the bonds that were forged there. The conference was a communal affair. Every day started with a 7am prayer meeting. The attendees slept in the Gandhigram dorms, but not always on mattresses, which were in short supply. Most used their sleeping bags or topcoats. This was no surprise – all attendees had been informed well in advance that conditions would be somewhat spartan. The WRI News Bulletin eight weeks before the conference left little to the imagination: "Do not ask for hot water as you will probably not get it."[28] Max Heinegg, in any case, did not get much sleep, although this stemmed partly from the fact that he had volunteered to translate speeches into French, a task that kept him at work into the small hours of the morning.[29] The fact that such a detailed record of bodily discomfort remains speaks to pacifist meetings as self-consciously embodied experiences. Sober arrangements were not just to be expected, they were actively embraced.

Bonds were likewise strengthened through the fact that many of the participants' life stories were interwoven with common threads. Irrespective of national origin, they had participated in peaceful protests that had been met with violence. They had been arrested and imprisoned. They also shared intellectual trajectories. *War Without Violence*, by Krishnalal Sridharani, had hit bookstores in the United States when Harcourt published it internationally in 1939. Offering "the sociology of Gandhi's Satyagraha" to an international audience, it inspired a generation of

conscientious objectors. These were the fundaments of peace work as fellowship, born of the conviction that their spiritual beliefs, irrespective of the label, were incompatible with the waging of war.

The shared experience of non-violent direct action certainly applied to the three main characters in this paper. The first was Siddharaj Dhadda, a prominent Gandhian in the freedom struggle who had become active in state politics upon independence, but who resigned from the Congress Party in 1957 to devote himself fully to the Sarvodaya Movement. In the World Peace Brigade, he would join hands with the second, Bayard Rustin, an African-American civil rights activist who had spent time in prison as a conscientious objector in the Second World War, and had toured India in 1948 to further acquaint himself with the Gandhian movement.[30] The third was Bill Sutherland, an African-American civil rights activists who, like Rustin, had been imprisoned as a conscientious objector in the Second World War, but who had moved to Ghana in 1953 and eventually took Ghanaian citizenship, becoming an important liaison between decolonizing Ghana and the world.[31] He too had previous experience of India, having visited along with Ghanaian finance minister Komala Agbeli Gbedema for a World Bank meeting in the 1950s.[32]

Many of the pacifists travelling to Gandhigram, therefore, were no strangers to Gandhian thought, even if the specifics might elude some of them. Among the latter was certainly Dutch delegate Hein van Wijk, who wrote to G.L. Puri, then India's Ambassador to the Netherlands, in a state of panic confessing that he had no idea where Gandhigram was.[33] Closer to the conference, he asked the WRI: "Is Gandhian Ashram Gandhi's ashram, and is an ashram a kind of settlement?"[34] When he arrived, however, he found kindred spirits. Van Wijk's life story had many parallels with the biographies sketched above: he had spent most of the Second World War in concentration camps for hiding conscientious objectors from Germany in the Netherlands. Narrowly escaping a death transport in April 1945, he went on to defend those refusing to serve in the Dutch decolonization war in Indonesia as a lawyer and became a national legislator for the Pacifist Socialist Party (PSP).

At Gandhigram, meanwhile, everything was set for the conference. An exhibition depicting peacemaking and nuclear disarmament activities throughout the world provided global context. Charts, photographs, and posters of the Bhoodan and Grandam movements in India provided local context.[35] After the opening of the exhibition, the delegates gathered for the first speeches in the late afternoon. First, G. Ramachandran, who also addressed the conference during the opening session as director of Gandhigram and therefore host of the event, reminisced about the 1949 World Pacifists Conference held at Tagore's Visva Bharati University in Santiniketan and later at Gandhi's ashram in Sevagram. Some of the international delegates at Gandhigram had attended the 1949 conference as well, so this offered the conference a framing that appeared natural but shifted the geographies of

peace work away from the WRI and away from Europe. Aside from Ramachandran, Norwegian peace activist Diderich Lund, Michael Scott, and Sarva Seva Sangh director Vallabhaswamy had been at the Santineketan gathering.

In other respects, too, Ramachandran's speech provided an extremely provocative start to the conference. He blasted Asian nationalism, and Indian nationalism in particular. He lauded peace activists from other countries who had stood up to their own governments and communities, and wondered if Indian peace activists would have the same courage when the situation called for it. He questioned whether the United Nations was not actually an obstacle to a "United Peoples" rather than a road towards it. He argued that Gandhi was misunderstood in Quaker circles. He asked all the conference attendees to prove him wrong. Then he asked for a real and truthful conference under Divine Providence.[36]

The first full conference day, a "world panoramic view" of peacemaking helped the delegates get in the right mood. In addition to Bayard Rustin and Bill Sutherland, speakers included Joseph Abileah from Israel and Japanese Anarchist Federation president Taiji Yamaga. Civil disobedience and civil rights figured prominently on the conference agenda. While these were themes more closely related to the core business of the WRI, a large role was reserved here for Rustin, Sutherland, and Nana (Nelson) Mahomo, a South African anti-Apartheid activist active in the Pan Africanist Congress. Both the US and South African situations, and the strategies for non-violent direct action deployed there, were extensively discussed.

On the evening of 24 December, the attendees were treated to a "Nativity Pantomime" as well as a play written by V. Rengarajan. Entitled "I have no part in the blood of this innocent man," it dealt with the issue of moral culpability, framed by the deaths of Jesus and Gandhi, and linked it to the modern pacifist movement: "The peace-loving scientist of tomorrow would, like the Pilate, say 'I have no part in the blood of this innocent man'. Would we cry then as did the Jews of the Pilate and the religious megalomaniacs who caused the death of Gandhiji – 'His blood will be upon us'? We should not – that is what this play has to tell you."[37] This blending of religious traditions that fed international pacifism was also evident from the session on Sarvodaya, chaired by Vallabhaswami, the president of the Sarva Seva Sangh. He insisted that addressing his "brothers and sisters" that day was more than rhetoric. "Our relation cannot be less than that of brothers and sisters … our family consists of Buddha, Jesus, Gandhiji and many such men of God."[38] Along with the commitment to work outside the mechanisms of the state, the rooting of peace work in individual spirituality – rather than in any one specific religious tradition – was another way in which this community of fellow travelers was forged.

After the conference, many of the international visitors no longer addressed their letters to Ramachandran as "friend" or "sir," but as "Mama" (uncle). To Arlo Tatum, the conference had indeed been deeply transformative. As he wrote to

"Dear Mama," he was now convinced the conference marked the end of the era in which pacifists thought that the refusal of military service was the only way to oppose war. For an official in the WRI– an organization which was founded on the principal of conscientious objection – who had spent much of his early twenties in prison for that exact conviction, this was a fundamental shift. He voiced the hope that "a new sense of dynamic will become evident in the movement. From my own personal point of view I am sure that my time in India represents one of the most valuable experiences in my life and I shall always be grateful for the opportunity … of all the people I met in India I felt you to be the least hampered with prejudicial constrictions."

Act II: Brummana, 1961

The Gandhigram participants left the conference with a very concrete task. The "Gandhigram Statement," widely publicized in Pacifist circles, had "endorsed the idea of an International Shanti Sena or World Peace Brigade and considered that the establishment of such a body was a matter of urgency. Such a World Peace Brigade should be independent of the United Nations and all governments. The conference envisaged practical constructive work as being an integral part of the activities of the World Peace Brigade."[39]

The idea of a World Peace Brigade dated back to the 1940s. Gandhi pioneered the concept when he proposed the creation of a people's nonviolent army, recruited from all over the world, to step in wherever conflict threatened.[40] By 1960, there had been several failed attempts to establish one, leading to some skepticism among the more seasoned pacifists at Gandhigram. Even Bayard Rustin, who was otherwise excited about the good a World Peace Brigade might do in Africa, noted that "the idea should either be implemented or forgotten."[41] It is no surprise, then, that when the details of that Peace Brigade were again tabled for a separate conference, "to be held as soon as feasible," the main advocates of the Brigade pressed on. Not wanting to lose momentum, they aimed to get the Brigade up and running within the year. They took the preparations upon themselves. Siddharaj Dhadda and Rustin took part in the steering committee.

One year later, almost to the day, the World Peace Brigade was formally established at the premises of a boarding school in Brummana, Lebanon. The setting, in many ways, resembled the meeting in India. The Brummana High School is nestled in the hills above Beirut. Funded by a community of Quakers from Darlington, England, the place was originally called Darlington Station. Education at Brummana followed the principles of the Society of Friends and stressed non-violence, equality, self-reliance, and the "spirit of service." As had been the

case in Gandhigram, the delegates to the founding conference of the World Peace Brigade slept in dormitories. The conference was able to use the school because of the December holidays, but that meant that the school was unheated and the weather bitterly cold. The fire came from within, as American Quaker Bob Gilmore later reminisced about the warm excitement from taking on the power of imperial interests and Cold War alliances.[42]

The Indian delegation consisted of G. Ramachandran, Devi Prasad, Narayan Desai, S. Jagannathan, and Siddharaj Dhadda, all of whom had played an important part in the Gandhigram conference the year before. Rustin and Sutherland were in attendance as well. Together, they decided the World Peace Brigade should focus on Southern Africa as a site where non-violent direct action was most urgently needed. At a session chaired by G. Ramachandran, Rustin, and Sutherland shared their previous experiences with organizing in Africa, especially in Ghana in the 1950s, but also urged that no final decisions be made until African leaders had been consulted.

In the run-up to the conference, there had been some discussion about the name the World Peace Brigade was to take. Swami Sri Bhadra wrote to Arlo Tatum to strongly argue in favour of a Shanti Seva over a Shanti Sena, thinking the concept of service still underrepresented in the initiative.[43] Sutherland, too, wrote to the WRI in the run-up to Brummana that "I sure hope we can find a better name."[44] Rev. R.R. Keithahn, at the Sarvodaya Ashram at Batlagundu in South India, likewise wrote in to remind the Brummana conference of its Sarvodaya roots, and to ensure that the World Peace Brigade did not run "way off track of the concern expressed at Gandhigram."[45] But there was also consensus: "World" Peace Brigade was favored over "International" Peace Brigade, to avoid the impression that its workers represented their respective nations.[46] This mirrored Ramachandran's contrasting of "united nations" versus "united peoples" a year earlier in Gandhigram.

Another point of contention was the main purpose of the Brigade. It is here that old differences within the peace movement surfaced. Rustin, Sutherland, and Dhadda came firmly down on the side of supporting decolonization efforts. Others, such as the American pacifist Brad Lyttle, saw nuclear testing as the primary threat to peace. This division, however, was not as clean-cut as it appeared. Rustin and Sutherland had previously been involved in the "Sahara Team," an international initiative launched from Ghana to prevent French nuclear testing in the Sahara in 1959. As Rob Skinner has shown, the Sahara Team was very much rooted in existing anti-colonial networks and informed by Pan-Africanist solidarity.[47] Choosing the Brigade's first project, albeit important, was a matter of emphasis, not principle.

By now, a strong friendship had developed between the advocates of this World Peace Brigade. This also found expression in a certain amount of homosociality – while the Gandhigram meeting had included several prominent female delegates,

by Brummana, the World Peace Brigade had become a decidedly more masculine affair. This is evident from the less formal aspects of the conference as well. The Gandhigram conference had ended with a "talent night" that only reinforced the idea that an unlikely marriage between Gandhians and conscientious objectors was taking place – the German delegation performed a "Christmas cabaret" full of anti-militarist jokes, while local female social workers performed a selection of traditional Indian dances. The two were both appreciated, but they did not go very well together. The last night of the Brummana conference provided an interesting contrast: the secretary of the War Resisters, Arlo Tatum, Bayard Rustin, and Narayan Desai sang the conference to a close, together. All three were known to possess musical talents, but Rustin in particular was known to move audiences to tears. This intimate moment of joint singing, just as the new year was starting, was the real start of the World Peace Brigade project.

Act III: Dar es Salaam, 1962

In 1962, three of the founders of the World Peace Brigade moved to Dar es Salaam – Dhadda, Sutherland, and Rustin – to implement the Africa Freedom Action (AFA). This was the World Peace Brigade's first real test. Their aim was to amplify Kenneth Kaunda's struggle for Zambian independence in Northern Rhodesia. Kaunda's commitment to non-violence and civil disobedience had brought him into the orbit of the World Peace Brigade. At first glance, the AFA seems another child of the unlikely marriage between the conscientious objectors of the War Resisters' International and Gandhian social workers otherwise deeply involved in the local uplift efforts of the Bhoodan movement in India. A closer look, however, reveals a very concrete and material project of Afro-Asian solidarity, best illustrated by the travels of Rustin, Sutherland, and Dhadda.

The World Peace Brigade set up a Positive Action Center in Dar es Salaam. Dhadda laid the groundwork for active Indian involvement. He met with Kaunda and Julius Nyerere in Dar es Salaam. Nyerere was adamant that, before anything else, the World Peace Brigade secure backing from the most important stakeholders in the region. Once that was arranged, the Tanganyikan government would "render all possible assistance."[48] Nyerere considered PAFMECA, the Pan-African Freedom Movement for East and Central Africa, the best forum for the AFA to build a network. Its third conference was about to open in Addis Ababa.[49] Dhadda admits to feeling a little lost. He had not travelled much outside India and had hoped to rely on the experience of Michael Scott, noted British peace activist and one of the chairmen of the Brigade.[50] Scott could not make it, however, so Dhadda joined "Bill and Bayard," to whom Dhadda now referred affectionately even in his formal

reports about his work in Africa, in Addis Ababa. Dhadda was able to get observer status to attend the proceedings. In the opening speech, Haile Selassie himself devoted special attention to the situation in Northern Rhodesia. The solidarity shown at the conference and the "realization of the desirability of African Unity" clearly made an impression on Dhadda. He returned to Dar es Salaam with a great sense of urgency, reporting that "the situation in Rhodesia is reaching boiling point and whatever action we propose, should be taken quickly."[51]

The East African travels of Dhadda speak to the strength of existing Afro-Asian ties as well as the forging of new ones. In Addis, Dhadda spoke with Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya, and Oginga Odinga, as well as some of Kaunda's Zambian colleagues. In Nairobi, he got together with an Indian friend from Mozambique, who helped him strategize the best locations for volunteer training centers in Central Africa, and "gave hope of financial assistance from local sources." The World Peace Brigade workers proceeded with their plans to organize an international march from Tanganyika to Rhodesia to ensure Kaunda's cause would occupy the front pages of the world's media outlets.

It is interesting to note that these efforts were primarily directed from the World Peace Brigade's Asian Regional Council in India, further cementing the Brigade's Afro-Asian orientation. That was true in a material sense as well. By March 1962, an initial Rs 10,000 in foreign exchange had been secured for the AFA, and the Sarva Seva Sangh committed to raising an additional Rs 20,000. But the Sarva Seva Sangh also did not intend to "invent the wheel" from India: they decided to send out volunteers to contact the Indian community in Tanganyika to engage them in the Brigade's work.[52]

The strong diasporic ties between India and East Africa were part of the AFA as more than passing references.[53] In fact, they had been instrumental in the development of Kaunda's pacifism. Kaunda was a devout Christian, but his introduction to non-violent thinking had been decidedly Gandhian, at the hands of a Lusaka storekeeper named Rambhai Patel.[54] Patel translated parts of Gandhi's writing for Kaunda, who wrote them into his early speeches. He even paid for Kaunda, in whom he saw a future leader, to travel to India in 1958 on a pilgrimage to the main sites of Gandhi's life and work. Without irony, he later wrote: "I owe Rambhai Patel much and can see why Jesus made a shrewd businessman the hero of one of his parables of the Kingdom.[55]

And so, the intended march became a largely Afro-Asian affair. In fact, the European Regional Council was hardly involved, and when it was, it was to urge caution or argue that the project's agenda of decolonization no matter the cost risked resulting in violence. These types of communication only reinforced the idea that peace work towards decolonization would have to be an Afro-Asian effort. This trend would continue over the short lifespan of the World Peace Brigade. By

1965, and especially after the Delhi-Peking Friendship March had run into a series of obstacles, the World Peace Brigade was re-evaluating its existence.[56] By then, Siddharaj Dhadda had lost all patience with the European Regional Council: "the World Peace Brigade has no doubt functioned inadequately. Without meaning any disrespect I might say that the European Regional Council has unfortunately had the largest share of this inadequacy."[57]

A more permanent Indian volunteer was sent to assist the AFA in Africa after Dhadda's return to India. The Indian section of the World Peace Brigade sent Bhoodan veteran Suresh Ram to Dar es Salaam to assist Sutherland and Rustin, taking care of both his expenses in Africa and those of his family back in India. Ram's mentor Vinoba Bhave wrote to the AFA that "… it is a matter of great satisfaction that thoughtful Africans are getting inclined towards non-violence, and a Satyagraha project is being planned in that continent… Jaijagat [victory to the world]!"[58] Relative to the other pacifist traditions represented in the Brigade, Gandhian peace work was well-suited to a peace project that prioritized decolonization. For the Brigade at large, however, it was the fork in the road which answered the question asked of every fellow-traveler: how far will he go?[59]

Epilogue

But what of the march to Rhodesia? News of the march had spread quickly, thanks in part to long volunteer lists from India who "were ready to go if called." The march itself was never held, but it succeeded in transferring some of the "sense of urgency" that Dhadda had felt to government circles. The semantic discussion around the World Peace Brigade's name seems to have had some effect, too: the Rhodesian government nervously declared that their country was going to be invaded by a "Brigade." The threat seemed credible enough that the Welensky government rushed troops to the border.[60] This helped start negotiations with Kenneth Kaunda and Julius Nyerere.

Kaunda, on his part, was quite matter of fact about the decision to withdraw the march. "In the event, the Brigade never marched. That is no disgrace. At least its members cared enough about our plight to do something about it."[61] His notes on the Sarva Seva Sangh members he met over the course of the AFA were collegial and appreciative, and he became an active leader in the War Resisters International. He tentatively agreed on the overall change of atmosphere the World Peace Brigade had effected in the Zambian struggle for independence: "I have no wish to sell short movements such as the Peace People. At the very least they help to create a climate in which people allow themselves to think about the hitherto unattainable."[62]

Devi Prasad, a Gandhian member of the WRI who had been present at Gandhigram and Brummana, and later in life became the institutional biographer of the War Resisters, was convinced that the World Peace Brigade's efforts had paved the way for Zambian and Tanzanian independence: "It would be wrong on my part to give an impression that it was the action of the WPB that brought about the freedom of these countries. Nonetheless, it is true that such "small" happenings can sometimes tip the balance."[63] Prasad may have overstated the role of the World Peace Brigade in forcing the British to the negotiating table. What the AFA accomplished, was to offer a method of non-violent direct action that spoke to international pacifism but drew from specifically Gandhian methods and ideas. That method would not have come into being without the fellowship of Dhadda, Rustin, and Sutherland: their parallel trajectories of organizing on three different continents, and their shared commitment to aid decolonization efforts thousands of miles from home.

Notes

1 International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam (IISH), Devi Prasad Papers 46: Notes on Talks with Vinoba on World Peace and World Peace Brigade, 2 January 1961.

2 IISH, War Resisters' International Archives (WRI), Gandhigram, Silver Jubilee Souvenir booklet, 1973, iii.

3 IISH, WRI, G. Ramachandran, "Gandhi and the Future of Human Society," 29.

4 Not least the most prominent Gandhians of the era, Jayaprakash Narayan and Vinoba Bhave. See, for example, Lydia Walker, "Jayaprakash Narayan and the politics of reconciliation for the postcolonial state and its imperial fragments," *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, (2019), 147–69. On the theoretical underpinnings of the divergence in development ideas between the Indian state and the Gandhians, see Taylor Sherman, "A Gandhian Answer to the Threat of Communism? Sarvodaya and Postcolonial Nationalism in India," *IESHR* 53 (2016), 249–70.

5 On the divergent intellectual underpinnings of non-violence, see Mithi Mukherjee, "Transcending Identity: Gandhi, Nonviolence, and the Pursuit of a 'Different' Freedom in Modern India," *American Historical Review* 115 (2010), 453–73.

6 Rachel Leow, "A Missing Peace: the Asia-Pacific Peace Conference in Beijing, 1952, and the Emotional Making of Third World Internationalism," *Journal of World History* 30 (2019), 21–53.

7 As Patrick Iber notes, the WPC represented peace-as-communism, promoted as defending national sovereignty against the imperialist west. Patrick Iber, *Neither Peace nor Freedom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 14.

8 Reem Abou El-Fadl conceives of these overlaps as "infrastructures of solidarity." Reem Abou El-Fadl, "Building Egypt's Afro-Asian Hub," *Journal of World History* 30 (2019), 157–92.

9 IISH, WRI, Appeal to the Triennial Conference of the WRI, 10th Triennial Conference IV, 1960.

10 See, in particular, Abigail Judge Kret, "'We Unite with Knowledge': The Peoples' Friendship University and Soviet Education for the Third World," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 33 (2013), 239–56.

[11] Priya Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy: The Politics of Postcolonial Identity from 1947 to 2004* (London: Routledge, 2012), chapter 3.

[12] Rachel Leow, "A Missing Peace," 50; Roland Burke, "Emotional Diplomacy and Human Rights at the United Nations," *Human Rights Quarterly* 39 (2017), 273–95.

[13] Of these, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation is arguably the most well-known, but pacifist fellowships were spread across locations as well as denominations. On the organizational forms of pacifism, see Peter Brock and Nigel Young, *Pacifism in the Twentieth Century* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999); Elise Boulding, *Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History* (Syracure, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), chapter 3.

[14] For a detailed discussion of this process, see Günter Wernicke, "The Communist-led World Peace Council and the Western Peace Movements: The Fetters of Bipolarity and Some Attempts to Break Them in the Fifties and Early Sixties," *Peace & Change* 23 (1998), 280–1.

[15] Trotsky, quoted in David Caute, *The Fellow-Travellers: Intellectual Friends of Communism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, rev. ed. 2009 [1973]), 2.

[16] On these longer connections, see Marjorie Sykes, *Quakers and India: A Forgotten Century* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1980).

[17] "Arlo Tatum Obituary," *The Guardian*, 7 May 2014.

[18] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference I-III, 1956-1961, Arlo Tatum to G. Ramachandran, 26 November 1956.

[19] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference I-III, 1956-1961, Arlo Tatum to Banwarilal Choudhri, 3 March 1960.

[20] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference I-III, 1956-1961, WRI News Bulletin, 20 September 1960.

[21] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference I-III, 1956-1961, Ramesh Vyas to Arlo Tatum, 1 August 1960.

[22] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference I-III, 1956-1961, Ramesh Vyas to the Assistant Secretary of the WRI, 28 September 1960.

[23] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference I-III, 1956-1961, Arlo Tatum to G. Ramachandran, 8 June 1959.

[24] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference I-III, 1956-1961, Gandhi National Memorial Fund, Tenth Triennial Conference of the War Resisters International, 1 March 1960.

[25] Ibid.

[26] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference I-III, 1956-1961, Arlo Tatum to R. Srinivasan, 1 June 1960.

[27] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference, V: cuttings, Max Heinegg, "Indian Pilgrimage."

[28] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference I-III, 1956-1961, WRI News Bulletin, 27 October 1960.

[29] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference V: cuttings, Max Heinegg, "Indian Pilgrimage."

[30] There are several biographies of Bayard Rustin. The most comprehensive biography is John D'Emilio, *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2003). Daniel Levine, *Bayard Rustin and the Civil Rights Movement* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000) and Jervis Anderson, *Bayard Rustin: Troubles I've Seen* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1997) look at Rustin mainly through the lens of the African American Civil Rights movement.

[31] Jake Hodder, "Toward a Geography of Black Internationalism: Bayard Rustin, Nonviolence, and the Promise of Africa," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 106 (2016), 1373.

[32] Bill Sutherland and Matt Mayer, *Guns and Gandhi in Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc: 2000), chapter 2. Gbedema was finance minister of Ghana between 1954 and 1961.

[33] IISH, Archief Hein van Wijk, Hein van Wijk to G.L. Puri, 24 May 1960.

[34] IISH, Archief Hein van Wijk, Hein van Wijk to Tony Smythe, 26 September 1960.

[35] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference I-III, 1956-1961, WRI Newsbulletin, 20 September 1960.

[36] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference I-III, 1956-1961, Welcome address.

[37] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference I-III, 1956-1961, Playbill.

[38] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference I-III, 1956-1961, Vallabhaswami's speech, 23 December 1960.

[39] IISH, WRI, 10th Triennial Conference IV, 1960, Gandhigram Statement, adopted 27 December 1960. For the most extensive treatment of the World Peace Brigade's activities in the decolonizing world, see Lydia Walker, *States in Waiting: 20th Century Global Decolonization and its Discontents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

[40] See in particular Thomas Weber, *Gandhi's Peace Army: The Shanti Sena and Unarmed Peacekeeping* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press 1996).

[41] D'Emilio, *Lost Prophet*, 315.

[42] Ibid., 317.

[43] IISH, Devi Prasad Papers 45a: Arlo Tatum to Swami Shri Bhadra, 6 December 1961.

[44] IISH, Devi Prasad Papers 45b: Bill Sutherland to Arlo Tatum, 4 March 1961.

[45] IISH, Devi Prasad Papers 45b: Dick Keithahn to Arlo Tatum, 8 December 1961.

[46] IISH, Devi Prasad Papers 45b: Arlo Tatum to Fred H. Blum, 28 November 1961.

[47] Rob Skinner, "Bombs and Border Crossings: Peace Activist Networks and the Postcolonial State in Africa, 1959-62," *Journal of Contemporary History* 50 (2015), 418–38.

[48] IISH, Devi Prasad Papers 49, "Report on African Tour" by Siddharaj Dhadda, 22 February 1962.

[49] PAFMECA was founded by Julius Nyerere in Tanganyika. It was an important steppingstone towards the Organization of African Unity (OAU), established in Addis Ababa in 1963, a year after the Addis PAFMECA Conference.

[50] On Michael Scott's international peace work, see Walker, *States in Waiting*.

[51] IISH, Devi Prasad Papers 49, "Report on African Tour" by Siddharaj Dhadda, 22 February 1962.

[52] IISH, Devi Prasad Papers 49: WPB Asian Section (1961-1962): Kashi, 27 March 1962.

[53] On the role of the Indian diaspora in Zambian politics in this period, see Friday Mufuzi, "Indian Political Activism in Colonial Zambia: The Case of Livingstone's Indian Traders," in Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar and Giacomo Macola (eds.), *Living the End of Empire: Politics and Society in Late-Colonial Zambia* (Leiden: Brill, 2011): 207–23.

[54] Kenneth Kaunda himself credits Patel in Kaunda, *On Violence*, ed. Colin Morris (London: Collins, 1980), 15. See also Mufuzi, "Indian Political Activism," 221.

[55] Morris, *Kaunda on Violence*, 16.

[56] The Delhi-Peking Friendship March was attempted in 1963 following the Sino-Indian war. Dhadda took on an important role in the organization of this March as well.

[57] IISH, Devi Prasad Papers 48: Devi Prasad on behalf of WRI to WPB, 15 January 1965.

[58] IISH, Devi Prasad Papers 49: WPB Asian Section, Vinoba's Message for the Project of Non-Violent Action in Africa.

[59] Caute, *The Fellow-Travellers*, 2.

[60] D'Emilio, *Lost Prophet*, 318.

[61] Kaunda, *On Violence*, 22.

[62] Ibid., 24.

[63] Devi Prasad, *War is a Crime Against Humanity: The Story of War Resisters' International* (London: War Resisters International, 2005), 330.