

SUCCESS AND FAILURE OF THE WORLD PEACE COUNCIL AS A TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL MOVEMENT

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Relative to its role and importance, the communist-led peace movement is a woefully neglected topic in the historiography of the Soviet-Western cold war. From its inception in the late 1940s, the movement quickly grew into a global network of peace organisations and activists. Its world congresses attracted thousands of delegates and the support of a dazzling array of scientists, artists and intellectuals. Hundreds of millions of people signed its anti-nuclear petitions. At the peak of its influence in the mid-1950s, the movement's organisational apex – the World Peace Council (WPC) – issued pronouncements and pursued policies on peace, disarmament, and security that garnered widespread public support.

The WPC stood for an end to the cold war and the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction; for nuclear and general disarmament; and for decolonisation, national liberation and independence as the foundation of world peace. Above all, the WPC was against war and sought to propagate peace across the globe as the fundamental human value.

Because of its close connections with Moscow, the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 was politically devastating for the WPC, but it recovered somewhat by re-focusing on the nexus between global peace and decolonisation. In the 1960s, the WPC's control of an established, global network of peace activists and organisations, enabled it to play a central role in international mobilisation against America's war in Vietnam¹.

One measure of the success of WPC's campaigning during the early cold war was frantic efforts by western governments to sponsor counter-movements and organisations to combat peace propaganda with affirmations of freedom and democracy as the fundamental global values².

¹ *Christiaens K.* "To Go Further Than Words Alone": The World Peace Council and the Global Orchestration of Vietnam War Campaigns During the 1960s" // A. Sedlmaier (ed). *Protest in the Vietnam War Era* L., 2022.

² *Saunders, F.* *Stonor: Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*. L., 2000.

The WPC led the first and biggest global mass peace movement in history. Yet the WPC's presence in contemporaneous Western accounts of the cold war was marginal, usually being depicted as a mercurial movement that crashed and burned quite quickly. Western specialists in peace history paid more attention to the WPC, but were invariably dismissive. According to the premier Western historian of the anti-nuclear movement, Lawrence S. Wittner, the WPC was little more than a communist front organisation that acted as a "self-serving" cover for Soviet rearmament and achieved nothing except to "discredit the cause that it claimed to represent."³

Recent years have seen the publication of more positive and nuanced studies of the communist-led peace movement – works that acknowledge the WPC's symbiotic relationship with Moscow whilst at the same time affirming the movement's authenticity and autonomy⁴.

³ *Wittner L.S.* "The Transnational Movement Against Nuclear Weapons, 1945–1986" // C. Chatfield & P. van den Dungen (eds), *Peace Movements and Political Cultures*. Knoxville, 1988. P. 270.

⁴ *Becker M.* "The Ecuadorean Peace Committee" // *American Communist History*. Volume 19, Issue 3–4 (2020). P. 263–287; *Becker M.* "A Latin American Peace Movement on the Margins of the Cold War" // *Peace & Change*. Volume 45, Issue 4, October 2020. P. 513–542; *Forster E.* *Threatened by Peace: the PRC's Peacefulness Rhetoric and the 'China' Representation Question in the United Nations* // *Cold War History*, December 2019; *Hajimu M.* *Fear of World War III: Social Politics of Japan's Rearmament and Peace Movements, 1950–3* // *Journal of Contemporary History*. Volume 47 Issue 3, July 2012. P. 551–571; *Johnston T.* "Peace or Pacifism? The Soviet 'Struggle for Peace in All the World', 1948–1954" // *Slavic and East European Review*, Vol. 86, No. 2, April 2008. P. 259–282; *Kirastova M.* "The Partisans of Peace in Lebanon and Syria: How Anti-Nuclear Activism in the 1950s Revitalized the Arab Left" // *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Vol. 55, No. 4, January 2024. P. 1–25; *Leow R.* "A missing peace: The Asia-Pacific Peace Conference in Beijing, 1952". *Journal of World History*. Vol. 30, No. 1. June 2019. P. 21–53; *Roberts G.* "Moscow's Campaign Against the Cold War, 1948–1955" // *F. Borzo et al (eds), Visions of the End of the Cold War in Europe (1945–1990)*, N.-Y., 2012; *Roberts G.* "Averting Armageddon: The Communist Peace Movement, 1948–1956" // S. Smith (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*, Oxford, 2014; *Roberts G.* "Science, Peace and Internationalism: Frederic Joliot-Curie, the World Federation of Scientific Workers and the Origins of the Pugwash Movement" // A. Kraft & C. Sachse (eds), *Science, (Anti-)Communism and Diplomacy*. Leiden-Boston, 2019. P. 43–79; *Roberts G.* "Working towards the Vozd? Stalin and the Peace Movement" // S. Grant and J. Ryan (eds), *Revisiting Stalin and Stalinism*. L., 2020; *Wentz G.* *The Communist-Led World Peace Council and the Western Peace Movements* // *Peace & Change*. Vol. 23, No. 3 1998. P. 265–311; O.S. Nagomayeva eds., *Sovetskaya Kul'turnaya Diplomatiya v Usloviyakh Kholodnoi Voyny, 1945–1989*. M., 2018 (Советская культурная дипломатия в условиях Холодной войны).

Petra Goedde's 2019 survey of peace movements during the cold war is much more balanced than Withner's various writings. The WPC and allied organisations "represented more than Soviet propaganda", notes Goedde, but her book is limited by lack of Russian archival sources, which reveal the WPC's leadership's persistent efforts to assert their independence from Moscow⁵.

In that regard, the gold standard of WPC historiography is Natalya Yegorova's 2016 monograph "*People's Diplomacy in the Nuclear Age: Partisans of Peace and the Problem of Disarmament, 1955–1965*".

Yegorova's book is based on extensive and still unsurpassed research in the Russian archives. Notable, too, is her dissection of peace movement historiography, including the contributions of Soviet authors. While the book's focus is the Soviet dimension of the movement's history, it pays due regard to the broader international picture.

According to the British historian, Geoffrey Elton, historical writings consist of 'narratives thickened by analysis'. Yegorova's narrative mainly concerns the WPC's navigation of its complex relations with the Soviet Union — its striving for independence and diversity whilst at the same time seeking to remain Moscow's best friend. Her book is 'thickened' by many different kinds of analysis, including consideration of conceptual debates about the best way to frame international phenomena such as the WPC-led peace movement. As her book's title indicates, she opts for "people's diplomacy" as the most apposite concept: while WPC was an important instrument of Soviet "soft power", it also sought to foster people-to-people connections and to influence, through 'public diplomacy', the foreign policies of all states, including the USSR.

For most historians, myself included, there is no substitute for historical narrative when it comes to the explanation of past phenomena. But conceptual framing may add analytical depth and enhance the clarity of the stories we tell about the past. In that regard, applying to the WPC conceptual schemas used to analyse transnational social movements has considerable merit.

1945–1989: коллективная монография / науч. ред., рук. авт. коллектива О.С. Нарочная. М., 2018).

⁵ Goedde P. The Politics of Peace: A Global Cold War History. N.-Y., 2019. P. 15.

⁶ Yegorova N.I. "Народная Дипломатия" Удаленного Века: Движение Столпников Мира и Проблема Разоружения, 1955–1965 годы. М., 2016 (*Егорова Н.И. «Народная дипломатия» ядерного века: Движение столпников мира и проблема разоружения, 1955–1965 годы. М., 2016*). The only other published full-length study of the WPC-led peace movement is *Schlagra K. Die Kommunisten in der Friedensbewegung — Erfolge? Munster/Hamburg 1991*.

According to the editors of *Transnational Social Movements and Global Politics*, transnational social movements are non-governmental political actors that seek institutional and policy changes in the international order. These International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) strive to

- Mobilise support for particular ideas, values and policies
- Encourage public participation in international policy processes
- Create networks of actors and relationships that criss-cross national boundaries
- Foster transnational identities, notably the construction of transnational solidarity across state borders in pursuit of a higher cause⁷.

International peace movements are a species of INGO that arose in the 19th century and developed in the 20th century — playing a central role in establishing transnational social movements as an important feature of world politics, not least in relation to the creation and evolution of the League of Nations and the United Nations.

The World Peace Council is mentioned only in passing in *Transnational Social Movements and Global Politics*, yet it was the organisational apex of what was arguably the 20th century's most important INGO

In his contribution to the book ("The Globalization of Social Movement Theory"), John D. McCarthy identifies six categories through which we can explore the role and activities of the WPC as an INGO:

- Strategic framing
- Activist identities
 - Mobilising structures
 - Resource Mobilisation
 - Political opportunity structures
 - Repertoires of contention

*Strategic Framing*⁸

Strategic framing refers to the shared understandings that motivate and structure action. The WPC's key reference points were, firstly, the internationalism inherited from the socialist and communist traditions, including the radical components of the pre-Second World

⁷ J. Smith, C. Chaffield and R. Pagnucco (eds), *Transnational Social Movements and Global Politics: Solidarity Beyond the State*. Syracuse (NY), 1977.

⁸ Detailed evidence for the findings that follow may be found in the present author's articles cited in n.4 above.

War international peace movement, and, secondly, and most importantly, support for the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. All sections of the WPC, including its non-communist elements, had a benign view of the USSR as an international power. They approved Soviet foreign policy positions and viewed them as a positive contribution to world peace. They viewed the Soviet Union as fundamentally a peace-loving state

The WPC's alignment with the Soviet Union was a source of innumerable political problems, but it did provide the organisation with coherence, consistency and solidity. It is also provided the WPC with considerable material and human resources, and its leadership direct access to the highest levels of the USSR — a key player — in the global order that is activists were struggling to transform.

While the WPC's "strategic framing" as a Soviet ally placed it on one side of the cold war divide, and created difficulties when it came to building bridges to non-aligned peace activists and movements, its alliance with a great power and its bloc meant that its political goals — including in relation to nuclear disarmament — were far from utopian. The fact that WPC policies on nuclear issues harmonised with those of the Soviet Union placed them in the realm of practical possibility, assuming that Moscow's own proposals on disarmament and arms control were made with good faith.

Activist identities

The observed (by outsiders) identity of the WPC as a Soviet-created and sponsored organisation was not surprising given its strategic framing and track-record: until the Hungarian crisis of the WPC did not publicly deviate in any major way from Moscow's foreign policy position⁹. The western cold war view of the WPC as a creature of the Soviet Union was not devoid of merit, given that the peace movement's leaders, activists and supporters were mostly communists and fellow-travellers. The Soviet leadership certainly saw the peace movement as an instrument of its foreign policy.

However, the WPC saw itself differently — as a broad-based, pluralistic and inclusive peace movement. Importantly, there were limits to the WPC's fidelity to Moscow. In 1956 the peace movement's leadership

⁹ In 1955 WPC President, Frederic Joliot-Curie, successfully resisted Soviet pressure to refrain from repeating from his stated view that nuclear weapons posed an existential threat to humanity. He even threatened to boycott the forthcoming Helsinki World Peace Assembly.

refused to endorse the Soviet invasion of Hungary. In the 1960s the WPC resisted being dragged into the middle of the Sino-Soviet split. When the Soviets crushed the 'Prague Spring' in 1968, a number of national peace committees condemned Moscow's actions.

The WPC's persistent striving to be a broad peace front was quite successful in some respects. Each of its World Congresses — from the late 1940s through to the mid-1960s — were more diverse and open than its predecessors. At the 1949 Paris congress, 60% of the delegates were communists or party supporters. At the 1950 Warsaw congress that number had reduced to a third, while the 1952 Vienna World Congress was even more diverse, as was the Helsinki World Peace Assembly of June 1955. The membership of the WPC itself grew from c. 200 to c. 450 as means of accommodating a greater political mix, and by the time of the Helsinki Assembly 98 of its 446 members were, according to Soviet analysts, representatives of "bourgeois organisations".

At the same time, the leadership remained firmly in the hands of committed communists and fellow-travellers. As one such fellow-traveller, Pierre Cot — a leading French socialist luminary of the peace movement — said in June 1956: "However tolerant the movement and however correct its postulates, the fact that its President, its General-Secretary, most of its secretariat and national leaders are communists leads one to suppose that the movement is not independent of the Communist Party. Equally, if 95% of the postulates supported by the movement echo those of Soviet diplomacy, the movement cannot appear to be independent of that diplomacy."

At the grassroots and activist level, a diversity of identities co-existed within the WPC framework, depending on factors of geography, class, gender, ethnicity, religion and political preference. Its communist and Soviet connections notwithstanding, the WPC stood unequivocally for peace, and that was good enough for many people.

Mobilising Structures

The WPC was the organisational apex of a global network of national and local peace organisations and auxiliary movements. In some countries — France, Italy, communist bloc states — there were tens of thousands of such committees and hundreds of thousands of activists. In countries where the communists were much weaker — for example, Great Britain — there were hundreds rather than thousands of local peace committees but they were not without influence.

The showcase of the movement — and the focus for publicity campaigns — were the periodic World Congresses — which attracted thousands of delegates from across the world claiming to represent tens of millions of people. These congresses were larded with political and cultural celebrities. There was simultaneous translation of congress sessions, bulletins issued in different languages and interpreters provided to bridge communications between different national delegations.

As well as world events there were national and regional congresses and a multitude of local activities.

The WPC — which was elected by the world congresses — met once or twice a year to formulate and proclaim policy and to further new or ongoing campaigns. These were big events and functioned as kind of annual or bi-annual representative conferences. To emphasise the movement's transnational character WPC meetings were held at different venues across Europe and the world. English was the lingua franca but a lot of documents and conversations were in French, too.

The WPC was led and serviced by a Buro of leading members, a secretariat and an administrative apparatus. The WPC's HQ was initially in Paris, however, in 1951 the French Government forced a move to communist-controlled Prague. In 1954 the Buro re-located to Vienna but was expelled in 1957 on grounds the WPC interfered in the internal affairs of states that were friendly to Austria. Rather than move out wholesale the WPC's administrative apparatus continue to function within a front organisation in Vienna called the International Peace Institute. Not until 1968 did the WPC formally and fully move its HQ to Helsinki — where it remained until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The Buro contained the core leadership of WPC, including its President, which from 1950-1958 was the French nuclear scientist and Nobel laureate Fredric Joliot-Curie, from 1958-1965, the Irish-born, British-based radical scientist J.D. Bernal, and from 1965-1969, Isabelle Blume, a Belgium socialist, communist and feminist.

The Buro met on a regular basis in different national locations, sometimes in enlarged sessions with participation of other members of the WPC. It was within the Buro that the key debates and decisions about the direction of the movement were taken.

The key mobilising activity of the WPC at the grassroots level was a series of anti-nuclear petitions. These petition campaigns were central to the WPC's identity as an integrated transnational movement rather than simply a loose framework for a series of disparate national campaigns. The petition was the same in every country and the campaigning took place simultaneously.

The first great petition campaign was the Stockholm Appeal, which within a few months garnered half a billion signatures world-wide (a quarter of the world's population at that time). This was followed in 1951-1952 by a petition calling for a peace pact of the great powers, which was supported by 600 million people, but these signatures were collected over a longer period of time.

The function of these petition campaigns was not just to influence people's views in different countries but to create and shape an international public opinion that would put pressure on states to change their policies. The WPC saw itself as more than a movement struggling for peace — rather it was a global network of peace activists, part of the emerging infrastructure of a world society or an embryonic global civil society.

When the WPC veered away from centrally organised petition campaigns the result was the movement's fragmentation and a loss of momentum. In 1953-1954 the WPC waged a general campaign for international negotiations (to end the cold war) and for the reduction of international tensions. The idea was that this general campaign theme would be adapted to local conditions, including the formulation of specific national demands. This campaign had its successes, including the convening of a Conference on the Reduction of International Tensions in Stockholm in 1954, but it failed to generate the enthusiasm or the reach the dizzying heights of the Stockholm Appeal.

In January 1955, therefore, the WPC launched another anti-nuclear petition, which soon gathered 650 million signatures but failed to reach the goal of a billion such signatures. The cause of this petition — timed to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — was helped by the growing international outcry against radioactive fallout from H-Bomb testing in 1954 but was handicapped somewhat by the fact that it was launched during a period of respite in the cold war following the death of Stalin in 1953.

As is the universal experience of peace movements, the WPC was a victim of its own success. It relied on the acute war danger to lend urgency to its cause and to mobilise the energies of its supporters. Its campaigning had helped build public support for the partial Soviet-Western détente of the mid-1950s. The problem was that peace campaigning was then increasingly overshadowed by conventional diplomacy. Such was the fate, for example, of the Helsinki Peace Assembly of June 1955, a huge event which was swamped by the international attention given to the great power summit in Geneva in July 1955.

Resource Mobilisation

The WPC needed loads of money to finance its world congresses and other international meetings, run petition campaigns, pay its staff wages and its leaders' expenses, subsidise its publications, and fund its media and propaganda work.

In theory, the WPC was funded by grants and subscriptions from national peace committees, which conducted their own fund-raising activities among grassroots supporters. In practice, most of the money came from the Soviet and other communist governments.

The way it worked was that the WPC would present budgets to, say, the Soviet peace committee, which would then apply for requisite funding from the Politburo, which generally rubber-stamped these requests. In the 1950s this funding amounted to millions of dollars.

The Soviets also supplied staff to work in the WPC's central apparatus, provided interpreters and translators, gave grants to peace movement publications, and met the expenses of foreign peace delegations visiting the USSR. The USSR's network of embassies was used to communicate with peace movement leaders and Soviet journalists were mobilised to recruit celebrity attendees to world congresses.

Moscow's money helped cement the political and ideological bonds between peace movement's leaders and the Soviet leadership. By providing funds the Soviets showed their commitment to the peace movement; by accepting the money peace movement leaders affirmed their faith in the Soviet Union.

But that does not mean the WPC was bought and paid for by Moscow. While the financial flows were in one direction, the political and ideological transactions were two-way.

In the early 1960s the WPC's finances were regularised by the establishment of an international fund for peace with a bank account in Stockholm. The Soviets also had their own national peace fund, which funnelled money into its international counterpart. "Moscow gold" was by no means the WPC's only source of funds, but it was by far the most important.

Political Opportunity Structures

The WPC pursued its goals through conventional political means: popular mobilisation, influencing public opinion, pressure on political and governing institutes, propaganda and media work, lobbying and

networking. At the international level it appealed to the UN as well as states for action on peace. It sought to ally with the Bandung Movement and the newly independent states of the de-colonised world.

Mostly, the WPC was an outsider organisation, an external agitator for policy change. But within the communist bloc, especially in the Soviet Union, the WPC was an insider and used its position to lobby for its preferred policies and strategies.

The two main Soviet representatives on the WPC were the writers Ilya Ehrenburg and (until he committed suicide in 1956) Alexander Fadeev. The constant theme of their reports to the Soviet leadership was the need for an influential, broad-based peace movement and the necessity for Moscow to take political risks to achieve that goal.

Before every meeting of the peace movement's leadership, Fadeev and Ehrenburg were issued with instructions from the party about the line they were to take. However, more often than not these directives reflected their own recommendations to the Soviet leadership and in turn derived from prior discussions with the leaders of the international peace movement.

Relations between Moscow and the peace movement were much more complex than the western cold war caricature of the WPC as a transmission belt for Soviet foreign policy. Indeed, sometimes Moscow followed the lead of peace movement. That was true, for example, of Moscow's efforts to seek a reduction of international tension after Stalin's death, which was presaged by the Vienna peace congress and by WPC decisions to campaign for negotiations to end the cold war and contain the nuclear danger¹⁰. Another example is the peace movement's revision of the traditional communist doctrine of the inevitability of war under capitalism. From its inception the peace movement was adamant that all wars could be prevented by political struggle. This deviation from Marxist-Leninist tradition went too far for Stalin who in October 1952 felt compelled to intervene and publicly reaffirm the doctrine that wars were inevitable while capitalism continued to exist. However, Stalin qualified his remarks by stating that while war was existentially inevitable under capitalism each and every actual war could be prevented by the peace movement¹¹. In 1956, at the 20th party congress, Khrushchev formally embraced the peace movement position on the war question — a stance

¹⁰ Yegorova disagrees. She thinks the initiative for the campaign for negotiations came from Moscow, not the peace movement (private communication to the author).

¹¹ Stalin's remarks about the inevitability of war were actually provoked by the claims of Eugene Varga during discussion of a new Soviet textbook on political economy.

which subsequently brought him into conflict with the leaders of Chinese Communist Party.

Another avenue of influence for the WPC was its impact on Soviet discourse. There was massive coverage of the international peace movement in the Soviet press. In terms of international affairs there was more space devoted to the peace movement than any other topic. This coverage told Soviet readers

- that the USSR and communist bloc was not isolated, that it had the support of a massive international peace movement
- that world politics was not polarised in the way suggested by Zhdanov's two-camps doctrine at the Cominform conference in September 1947
- that war was not inevitable and peace would prevail
- that the Soviet struggle for peace — at home and abroad — was part of a wider struggle

Peace movement leaders were frequent visitors to the USSR and spoke at all the major Soviet peace congress. Though often communists or fellow-travellers themselves, they spoke a different language from that of their Soviet counterparts, a language that was more open to dialogue with those of different views. Indeed, a major theme of peace movement discourse was the need to reach out to all those who supported the cause of peace, including those with radically different political views. The message was that you did not just talk to political opponents — you had to actively collaborate with them where there was common agreement.

After Stalin's death there was a distinct shift in Soviet discourse, which now talked about 'world society' as well as world capitalism and 'international public opinion' as well as international class struggle. In effect, Soviet discourse about world politics coalesced with that of the peace movement and was internalised by the Soviet leadership¹². One expression of this — unacknowledged — shift may be found in Foreign Minister Molotov's speech to the 20th party congress in February 1956:

"The policy of easing international tension is the most effective and flexible method of struggling for peace... This policy takes the struggle for peace beyond the usual limits; it embraces the field of economic and cultural interests and the relations of states and private bodies but also

¹² Yegorova distinguishes between the late 1940s and early 1950s, when peace movement discourse derived from Soviet sources, and the post-Stalin period, when its language began to deviate from that used by Moscow (private communication to author).

of private individuals. Not only diplomats and politicians can help ease international tensions, but also economic and cultural leaders".

There was another way in which the international peace movement served as an influential interface between the Soviet Union and the outside world: the exchange of peace delegations.

The WPC provided a framework for peace activists to meet and to visit each other's countries. A lot of this traffic involved movement into and out of the communist bloc, particularly the Soviet Union. As the peace movement expanded globally so too did these contacts. In the 1950s there were hundreds of such delegations involving many thousands of delegations. Important, too, were the opportunities for political contact afforded by world, regional and national congresses. The Soviets sent large delegations to these events, which provided many opportunities for local cultural contacts.

Intra-peace movement contacts and personal relations were particularly important during the late Stalin era when they helped counteract Soviet isolationism and paved the way for the massive expansion of cultural, sporting and cultural contacts with the outside world that developed after the dictator's death in 1953.

Repertoires of contention

The WPC was a conventional political movement that pursued its goals through petitions, resolutions, demonstrations, meetings, festivals, lobbying, educational activities, press and propaganda work. As a 1950s version of the 1930s Popular Front the WPC sought respectability and acceptance by the mainstream of politics. When J.G. Crowther, the Chairman of the British Peace Committee called for strikes (industrial action) against nuclear weapons his colleagues were aghast and his appeals for a hearing fell on deaf ears in Moscow.

Success and Failure of the WPC as a Transnational Movement

The WPC's greatest strength was the thing that opponents and rivals taunted it about — the sponsorship of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Yet without that material and political support, the WPC would have been a far less effective campaigner for peace.

Equally problematic, but beneficial as well, was the WPC's close connection to the international communist movement. It was party

members and fellow-travellers who led, staffed and organised the peace movement at every level. The WPC's rapid growth and mass political campaigning in the 1940s and 1950s would not have been possible without the pre-existing global network of communist political activists. The communist movement was also a repository of a rich experience of broad-based political campaigning that had begun with the popular fronts of the 1930s and ran through the anti-fascist struggles of the Second World War. WPC campaigning was the popular front redux.

While the WPC didn't achieve its fundamental goals — nuclear disarmament and world peace — it did successfully resist the extremes of the cold war, particularly during the early, dangerous years of that conflict. It stood as an alternative to the polarising perspective of Zhdanov's two-camps doctrine. The WPC lent credibility to the idea that the Soviet Union could achieve its security and ideological goals through the struggle for peace. After Stalin's death the WPC was instrumental in shifting western public opinion towards a more benign view of the USSR as an international actor. That the Soviet campaign to end the cold war and create a European collective security system came so close to success in 1955 was testimony, at least in part, to the WPC's peace campaigning.¹³

The WPC didn't invent transnational peace campaigning but it did contribute to its reinvention by emphasising the centrality of political struggle — as opposed to moral posturing — to the achievement of world peace. Its bottom-line was pragmatic: only state action could rid the world of the scourge of nuclear weapons. But equally important was the principled value it placed on people-to-people contact as the basis of a global civil society founded on peace. The WPC was a pioneer of what we call today "citizens' diplomacy". There were other groups and movements that pursued similar goals but none that operated on the prolonged, global scale of the WPC.

In her conclusion, Yegorova quotes Ilya Ehrenburg's memoirs: "Looking back, I have no regrets: we were doing something, we achieved something. Thirty of forty years hence, an historian who is today just learning their letters, may possibly devote a chapter, or perhaps a few

¹³ *Roberts G.* "A Chance for Peace? The Soviet Campaign to End the Cold War, 1953-1955". *Cold War International History Project Working Paper*. No. 57, December 2008. Published in Russian as: "Shans Dlya Mira? Sovetskaya Kampaniya v Pol'zu Zaversheniya 'Kholodnoi Voiny', 1953–1955godu" // *Novaya i Novishaya Istoriya*. December 2008. P. 35–75 (*Робертс Дж.* (Великобритания). Шанс для мира? Советская кампания в пользу завершения «холодной войны». 1953–1955 годы // *Новая и новейшая история*. 2008. № 6. С. 35–75).

lines to the peace movement. As a biased, blind person, it is not for me to judge."¹⁴

Elsewhere in his memoirs, Ehrenburg asks: "Who will unravel in the vast tangle of history one slender broken thread, the deeds and the passions of an actor who has vanished from the stage?"¹⁵

Ehrenburg was thinking of his own life, but the same point applies to the story of the World Peace Council. And there is no better guide to its tangled history than Nataliya Yegorova.

¹⁴ *Yegorova N.I.* Op. Cit. P. 307, omits the first sentence of this quote.

¹⁵ *Ehrenburg I.* *Postwar Years: 1945–54*, L., 1966 P. 283.

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МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ В ЭПОХУ ХОЛОДНОЙ ВОЙНЫ

Коллективная монография
к юбилею Н.И. Егоровой

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