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‘Peace’, as a concept and geopolitical reality, was one of the main ideological battlefields of the Cold War in Europe: the United States and the Soviet Union advanced different plans for creating ‘peace’ and order after the Second World War. These plans came with fundamentally different assumptions of the geopolitical, political, social and economic order. From the late 1940s onwards, ‘peace’ also became one of the key words of the Cold War: while ‘the West’ aimed at constructing peace and freedom in conjunction, ‘the East’ regarded peace as the ultimate result of constructing socialism. Whereas in the one case, ‘peace’ meant stability, in the other it meant constant movement and political and social mobilisation.¹ Weston Ullrich’s article powerfully illustrates and analyses the emergence of this view of the world from the perspective of the British government. Ullrich zooms in on the debates about travel restrictions for participants in a congress that the communist Moscow-run World Peace Council planned to hold in Britain in order to highlight the importance of ideological threat perceptions for the emergence and persistence of the ‘security dilemma’ of the Cold War.

Given the ideological importance of ‘peace’ during the Cold War, we still know surprisingly little about the ways in which Western governments came to understand ‘peace’ as an ideological battlefield. Ullrich’s work signals a renewed attention amongst scholars to ideology as a key factor for the emergence, persistence, and duration of the Cold War.² On a methodological level, his is one of the first studies that conceptualises

¹ Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, “Im Kampf um ‘Frieden’ und ‘Freiheit’. Über den Zusammenhang von Ideologie und Sozialkultur im Ost-West-Konflikt,” in: Hans-Günter Hockerts (ed.), *Koordinaten deutscher Geschichte im Zeitalter des Ost-West-Konflikts* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2003), 29-47.

² See the powerful argument by Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind. The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2007).

systematically and consistently British policy making from the perspective of ideology, and his argument skilfully transcends the boundaries between domestic and foreign-policy making. In opening up the debates about 'peace' within the British government in the late 1940s and early 1950s for scholarly analysis, Ullrich has also historicised one of the master narratives about the role and function of peace movements in the Cold War as communist agents.³ His article thus usefully supplements the work by Philip Deery.⁴

The article's title captures wonderfully the ambivalences and paradoxes that lurked behind these struggles for peace in the early Cold War. The British government attempted to "prevent 'peace'," while at the same time trying to argue that its efforts at preventing representations by the communist World Peace Council in Britain helped to save Britain's democracy and "peaceable kingdom" from the wrong kind of activism: . Government officials concluded that "the manner of attack of the peace movement was to manipulate Western freedoms in order to propagate an ideology that would serve as a tool to undermine Western security" (p. 342). Ullrich traces the development of these policies in a number of chronological steps: He begins with the early debates about what the British government proposed to do about the World Peace Council and situates these more broadly in the context of debates going back to the early 1940s. He then traces the emergence of a more acute perception of problems from 1948 onwards, following COMINFORM's declaration in 1947 about the "Cold War" as a struggle between two ideological camps and the emergence of a communist world peace movement. The third section traces the ways in which perceptions of the World Peace Congress (WPC) solidified, when WPC activists met in London to discuss their plans to hold a Congress in Britain. The fourth section gives a more detailed outline of British views of Soviet Cold War strategy and peace propaganda as it emerged from these debates. The article's last two sections highlight the ways in which, in a typical British way, the British government avoided direct confrontations and settled on a policy to revoke the WPC activists' visas just as they arrived at the UK border. Here, Ullrich also stresses that the worry that activists linked to the World Peace Congress might carry out acts of industrial sabotage was a particular concern for British policymakers.

³ See most prominently Gerhard Wettig, "Origins of the Second Cold War. The last Soviet Offensive in the Cold War. Emergence and Development of the Campaign against NATO Euromissiles. 1979-1983," *Cold War History* 9:1 (2009): 90-98. As a critique cf. Holger Nehring and Benjamin Ziemann, "Do all paths lead to Moscow?," *Cold War History*, forthcoming.

⁴ Phillip Deery, "The Dove Flies East. Whitehall, Warsaw and the 1950 world peace congress," *Australian journal of politics and history*, 48:4 (2002): pp. 449-468 and the references in Peter Hennessy, *The Secret State. Whitehall and the Cold War* (Harmondsworth, 2010). A history of the World Peace Congress and its activities still needs to be written. But see the not unproblematic piece by 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 and Change*, 23:3 (1998): 265-311 and the references in Lawrence S. Wittner's three-volume history of the world peace movement: *The struggle against the bomb*, 3 vols. (Stanford 1995-2003).

Throughout, Ullrich presents the British government as reactive and rather cautious, while at the same time ideologically committed. Ullrich carefully draws out the debates within the British government about the appropriate policy and highlights the fact that, interestingly, the hawks sat in the Foreign Office, while the more conciliatory factions belonged to the Home Office. Ullrich also usefully alerts us to the ways in which these debates are reflected in the ways in which these debates appear in the archival record. Fundamentally, the author highlights that the key reason for British policy makers to start thinking about “preventing ‘peace’” was not “the security of Britain,” but rather “the impact that the Second Congress could have upon NATO” (p. 352). This seems to me to highlight much more clearly than other work on British foreign policy during this time period the importance that Britain placed on NATO at this early stage of the Cold War. Conversely, this point emphasises that British policymakers thought less – at least in this instance – of the need to bolster their national position and more of their position within the alliance system. In this, they resembled continental West European countries more than the United States.

Ullrich’s article, therefore, brings out three aspects that deserve further discussion: Following on from (though the article does not cite) Anne Deighton’s work on British policy in the early Cold War, the British government emerges in Ullrich’s formulation as much as a key ideological player in the Cold War as other Western countries at the time.⁵ Second, Ullrich’s article reminds us powerfully that the Cold War did not simply happen. Rather, the foreign-political and ideological mindset or matrix of Cold War thinking emerged only gradually out of the ashes of the Second World War.⁶ Third, the author draws our attention to the “role of ideological perception” for the “creation and maintenance of threat perceptions in the Cold War” (p. 341). While this element comes out very powerfully in a conceptual sense, one would still have liked to hear more about the intellectual and political contexts to which British policies of “preventing ‘peace’” were linked. In particular, it might have been good to have a bit more context on the efforts by the Information Research Department (including prominent Labour Party figures) at around the same time to establish an agenda that revolved around freedom (and cultural freedom in particular) and that sought to link West European reconstruction to allegedly ‘Western’ values of civility and freedom.⁷ In terms of politics, one would have liked to hear more about the ways in which the emergence of a worldview amongst British policymakers that ‘peace’ was dangerous was linked to

⁵ Anne Deighton, *The Impossible Peace. Britain, the Division of Germany, and the Origins of the Cold War* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993).

⁶ Anne Deighton, “Britain and the Cold War, 1945-1955,” in: Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), vol. 1, pp. 112-132.

⁷ Hugh Wilford, *The CIA, the British Left, and the Cold War: Calling the Tune?* (London: Frank Cass, 2003) and my review article “Westernisation – a new paradigm for interpreting West European History in a Cold War context,” *Cold War History* 4:2 (2003/4): 175-190.

experiences of the 1930s and the Second World War: I am thinking here specifically of the debates about a communist ‘fifth column’ in Britain around the time of the Spanish Civil War as well as the debates about appeasement that, in manifold ways, had already tarnished ‘peace’ as a legitimate cause after the Second World War.⁸

Not least, I would have been curious to learn more about whether “preventing ‘peace’” was, at the same time, part of a more aggressive ideological stance that was based on the assumption that the borders of the nation-state had become permeable, as the ‘other side’ in the Cold War no longer seemed to accept one’s own national sovereignty. Put more generally: were the debates about peace in the British government products of a fundamental shift away from views of the international system that was based on the sovereign integrity of states and their mutual acceptance of that integrity towards a system that was based on the fundamental assumption that that integrity was longer sacrosanct? While the United States government at the time phrased this issue in terms of ‘liberty or death,’ the British government appears to have preferred notions of the security of the alliance system in the context of ideological rejuvenation and policing efforts as a response to this problem.⁹ Marc Trachtenberg’s work has shown powerfully how this irreconcilable stand-off between the United States and its partners and the Soviet Union and its allies was fundamentally transformed as part of the settlement over the question of the role of nuclear weapons in international politics.¹⁰ Hence, the question remains whether the Cold War is really conceptualised well “in its most basic form” as a “struggle of ideas” (p. 341), as this perspective has the potential of taking “war” out of the “Cold War”.¹¹ It is a testament to the quality of in-depth scholarship assembled in this very illuminating article that it urges us to reconsider the Cold War in terms of a war over ‘peace’ and thus raises these fundamental questions of European Cold War history in such a powerful way.

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⁸ Cf. Richard Thurlow, “The Evolution of the Mythical British Fifth Column, 1939-46,” *Twentieth Century British History*, 10: 4 (1999): 477-498; Martin Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain, 1914-1945. The Defining of a Faith* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980).

⁹ Anders Stephanson, “Liberty or Death: The Cold War as US Ideology,” in: Odd Arne Westad (ed.), *Reviewing the Cold War* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 81-100.

¹⁰ Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

¹¹ Anders Stephanson, “Fourteen Notes on the very concept of the Cold War,” February 2007, <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/essays/PDF/stephanson-14notes.pdf>.

H-Diplo Article Review

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