

# RUSSELL AND THE COMMUNIST- ALIGNED PEACE MOVEMENT IN THE MID-1950S

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The Soviet Union's successful test of an atomic bomb in 1949 altered Russell's outlook on international politics. But there was a considerable delay between this critical juncture of the Cold War and any perceptible softening of Russell's anti-Communism. Even after a muted optimism about the possibility of improvement in the foreign and domestic policies of the Soviet Union entered Russell's writing, he remained apprehensive about campaigning for peace alongside western Communists and fellow-travellers. He disliked the central thrust of pro-Soviet peace propaganda but regarded ideological diversity as a vital prerequisite for meaningful peace work. Russell also understood that such an approach carried with it a risk that his efforts might be tarnished by association with the Communist-aligned peace movement. His dilemma was eased not by a shift in his own tactics, but by external factors: a crisis within western Communism and the emergence of broadly based movements for peace that could not easily be tainted by their critics as "pro-Soviet".

## INTRODUCTION

When Russell delivered his famous broadcast on "Man's Peril" just before Christmas 1954, he had long since passed through his most belligerent anti-Communist phase. Indeed, his som-

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bre message called for a common humanity somehow to transcend the “titanic struggle between Communism and anti-Communism” (*PfM*, p. 215). But attempts to bridge the Cold War divide faced enormous obstacles at this time. Quite apart from the fact that the nuclear arms race had escalated with the advent of the hydrogen bomb—the theme of Russell’s talk—the broader political context was far from auspicious. In the aftermath of the Korean War the mutual suspicion of the rival blocs, frequently lamented by Russell, was much to the fore. In the West, and especially in the United States, this mistrust had assumed the form of a virulent anti-Communism. Even the occasionally hopeful sign of an impending *détente* would usually be offset by some more ominous development. For example, the Geneva summit meeting of Soviet, American, British and French heads of state in July 1955 generated optimistic expectations from which Russell himself was not immune. But neither the “spirit of Geneva” nor Russell’s optimism endured, as the “oscillatory antagonism”<sup>1</sup> characteristic of superpower relations after Stalin’s death persisted into the 1960s.

When Russell embarked upon his anti-nuclear quest, he confronted not only an unpromising international situation but also a peace movement that was very much on the defensive. In Britain, opposition to nuclear weapons had become extremely isolated or had been diverted from protest against the bomb towards easing the rising tensions of the Cold War. In the early 1950s the only serious resistance to the British nuclear weapons programme was that mounted by the direct action fringe of the most influential pacifist organization from the inter-war period, the now ailing Peace Pledge Union.<sup>2</sup> Proponents of disarmament and other challengers of Cold War orthodoxies had previously achieved some, strictly limited, influence in western countries in the early post-war years. But as Lawrence Wittner concedes in his study of the world nuclear disarmament movement from 1945 to 1953, the various organizations and tendencies—of orthodox pacifists, concerned atomic scientists, “one worlders”, and Communists and fellow-travellers—at most provided a “braking action—albeit an important one—in the nuclear arms race”.<sup>3</sup> Beginning roughly with the outbreak of the Korean

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<sup>1</sup> Fred Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War* (London: Verso, 1983), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> See Richard Taylor, *Against the Bomb: the British Peace Movement, 1958–1965* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1988), pp. 116–20.

<sup>3</sup> *The Struggle against the Bomb*, Vol. 1: *One World or None: a History of the World*

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War (which produced a deep despondency in Russell<sup>4</sup>), this already modest degree of purchase over government policy in the West was further eroded. As Cold War politics reached a new level of intensity, much erstwhile apprehension about the bomb was transformed into support for NATO. The difficulty of sustaining a campaign based largely upon fear also contributed to the decline. Another important factor identified by Wittner, and the one with which this article is centrally concerned, was the vexed relationship between Communist-aligned and independent peace organizations (*One World or None*, pp. 310–29).

#### BANNING THE BOMB: COMMUNIST PEACE PROPAGANDA

The Communist-led peace movement existed under the umbrella of the World Peace Council (WPC), founded at the second World Peace Congress in Warsaw in November 1950 and presided over since that inaugural occasion by the French Communist and Nobel laureate in physics, Frédéric Joliot-Curie. Its Cold War partisanship caused both the Council and its affiliated organizations to be viewed with suspicion by many potential sympathizers in the West. The mistrust was reciprocated, as pro-Soviet groups dismissed orthodox pacifists as defeatist and supporters of world government, including Russell, as stooges of American imperialism.<sup>5</sup> On the vital issue of disarmament, western Communists and fellow-travellers echoed the Soviet line that prohibiting the manufacture, stockpile and use of nuclear weapons was a necessary first step towards peace. The United States and its allies, possessed of a superior nuclear arsenal, were adamant, by contrast, that a proper system of inspection and control had to be instituted before any actual measures of disarmament. In conventional armaments, the Soviet Union had since the early 1950s urged *proportional* cuts of approximately one third to the armed forces of all U.N. Security Council members, whereas the western powers wanted these cuts to be *balanced* in order to offset their inferiority in manpower. The ground staked out by the rival blocs reflected their respective areas of strength and weakness in the military sphere.

A diplomatic deadlock on disarmament had existed more or less since

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*Nuclear Disarmament Movement through 1953* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford U.P., 1993), p. 337.

<sup>4</sup> See Monk, 2: 328–30.

<sup>5</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 293–4.

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the Soviet rejection of the Baruch Plan for international control of atomic energy in 1946. The disagreements were, in any case, a shade unreal, overshadowed as they were by the relentless progression of the arms race during a period of rapid and menacing technological change. Although a UN Disarmament Commission had been set up in January 1952 in an attempt to break the impasse, the “largely ritualistic character” of the talks remained unchanged.<sup>6</sup> Instead of adopting serious negotiating positions, each side simply jockeyed for propaganda advantage over the other. To this end the simplicity and moral force of “banning the bomb” was extremely helpful to the Communist-aligned movement. Its most noteworthy initiative along these lines was the Stockholm Peace Appeal of 1950, a mildly worded petition which carefully eschewed anti-capitalist rhetoric and called for the unconditional prohibition of nuclear weapons. The WPC claimed that it had garnered some 500 million adherents by November 1950. About 80% of these were from inside the eastern bloc, but the appeal was impressively supported in France and Italy as well, and it attracted over a million signatures in Britain, even though the Communist Party there was far weaker than in either continental country.<sup>7</sup> A similar “Appeal against the Preparations for Nuclear War”, followed by similarly puffed-up claims about its success, was launched at the WPC meeting in Vienna in January 1955. When asked to endorse the latter document by the British Peace Committee (an affiliate of the WPC), Russell declined. He did “not think that the destruction of all existing atomic weapons plus an international agreement never to use them would do anything to prevent their use in the next world war. I think the only thing that is of any use is the avoidance of war.”<sup>8</sup>

In fact, Russell repeatedly expressed his opposition to the Communist-aligned movement’s demand for prohibiting nuclear weapons. He defended this position on several grounds. First, he claimed that unless

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<sup>6</sup> David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: the Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939–1956* (New Haven and London: Yale U.P., 1994), p. 340. For a contemporary account, assessed by Russell in an unpublished review (RA1 220.021300), see Jules Moch, *Human Folly: to Disarm or Perish?* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1955), Chaps. xii–xiv.

<sup>7</sup> Wittner, *One World or None*, pp. 182–4; James Hinton, *Protests and Visions: Peace Politics in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989), p. 151.

<sup>8</sup> To William Wainwright, 30 May 1955 (RA1 630). See also Wittner, *The Struggle against the Bomb*, Vol. 2: *Resisting the Bomb: a History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1954–1970* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford U.P., 1997), p. 86.

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such a ban was enforceable, the bombs would simply be manufactured anew after the outbreak of hostilities. Second, and more generally, he believed that a mild improvement of the poisoned Cold War atmosphere must precede the realization of more ambitious diplomatic and disarmament objectives. Third, Russell had little time for expressions of moral repugnance directed at the new weapons of mass destruction. Much more persuasive for him was a utilitarian sense that, contrary to the famous dictum of von Clausewitz, a war fought with modern means could no longer serve as an instrument of policy.

I have not much sympathy with those who regard the bomb as more wicked than previous methods of warfare. From the time of bows and arrows onwards, warfare has always been as wicked as people knew how to make it. What is new since the invention of the bomb is not that warfare has grown more wicked, but that it has ceased to be able to achieve its ends, since it has made it impossible for either side to be victorious in any substantial sense.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, and most importantly in the present context, he was suspicious of “a policy much encouraged by Russia”.<sup>10</sup> Russell elaborated on this point in another unpublished typescript, dated 6 December 1955 and probably prepared either for a broadcast which did not take place or as a private memorandum. Admittedly, these thoughts were set down when he was in a noticeably sombre mood after the failed conference of foreign ministers in Geneva. Nevertheless, they are extremely interesting:

As regards nuclear weapons, the Russians demand that they should be renounced. This would be a very important military gain to the Russians owing

<sup>9</sup> “A Prescription for the World”, *The Saturday Review*, 37, no. 35 (28 Aug. 1954): 40. On this and the other objections raised by Russell to the prohibition of nuclear weapons, see also, for example, “Segreti del domani” [Secrets of the Future], *Corriere della sera*, 22 June 1954, p. 3; “The Most Hopeful Road to Peace”, *Picture Post*, 64, no. 4 (24 July 1954): 14; “The Morality of ‘Hydrogen’ Politics”, *United Asia*, Bombay, 6 (Nov. 1954): 225–6. Von Clausewitz was invoked by Russell in the sense suggested above in “What Neutrals Can Do to Save the World”, *Britain To-day*, no. 223 (Nov. 1954): 7, and “War and the Hydrogen Bomb”, an unpublished typescript prepared in January 1955 for broadcast in German on Radio Sender Freies Berlin (RAI 220.021240). The preceding citations, along with Russell’s other published and unpublished writings from January 1954 to August 1955 will appear in *Man’s Peril, 1954–55*, ed. Andrew G. Bone, Vol. 28 of *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell* (Routledge, forthcoming 2002).

<sup>10</sup> “Policy and the Hydrogen Bomb”, typescript, 11 and 13 Jan. 1955 (RAI 220.021230).

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to Russian superiority in man power and to their propinquity to Europe. I cannot think of any equal compensating gain to the West except the evacuation by Russian forces of all the Satellite States and the substitution in those States of Governments created by free election. This, of course, the Russians would never agree to. Meanwhile, it is to the existence of nuclear weapons on both sides that we owe the preservation of peace.<sup>11</sup>

With its implicit validation of the strategic doctrine of deterrence, the concluding sentence of this passage strikes a somewhat discordant note. When Russell had debated nuclear strategy on BBC radio nine months previously, he had exhibited rather less confidence than had the two other guests in the deterrent effect supposedly exerted by the possession of nuclear weapons.<sup>12</sup> Yet he was obviously prepared to acknowledge the force of such thinking on occasion. “I must add”, he had written in September 1954, “that I do not now, any more than at an earlier time, advocate either appeasement or a slackening in re-armament, since either might encourage the Communist Powers in aggressive designs and would therefore make war more likely.”<sup>13</sup> According to Alan Ryan, Russell’s “argumentative record” on nuclear weapons, disarmament and international security from 1954 to 1960 “is all of a piece.”<sup>14</sup> Certainly, he consistently advocated as an ultimate solution a world government backed by a single “armed force possessed of a monopoly of the major weapons of war”.<sup>15</sup> But in other respects the Russell of 1954—still prepared to urge vigilance on the part of NATO, reluctant even to press for the cessation of nuclear weapons testing—was radically different from Russell the unilateralist of the CND years. The evidence suggests that his transition from Cold War scourge of Communism in the late 1940s to anti-nuclear campaigner in the late 1950s was not entirely seamless.

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<sup>11</sup> “The Dilemma of the West” (RAI 220.021410). On the foreign ministers’ conference, see below.

<sup>12</sup> “Strategy and the Hydrogen Bomb”, BBC mimeograph-transcript (RAI 220.021260). Appearing with Russell on this *London Forum* discussion, recorded on 24 February 1955 and broadcast on the General Overseas Service three days later, were the military historian and authority on contemporary strategic issues, Cyril Falls, and the journalist and former junior Labour minister, Aidan Crawley.

<sup>13</sup> “1948 Russell vs. 1954 Russell”, *The Saturday Review*, 37, no. 42 (16 Oct. 1954): 25.

<sup>14</sup> *Bertrand Russell: a Political Life* (London: Allen Lane the Penguin P., 1988), p. 189.

<sup>15</sup> “The Danger to Mankind”, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 10 (Jan. 1954): 9.

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RUSSELL AND RUSSIA:  
FROM CONFRONTATION TO COEXISTENCE

The real danger for the non-aligned peace movement was that, owing to the prevailing anti-Communist hysteria, it might be tarnished by association with pro-Soviet elements. As a result, many individuals and groups studiously avoided contact with Communists and fellow-travellers. If taken to extremes, however, this determination to remain free of Communist influence tended to submerge all other political objectives. This was one dilemma faced by Russell as he responded to the first stirrings of a new wave of protest generated by the Americans' hydrogen-bomb test at Bikini atoll in March 1954.<sup>16</sup>

Russell's position was not so uncomfortable as it might have been. Unlike so many other non-Communist intellectuals on the left, the author of *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* (1920) did not have an embarrassing fellow-travelling past to disavow. He was "in that almost unique position", the independent Marxist scholar, Isaac Deutscher, had told him, "that in writing on the Russian Revolution and Stalinism you might justifiably indulge in a certain amount of self-righteousness and say 'I told you so'."<sup>17</sup> In addition to his longstanding record of opposition to the Soviet regime, Russell had assumed an orthodox, if not aggressive, Cold War posture in the immediate post-war years. The explosion of the first Soviet atomic bomb on 29 August 1949 slowly changed Russell's perspective on international politics. Prior to that landmark date of the Cold War, however, he had seemed willing—at least in his private utterances—to coerce the Soviet Union into accepting some form of international control over the world's atomic energy resources. Quite how far he was prepared to go in order to achieve this end has become the subject of a lively debate which need not detain us here.<sup>18</sup> Whatever the nuances of Russell's position, his views evidently

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<sup>16</sup> See Wittner, *Resisting the Bomb*, Chap. 1, *passim*; A. J. R. Groom, *British Thinking about Nuclear Weapons* (London: Frances Pinter, 1974), pp. 168–70; Robert A. Divine, *Blowing on the Wind: the Nuclear Test Ban Debate, 1954–1960* (New York: Oxford U.P., 1978), pp. 18–22.

<sup>17</sup> 24 March 1954 (RA1 410, *The Observer*).

<sup>18</sup> Most of the relevant literature is referred to in Ray Perkins, Jr., "Bertrand Russell and Preventive War", *Russell*, n.s. 14 (1994): 135–53. The issue has been appraised more recently by Monk (2: 298–306), Nicholas Griffin (*SLBR*, 2: 426–8), and David Blitz in

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made him sufficiently respectable, for example, to be invited by the Foreign Office during the Berlin airlift “to help”, as he put it, “to persuade the people of Berlin that it was worth while to resist Russian attempts to get the Allies out of Berlin.”<sup>19</sup>

The development of a Soviet atomic bomb signalled a shift in Russell’s thinking about the Cold War. In other respects, however, his attitudes towards the Soviet Union and Communism remained fundamentally unaltered. It is necessary to review these attitudes before we begin to assess his approach to political cooperation with Communists and fellow-travellers. Early in 1955 Russell explained to a private correspondent that he had “taken a great deal of trouble to sift truth from propaganda in regard to Communist countries and I am left with a conviction that Communist régimes are very bad. But I no longer think that much purpose is served by saying so in public.”<sup>20</sup> Yet Russell *was* still prepared on occasion to place his views about Communism and the Soviet Union on record. The previous April (1954) he had written a short piece which was published almost two years later in a volume of ten essays entitled *Why I Oppose Communism* (1956). The pamphlet was part of the Background Books series for which Russell had written three times already—once in a similar symposium, *Why Communism Must Fail* (1951), and twice as single author, of the booklets *What Is Freedom?* (1952) and *What Is Democracy?* (1953). The series was subsidized by the British Foreign Office, perhaps from the hope that the reasoned anti-Communist arguments of authors such as Russell would reach a mass audience.<sup>21</sup>

Russell’s contribution summarized the case against Marxist political economy and its philosophical underpinnings that he had first stated in *German Social Democracy* (1896). Equally if not more familiar is his critique of Soviet tyranny, especially under Stalin. As dictated initially, on 30 April 1954, Russell’s text contained the following:

an unpublished paper delivered on 26 May 2001 at the Annual Meeting of the Bertrand Russell Society (“Did Russell Really Advocate Preventive War against the Soviet Union?”).

<sup>19</sup> *Auto.*, 3: 20.

<sup>20</sup> To Mr. Beer, 1 Feb. 1955 (RA2 750).

<sup>21</sup> See Stephen Hayhurst, “Russell’s Anti-Communist Rhetoric before and after Stalin’s Death”, *Russell*, n.s. 11 (1991): 71–2.

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It is possible that in course of time the Russian régime may become more liberal. But, although this is possible, it is very far from certain. In the meantime, all those who value not only art and science but a sufficiency of daily bread and freedom from the fear that a careless word by their children to a schoolteacher may condemn them to forced labour in a Siberian wilderness, must do what lies in their power to preserve in their own countries a less servile and more prosperous manner of life. (RA1 220.020960)

This passage appeared as above in *Why I Oppose Communism*,<sup>22</sup> but when Russell revised the essay for reprinting later in 1956 in *Portraits from Memory* his unequivocal denunciation of the Soviet regime in the long last sentence was prefaced by a slightly more hopeful projection of the prospects for internal reform. By 1956 it was not merely “possible that in the course of time Russia may become more liberal.” Rather, there were “signs” that it “will” move in this direction.<sup>23</sup> Russell had also altered the title of the dictated manuscript (“Why I Am an Anti-Communist”) to the less politically charged variant used in *Portraits* (“Why I Am Not a Communist”). These emendations, plus two others marked on the Allen and Unwin page proofs of the book,<sup>24</sup> achieved on a smaller scale the same effect as the revisions to *What Is Freedom?* and *What Is Democracy?* that were incorporated into *Fact and Fiction* (1961). “Many of the general criticisms of the Russian regime were revised to retrospective condemnations of Stalinism”, concludes Stephen Hayhurst in his meticulous textual comparison of the first editions with the reprinted versions of the two earlier Background Books.<sup>25</sup>

This small piece of textual evidence supports Russell’s autobiographical commentary on his changing political perspective in the 1950s: “I was brought around to being more favourable to Communism by the death

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<sup>22</sup> Under the title “The Philosopher”, in *Why I Oppose Communism* (London: Phoenix House, 1956), pp. 11–14.

<sup>23</sup> *PfM*, p. 213. An interim reading of this sentence had appeared already in the *News Chronicle*. In this earlier revised version of the essay there were “some signs that in the course of time Russia may become more liberal” (“The Marxist Fraud”, 26 March 1956, p. 4).

<sup>24</sup> RA1 210.006888–F1. The words “comes” and “can” were changed to the past tense in the following sentence: “I am completely at a loss to understand how it comes about that some people who are both humane and intelligent can find something to admire in the vast slave camp produced by Stalin.”

<sup>25</sup> “Russell’s Anti-Communist Rhetoric”, p. 78.

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of Stalin in 1953 and by the Bikini test in 1954; and I came gradually to attribute, more and more, the danger of nuclear war to the West, to the United States of America, and less to Russia" (*Auto.*, 3: 20). But the transformation was slow and uneven and driven far more by a growing hostility to the United States than a more benign feeling about the Soviet Union. His immediate response to Stalin's death had been not at all hopeful and commenced with a pessimistic prediction that "The end of Stalin is not, I fear, the end of Stalinism."<sup>26</sup> For a short time he was impressed by Soviet Premier Malenkov's public statement (delivered in March 1954) that another world war, "with the present means of warfare, means the destruction of world civilization."<sup>27</sup> But this frank acknowledgement of the nuclear peril was challenged by other powerful figures in the post-Stalin leadership collective, who countered with the more conventional line that nuclear war would ultimately lead only to the collapse of capitalist civilization. Malenkov's alleged defeatism seriously weakened his position politically, and in February 1955 he was forced to resign. At this point Russell still hesitated to accept the "optimistic forecast" of impending liberalization in the Soviet Union issued by Isaac Deutscher in a collection of essays reviewed by Russell.<sup>28</sup>

#### COOPERATION OR EXCLUSION?

Russell's thinking about the Soviet Union in general is obviously relevant to our more narrowly focused topic. But we have not yet reached the heart of the matter—the degree of contact with Communists and fellow-travellers in the peace movement that he deemed it either necessary or wise to cultivate. He explained his thinking about this in reply to one of numerous supportive letters received in response to "Man's Peril".

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<sup>26</sup> "Stalin's Legacy", typescript, 8 March 1953 (RA2 220.148003), published with omissions as "The Other Fellow's Point of View", *The Wichita Sunday Beacon*, Wichita, Kan., 21 June 1953, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Herbert Dinerstein, *War and the Soviet Union: Nuclear Weapons and the Revolution in Soviet Military and Political Thinking*, rev. ed. (New York and London: Praeger, 1962), p. 71. See also Russell, "A Prescription for the World", *The Saturday Review*, 37, no. 35 (28 Aug. 1954): 11; "The Hydrogen Bomb and World Government", *The Listener*, 52 (22 July 1954): 133–4.

<sup>28</sup> "Marxism and Russia", *The Observer*, London, 8 May 1955, p. 16, a review of Deutscher's *Heretics and Renegades, and Other Essays* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1955).

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This particular correspondent, E. M. Johnston, had emphasized the importance of securing further publicity for Russell's Christmas broadcast and assumed that he would "have no objections to any organization that is willing to cooperate, including the *Daily Worker* and the Communist Party." Russell replied thus:

As a matter of principle I have no objection to any organization willing to cooperate. Indeed the cooperation of Communists might be especially valuable. But I should not like the whole thing to appear as a Communist move, or as likely to appear more useful to Communists than their opponents. I think therefore that I should wish to make sure of the non-Communist support before approaching the *Daily Worker*.<sup>29</sup>

Yet Russell did not adhere consistently to this tactical advice. On 23 June 1955 the text of a speech prepared by him was read *in absentia* to the World Assembly for Peace in Helsinki. The gathering had been convened by the World Peace Council, and Russell's contribution to it was delivered by William Wainwright, a delegate from the affiliated British Peace Committee. Although the latter body did include some Quaker and other non-partisan pacifist representation, the British Peace Committee was closely identified with the Communist Party of Great Britain. By Russell's own admission a few years later, the Helsinki event had been "sponsored chiefly by Communists" (*HMF*, p. 53). More than this, he had even been prepared to allow Wainwright, secretary of the British Peace Committee, to abridge his original and much lengthier submission for Helsinki, which seems to have been taken from "The Road to Peace", an as yet unpublished paper that appeared later in a collection entitled *The Bomb: Challenge and Answer* (1955).<sup>30</sup>

Russell was probably satisfied that the extent of the non-Communist representation at Helsinki justified his own participation. But he re-

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<sup>29</sup> Johnston to Russell, 12 Jan. 1955 (RA1 600); Russell to Johnston, 15 Jan. 1955 (RA2 750).

<sup>30</sup> Ed. Gilbert McAllister (London: B. T. Batsford), pp. 47–68. Evidently Russell was sufficiently pleased with the outcome of this editing to print the shorter version in *Portraits from Memory* largely unaltered except for the omission of part of a passage from "Man's Peril" inserted by Wainwright (see Wainwright to Russell, 20 June 1955 [RA1 600]; "Steps towards Peace", *PfM*, pp. 221–7, first published in full in *World Assembly for Peace* [Vienna: World Council for Peace, 1955], pp. 79–84).

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mained wary about cooperation outside the sphere of peace work narrowly defined lest he give, as he explained in turning down an invitation from the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR, “an appearance of more agreement with Communism than I in fact feel.”<sup>31</sup> The British-Soviet Friendship Society was another organization which Russell regarded with a certain degree of suspicion. “I think the society is too definitely pro-Communist for me”, he wrote in declining an offer from the Richmond and Barnes branch to serve as its Honorary President.<sup>32</sup> In August 1955 Russell was invited to address a meeting in London held under the auspices of the Society and timed to coincide with the visit to Britain of a small Soviet delegation. The scheduled date, 5 November 1955, was also the eve of the 38th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. He was asked to “make a short statement on the possibilities of peaceful coexistence and co-operation between Britain and the Soviet Union in the light of recent developments.” Although intrigued, Russell harboured reservations which he outlined in his reply:

I think it is of the utmost importance that we should all learn to live at peace with each other and I should be glad to express this opinion. At the same time I have the same kind of opposition to Communism and Communist Governments that I have to other political creeds and systems with which I disagree—e.g. Franco and his Government. If there were a proposal to go to war with Spain, I would willingly attend the meeting to oppose it but I would not attend a meeting intended to make people think well of Franco and his Government. My attitude towards the Soviet Government is similar. You say in your letter that you hope to have among the speakers representatives of all political views. I infer that the meeting is not intended to express approval of Communism, but I should be grateful if you could give me further information.<sup>33</sup>

After another approach, Russell did agree to deliver a short speech, but he withdrew this offer when the event was rescheduled for a day later. He did supply the organizers with what he hoped was a “suitable” message to be read in his absence. This rather innocuous statement simply expressed hope for a successful meeting and that it “will contribute to the great work of preserving the atmosphere generated by the meeting of

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<sup>31</sup> To Mr. Richnell, 5 Oct. 1955 (RA2 740).

<sup>32</sup> To Miss Reis, 14 March 1956 (RA2 750).

<sup>33</sup> Pat Sloan to Russell, 24 Aug. 1955; Russell to Sloan, 1 Sept. 1955 (RA1 740).

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the Big Four at Geneva.”<sup>34</sup> According to the *Daily Worker’s* upbeat report of the proceedings at the Stoll Theatre, Russell’s message and several others were delivered to a “packed audience” by the so-called “Red Dean” (of Canterbury), Hewlett Johnson.<sup>35</sup>

In the autumn of 1955 Russell also continued his association with the pro-Soviet British Peace Committee. The occasion was a public meeting at Central Hall, Westminster, on 21 October 1955, staged by the committee in advance of the conference of American, Soviet, British and French foreign ministers in Geneva from 27 October to 16 November 1955. The statesmen were convening in order to tackle some of the substantive issues that had been broached at the summit of heads of state in July—namely, Germany and European security, disarmament and East–West contacts. Russell had been asked to deliver a speech and also to endorse a message addressed to the four foreign ministers. This statement was to be formally presented to the audience at Central Hall and was co-signed by the nutritionist, humanitarian and internationalist, Lord Boyd Orr, the Nobel laureate in physics, Cecil Powell (a signatory of the Russell–Einstein manifesto), and the General Secretary of the Building Trades Workers Union, Sir Richard Coppock. As a press release from the British Peace Committee made plain, the message was intended to impress upon the assembled statesmen “the sense of urgency felt by all people that there shall be a fruitful outcome to their discussions.”<sup>36</sup> It had been written (possibly by the committee’s secretary, William Wainwright) very much in the spirit of the Russell–Einstein manifesto, to which direct reference was made.<sup>37</sup> It certainly contained nothing to which the supporters of the manifesto would have likely objected.

The wisdom of Russell’s collaboration with the British Peace Committee, however, was questioned by some of his political allies. Patrick Armstrong, clerk to the Parliamentary Group for World Government (PGWG), which Russell had joined earlier in the year, had alerted him to the dangers. But the latter discounted the possibility “that an impression may be given that I am fellow-travelling”.

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<sup>34</sup> Russell to Sloan, with enclosure, 28 Sept. 1955 (RA1 740).

<sup>35</sup> “58 Labour MPs Greet the Soviet Union’s Big Day”, 7 Nov. 1955, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> 2 Oct. 1955 (RA1 600).

<sup>37</sup> There is a copy of this statement, dated 21 Oct. 1955, at RA3 Rec. Acq. 700.

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My speech will counteract this impression for those who hear it or who see it adequately reported. Moreover, the West has been guilty of a bad blunder in allowing Communists to appear as advocates of peace, and if we are to advocate co-existence effectively we must not leave this impression unchallenged.<sup>38</sup>

Armstrong's apprehensions had been forwarded to Russell by Lord Boyd Orr, president of the PGWG. He too was troubled by the political company that Russell was keeping. Although an official sponsor of the event, Boyd Orr "was not aware that the Communists had any part in the meeting.... Nor I suppose did you." The eminent scientist had never intended to attend the gathering, but if Russell was determined to deliver his address, he would "continue to be a sponsor for *you* but not for any communist organisation."<sup>39</sup> Immediately upon receipt of this letter, Russell replied to Boyd Orr in justification of his involvement with the enterprise.

When I speak I shall make it clear that I am unalterably opposed to Communism but that I do not think either its friends or its enemies should promote their cause by war. More generally, I think that if we are to advocate co-existence we must no longer treat Communists and fellow-travellers as pariahs. I do not see that when I speak as I intend to do I shall be used by the Communists any more than [*sic*] they will be used by me. Moreover, the doctrine for which I stand, namely that a great war cannot now serve the interests of either Communists or anti-Communists, is one which it is vitally necessary to spread amongst Communists and it seems to me imperative to seize every opportunity of doing so. (18 Oct. 1955, RA1 630)

Russell was true to his word when he actually spoke, for he was quoted thus in *Peace News*: "I myself am definitely opposed to Communism, at any rate as far as the West is concerned ... and should be sorry to see parliamentary democracy replaced by dictatorship."<sup>40</sup> The optimistic notes of anticipation struck by Russell in his speech, as well as in the jointly signed message, were soon dashed by the collapse of the negotiations at Geneva. In a reply to the message, John Foster Dulles blamed the lack of progress on the belligerence of a speech to the confer-

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<sup>38</sup> Russell to Armstrong, 18 Oct. 1955 (RA1 630).

<sup>39</sup> Boyd Orr to Russell, 18 Oct. 1955 (RA1 570).

<sup>40</sup> Margaret Tims, "A Message to the Foreign Ministers", *Peace News*, no. 1,009 (28 Oct. 1955): 1.

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ence by Foreign Minister Molotov on 8 November.<sup>41</sup> Russell had decidedly little respect for the American Secretary of State but felt, he informed Wainwright on 15 November, “reluctantly compelled to agree” with this judgment.<sup>42</sup>

#### RUSSELL’S ANTI-ANTI-COMMUNISM

Overall, Russell seems to have decided that the benefits of cooperation with pro-Soviet elements outweighed the risks of being labelled as an apologist for Communism. He occupied the middle ground between those non-aligned activists and organizations who participated willingly in Communist-led ventures and those who steadfastly opposed such alliances. The most notable representative of the former tendency was probably the American Nobel laureate in chemistry, Linus Pauling, who consistently argued that “the broadest possible constituency should be mobilized against the nuclear arms race.”<sup>43</sup> Pauling’s position, however, was very much that of the minority. The constraints against his inclusive approach were considerable, particularly in the United States. For example, after the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) was founded in November 1957, the organization repeatedly rejected overtures from the World Peace Council.<sup>44</sup> Such vigilance, however, might easily be taken to extremes, with the exclusion of Communists and fellow-travellers being regarded as an end in itself—overriding all others.

Russell was only too aware of this problem as it had arisen in the United States under the shadow of McCarthyism, although more in relation to academic and other freedoms than peace campaigning as such. Like other liberal critics of the phenomenon, he thought that McCarthyism stoked the very cause that its adherents so intemperately attacked. He especially resented the guilt-by-association ploy. In April 1953, for example, he learned that the American Committee for Cultural

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<sup>41</sup> Dulles to Russell, 10 Nov. 1955 (RA1 650, U.S.A.).

<sup>42</sup> RA2 750, although in an unpublished letter to the editor of an unidentified newspaper (typescript, 17 Nov. 1955 [RA1 220.021391]), Russell held all parties accountable for the failure of the summit.

<sup>43</sup> Wittner, *Resisting the Bomb*, p. 92.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

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Freedom (ACCF) had smeared as pro-Communist a symposium on the Bill of Rights convened by the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee (ECCL). This action caused Russell considerable disquiet as he was an Honorary President of the ACCF's parent body, the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), and his name was displayed prominently on the letterhead of its American affiliate (*BRA*, 2: 58–9). Russell's initial attraction to an international movement of the anti-Communist left is not difficult to comprehend. He probably had looked for the "liberal" Congress to check the erosion of the civil liberties that he saw as threatened. He now tried to repudiate his association with the ACCF but was assuaged, temporarily, by assurances that he was a sponsor only of the international organization, not the autonomous American body.

His relationship with the Congress for Cultural Freedom remained bothersome, however, largely because of the aggressive anti-Communism of the ACCF.<sup>45</sup> Fresh difficulties arose the following year after the latter group again attacked the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee. Russell had been asked by the ECCL to provide a short tribute to Einstein for a proposed conference on academic freedom at Princeton University, timed to coincide with the great scientist's 75th birthday. On 9 March, however, Russell received a cable from the ACCF urging him to "publicly withdraw support from this undertaking which does no honor to Einstein's great name" and had been arranged by a group which had "discredited itself by refusing [to] acknowledge suppression [of] civil liberties [and] academic freedom behind Iron Curtain". Russell refused to comply.

I do not see any reason why I should withdraw the message that I sent since it only expressed admiration for Einstein, which I would express to the devil himself if asked to do so. I cannot, at this distance, verify the accusations and counter-accusations which come to me across the Atlantic. Everybody knows that I am at least as hostile to communism as Senator McCarthy, and I should be very sorry to think that admiration for Einstein is now considered in America the mark of a fellow-traveller. (*BRA*, 2: 64)

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<sup>45</sup> See Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy: the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe* (New York: Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1989), pp. 165–8.

He was not prepared to discount what was being said simply because of who was saying it; he remained resolutely anti-anti-Communist.

Two years later Russell was again taken to task by the ACCF when he publicly protested the conviction and continuing imprisonment of Morton Sobell, a co-accused with Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in the sensational “atom spies” trial of March 1951. The dim view of American criminal justice presented by Russell in his letters to *The Manchester Guardian* drew the ire of a number of Americans.<sup>46</sup> A one-time friend, the former Marxist philosopher, Sidney Hook, objected particularly to Russell’s use of Corliss Lamont “as an authority on the state of political freedom in the United States”.<sup>47</sup> This independently wealthy scion of an influential American banking family was the patron of numerous progressive causes through a long public life. He was also an inveterate fellow-traveller who even many years later defended his attitude of “critical sympathy” towards the Soviet Union.<sup>48</sup> When Hook forwarded to Russell an old apology for Stalinism by Lamont, Russell countered by claiming, simply, that “As regards facts in America, I do not find him unreliable.”<sup>49</sup> Indeed, Russell had agreed to contribute a foreword to the British edition of Lamont’s recently published book about civil liberties in the United States, *Freedom Is as Freedom Does* (1956). This decision was deplored by another stalwart of the anti-Communist American left, Norman Thomas, Socialist Party leader and, like Hook, a director of the ACCF. Writing for *The New Leader*, one of the principal organs of “Cold War liberalism” in the United States, Thomas expressed his disgust at Russell’s endorsement of a work which, in his opinion, undermined “individuals and organizations whose services to freedom have been at least as effective as his [Lamont’s] own, and which have not, like his, been compromised by the application of a double standard.”<sup>50</sup>

Russell was sensitive to the possibility of being manipulated by Com-

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<sup>46</sup> “The Sobell Case”, 26 March 1956, p. 6; “The Case of Morton Sobell”, 5 April 1956, p. 6; reprinted in Ray Perkins, Jr., ed., *Yours Faithfully, Bertrand Russell: a Lifelong Fight for Peace, Justice, and Truth in Letters to the Editor* (Chicago and La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 2001), pp. 261–5. (Russell’s second letter quotes from some of the more angry responses to his initial intervention.)

<sup>47</sup> 5 June 1956; quoted in *BRA*, 2: 81.

<sup>48</sup> *Yes to Life: Memoirs of Corliss Lamont* (New York: Horizon P., 1981), p. 39.

<sup>49</sup> 8 June 1956; quoted in *SLBR*, 2: 500.

<sup>50</sup> “An Open Letter to Bertrand Russell”, *New Leader*, 40, no. 1 (7 Jan. 1957): 15.

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munists but was confident that this could be prevented. His American critic, Sidney Hook, however, thought that advantage was being taken of Russell's name in precisely this fashion. Responding to an interview with Russell in the *National Guardian*,<sup>51</sup> a radical New York weekly, Hook told Russell that "the Communists' build-up of you in their press is motivated neither by genuine regard for you nor by agreement with your ideals" (18 June 1956; *BRA*, 2: 86). This "Communist *National Guardian*" piece, continued Hook, was evidence of how Russell was "being used—and effectively used—as a weapon in the Communists' political war against the United States." Presumably the former had in mind the disparaging comments made by Russell to his interviewer about the ACCF as well as the provocative assertion that in the sphere of civil liberties there "seemed to be less and less difference between America and Russia" (*ibid.*).

#### THE RUSSELL–EINSTEIN MANIFESTO AND PUGWASH

This brief assessment of Russell's engagement with American anti-Communism may seem tangential to our primary concern. But he believed that the reactionary drift of American political and cultural life was seriously imperilling the prospects for peace. In one of his gloomier moments, shortly after the inauguration of President Eisenhower, Russell predicted to his American literary agent, Julie Medlock, that American policy under the influence of right-wing Republicanism "will, I fear, lead to World War before long" (17 Feb. 1953; *BRA*, 2: 57). Early in 1955 Russell had suggested that a degree of Communist involvement with independent peace activities "might be especially valuable".<sup>52</sup> As seen already, he reiterated this sentiment on several other occasions. An especially crucial influence on his tactical thinking was the initiative already taking shape early in 1955 and which achieved global renown as the Russell–Einstein Manifesto.

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<sup>51</sup> "An Interview with Bertrand Russell", *National Guardian*, 8, no. 35 (18 June 1956): 6, conducted by Cedric Belfrage, the self-described "editor-in-exile" (to Russell, 11 April 1956) of this "progressive newsweekly" published from New York. In August 1955 the English-born Belfrage had been deported to Britain on account of his alleged membership of the American Communist Party in the late 1930s.

<sup>52</sup> To E. M. Johnston, 12 Jan. 1955 (RA2 750; also quoted above).

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The drafting of this declaration, Russell's efforts to obtain signatures to it, as well as his formulation of the follow-up plans which grew into Pugwash, all brought the issue of Communist involvement to the fore. At first, Russell was sceptical about the value of a scientists' memorandum on nuclear warfare, feeling "sure that it would carry no weight in Russia unless signed only by Communists and Fellow Travellers."<sup>53</sup> However, he quickly grew more amenable to the idea. In an appreciative letter about "Man's Peril", dated 31 January 1955, Frédéric Joliot-Curie had asked Russell to support an international scientific conference entrusted with preparing such a statement. Russell preferred "a declaration by a small number of eminent men". He probably thought that too few western scientists would be drawn to a congress held under the auspices of the World Federation of Scientific Workers (WFSW), a notoriously fellow-travelling body of which Joliot-Curie himself was President. At the same time, however, Russell told the Communist Joliot-Curie that it was "very important that the signatories should have no common political complexion...."<sup>54</sup> He also set great store by this point in his initial approach to Einstein a few weeks later. "Perhaps politically tinged people like Joliot could be included", responded the venerated physicist, "so long as they could be offset by such people from the other side." Regarding the content of his proposed declaration, Russell wrote Einstein on 25 February that he envisaged something which, "after pointing out, briefly and soberly, the universal suicidal folly of a thermo-nuclear war ... should go on to suggest that Governments which are uncommitted should approach both sides in an attempt to get them simultaneously to agree that war cannot serve the purposes of either."<sup>55</sup>

The earliest version of the manifesto is an extensively emended typescript copy of "Man's Peril".<sup>56</sup> The paragraph about renouncing nuclear weapons, present in the manifesto as issued,<sup>57</sup> was inserted by

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<sup>53</sup> To Nathalie A. Duddington, 14 Dec. 1954 (RA2 750).

<sup>54</sup> Russell to Joliot-Curie, 4 Feb. 1955 (RA1 600).

<sup>55</sup> Russell to Einstein, 11 Feb. 1955 (SLBR, 2: 488-9); Einstein to Russell, 16 Feb. 1955; Russell to Einstein, 25 Feb. 1955 (RA1 600), published in *Einstein on Peace*, ed. Otto Nathan and Heinz Norden (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), pp. 624-8. The original of the Einstein quotation reads: "Vielleicht könnte man sogar politisch gefärbte Personen wie Joliot hinzunehmen, wenn es gelänge, diese durch solche Personen aus dem andern Lager zu kompensieren."

<sup>56</sup> RA1 220.020740.

<sup>57</sup> "Although an agreement to renounce nuclear weapons as part of a general

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hand into this first prepublication text. The addition was somewhat curious because of Russell's explicit disapproval of the policy. As Russell admitted to Hermann Muller, however, he had felt obliged "to conciliate Communist opinion" (14 May 1955, RA1 600). The American geneticist signed the manifesto, but only after Russell allowed his reservations about this passage to be stated in a footnote to the text. Some further cuts and changes were introduced to the draft that was sent to Einstein and the seventeen other proposed signatories on 5 April 1955. This version now made no mention of any neutral commission of inquiry into the effects of nuclear war<sup>58</sup> and now heralded in its opening paragraph the convening of a scientific congress "to appraise the perils that have arisen as a result of the development of weapons of mass destruction...."<sup>59</sup> These revisions were the fruit of intervention by Joliot-Curie, who presumably wanted the Communist viewpoint better reflected in the final draft. Accordingly, he had advised Russell on 2 March to confer with his principal contact in the British scientific community, Eric Burhop, a physicist at University College London, and a leader of the Association of Scientific Workers, the British section of the WFSW. The two men met on 1 April and arrived ultimately "at a statement involving no bias either to the right or to the left". Russell had been prepared to give way on certain points, he told Joliot-Curie two months later, because of his desire "to build a bridge between opposing

reduction of armaments would not afford an ultimate solution, it would serve certain important purposes. First: any agreement between East and West is to the good, in so far as it tends to diminish tension. Second: the abolition of thermo-nuclear weapons, if each side believed that the other had carried it out sincerely, would lessen the fear of a sudden attack in the style of Pearl Harbour, which at present keeps both sides in a state of nervous apprehension. We should therefore welcome such an agreement, though only as a first step." There are numerous published versions of the manifesto: see B&R, 2: 194-5.

<sup>58</sup> Russell had been trying for some time to persuade the Indian Government to sponsor such a report and, to this end, had even managed to meet Nehru early in February 1955, during the conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London. Encouraged by this contact "to hope that the outcome may be such as we can welcome", Russell was careful to tell Einstein that any declaration by distinguished scientists merely "runs parallel" with steps to be taken by India (25 Feb. 1955, RA1 600). Indeed, until the Indian Government backed away from this undertaking late in March, Russell seems to have regarded the latter scheme as the more promising.

<sup>59</sup> "Draft to be sent to Scientists" (RA1 600). The opening paragraph was written in another hand (possibly Eric Burhop's)—but emended by Russell—on the verso of fol. 1 of this six-leaf typescript carbon, dated 2 April 1955.

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camps....” Indeed, without the support of Communists and non-Communists alike, he continued, “a large part of the purpose of the statement is lost.”<sup>60</sup> But room for further manoeuvre had been closed suddenly by Einstein’s death on 18 April. The world’s most famous scientific figure had signed the draft declaration in perhaps “the last public act of his life”,<sup>61</sup> and Russell, not surprisingly, wanted to maintain Einstein’s posthumous association with their joint peace initiative. By so doing, however, the substance of the statement could not now be altered without withdrawing the latter’s signature. Joliot-Curie had agreed about this in principle when he met Russell on 21 April in Paris, but he then tried to impose additional, substantive changes on the document until the very eve of its publication.<sup>62</sup>

Quite apart from the fact that such extensive emendation would have necessitated the removal of Einstein’s signature, replies were already trickling in from the other scientists to whom the 5 April draft had been circulated. At the press conference where the manifesto was officially released, Russell claimed that “None of the answers I have received were unsympathetic.”<sup>63</sup> However, three of those approached had voiced distinctly anti-Communist sentiments in explanation of their unwillingness to sign. An American Nobel laureate in chemistry, Harold Urey, admitted to Russell his “dislike for some of the people on your list. I do not object to the Communists from communistic countries, but I dislike Communists from the democratic countries.” The Swedish physicist, Manne Siegbahn, stated the anti-Communist thrust of his objections even more plainly: “My hesitation to sign a resolution of this kind is due to the fact that the eastern side has misused ‘peace resolution’ and ‘peace-conference’ for propagandistic purposes, which in reality have very little to do with the work for a lasting peace.”<sup>64</sup> Max Born, meanwhile, expressed such reservations about collaboration with Joliot-Curie and Cecil Powell (the British physicist)—“because they are known all

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<sup>60</sup> Russell to Joliot-Curie, 5 April 1955; 17 June 1955 (*SLBR*, 2: 492).

<sup>61</sup> Russell, *Papers* 11: 594.

<sup>62</sup> See *Auto.*, 3: 70; Monk, 2: 337–8; Clark, p. 541.

<sup>63</sup> “Press Conference by the Earl Russell at Caxton Hall, Westminster on Saturday, 9th July, 1955”. Typed transcript (RA1 600); sound recording as *Notice to the World* (Audio Masterworks, 1955).

<sup>64</sup> Urey to Russell, 7 July 1955; Siegbahn to Russell, 30 June 1955 (RA1 600).

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over the western world to be communists”—that Russell seems to have construed his adhesion to the manifesto as a refusal.<sup>65</sup>

Born was the co-sponsor with Otto Hahn of a parallel initiative, a declaration of Nobel laureates in physics and chemistry, very similar in spirit to the Russell–Einstein manifesto, but deliberately restricting its eighteen sponsors to scientists with a strong western orientation. This exclusiveness did not necessarily reflect a visceral anti-Communism on the part of the two Germans. Russell was informed by Born that this approach had been influenced by the Polish physicist, Leopold Infeld (another signatory of the Russell–Einstein manifesto), who, at a meeting with Born in Berlin, had “said quite spontaneously that it would be of greatest importance to have an initiative coming from Western scholars not mixed with those who are known to be communists.”<sup>66</sup> Born remained hopeful that ultimately the two schemes might be fused together. While he remained willing to sign Russell’s draft as well, Hahn refused: “In view of the not small number of gentlemen who are Communists or living in the East with whom you wish to be associated I should find a difficulty for myself which would be harmful to the action planned by Born and me.”<sup>67</sup> Their appeal was duly issued on 15 July—only six days after Russell’s press conference at Caxton Hall—from the island of Mainau, Lake Constance during a meeting of Nobel laureates in the German town of Lindau. Russell applauded the Born–Hahn statement but “regretted ... the absence from it of signatures by Communists. Einstein and I had hoped to show that political differences do not prevent a large and important measure of agreement among men of science, and a consequent possibility of co-operation.”<sup>68</sup> Although the Mainau declaration was endorsed in the first instance only by its select list of initiators, all Nobel laureates were subsequently invited to sign. When Russell added his name the following January, he again expressed disappointment “that there are no signatories from the other side of the

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<sup>65</sup> Born to Russell, n.d. [April 1955] (RA1 600). See also *Auto.*, 3: 78 for Russell’s regret about this oversight and his attempts to correct it.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Hahn to Russell, 23 April 1955 (RA1 600). The original reads: “Bei der nicht kleinen Anzahl kommunistischer oder im Osten wohnenden Herren, mit dessen Sie vorgehen wollen, würde ich für mich eine Schwierigkeit sehen, die für die von Born und mir geplante Aktion schädlich wäre.”

<sup>68</sup> “Scientists’ Warning”, *The Sunday Times*, London, 17 July 1955.

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Iron Curtain.”<sup>69</sup>

After publication of the Russell–Einstein manifesto, the logical next step was the international scientific congress anticipated by the resolution appended to it. Joliot-Curie had asked Eric Burhop to approach Russell about convening this meeting. Burhop was keen “to see what help we could give in securing the attendance at such a conference of eminent scientists with whom the World Federation of Scientific Workers has some influence.”<sup>70</sup> For Russell, ensuring a politically balanced gathering remained paramount. On 23 July he inquired whether one of the manifesto’s American signatories, geneticist Hermann Muller, might coordinate the involvement of “scientists of Western outlook” in the United States:

It is clear that if it is to be effective there must be no obvious preponderance either of Communists or of anti-Communists. It will have the kind of neutrality that belongs to diplomatic conferences. It has seemed to me that we shall have to have two branches in the organizers of such a congress; the one branch being organized by Communists and the other by those whose sympathies are Western. I have talked this over with Dr. Burhop, who represents the opinion of Joliot-Curie, and he thinks that some such arrangement would be acceptable on the Communist side. (*SLBR*, 2: 493)

Much to Russell’s frustration, however, Muller decided that he “would not be a suitable person for promoting the organization which you propose.” Part of his explanation highlights the still daunting nature of the obstacles to the kind of political action contemplated by Russell:

A considerable difficulty with which the proposed conference would have to contend lies in the climate of opinion in western countries, more particularly in the United States, which would tend to cast suspicion upon scientists who as individuals were willing to participate in a conference in which delegates (for they must be regarded as delegates) from communist countries also took part. Because of this difficulty it would be important to have as participants from the western countries as many persons as possible of the type of [Arthur] Compton, who are regarded with favor by the leading political powers of their own coun-

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<sup>69</sup> To Count Lennart Bernadotte, 17 Jan. 1956 (RA2 750).

<sup>70</sup> To Russell, 21 July 1955 (RA1 600).

tries. The fact that I do not fit into this category is a major objection to my playing an active role....<sup>71</sup>

A plan was formed in the autumn of 1955, although it was not acted upon until the following summer. This envisaged the creation of a conference-initiating committee comprised of signatories to the Russell–Einstein and Born–Hahn declarations. Russell insisted that a few other eminent scientists, “notably a Russian, a Chinese and an Indian”, should be invited to participate as well. He was adamant that “any appeal which is to be made must be neutral as between Communist and anti-Communists and that the signatories should be so chosen as to make this neutrality evident.”<sup>72</sup> In attempting to attract scientific support for the Russell–Einstein manifesto, Russell had deeply regretted “that I did not succeed in getting the signatories [*sic*] of the Russian, the Chinese or the Indian whom I attempted to get.”<sup>73</sup> To remedy this defect as the follow-up scheme took shape, Russell’s close contact with Eric Burhop proved extremely useful. On 23 November Burhop reported to Russell that the leader of a visiting Soviet delegation, the President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, A. N. Sesmeyanov, along with three other Academicians, “would probably accept an invitation to join the Initiating Committee....”<sup>74</sup>

The following year it seemed possible that the Soviet presence might be augmented by the distinguished physicist, Pyotr Kapitza. In September 1956 Kapitza published a “reasoned comment” on an article by Russell in the Moscow *New Times*. “The tone of what he writes”, Russell informed Max Born, “makes it seem to me probable that he would be willing to join our efforts.”<sup>75</sup> So Kapitza was belatedly invited to the

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<sup>71</sup> 29 Aug. 1955 (RA3 Rec. Acq. 812). Muller’s copyright holders cannot be located.

<sup>72</sup> Russell to Born, 12 Nov. 1955 (RA3 Rec. Acq. 804).

<sup>73</sup> To James R. Newman, 1 Sept. 1955 (RA1 410). The scientists in question were the Soviet and Indian physicists, D. V. Skobelzyn and H. J. Bhabha, and the Chinese geologist, Li Szu-kuang.

<sup>74</sup> RA1 600. The other Soviet scientists named by Burhop were Skobelzyn, the biochemist, A. I. Oparin, and the oil chemist, A. V. Topchiev, who had met Russell at a World Conference of Scientists in London in August 1955 (see *Auto.*, 3: 79–80).

<sup>75</sup> 8 Oct. 1956 (RA3 Rec. Acq. 804). Russell’s article (“Nuclear Weapons Must Not Be Used”) had appeared with Kapitza’s critical commentary (“The Paramount Task”) simultaneously in the English-, Russian-, German- and French-language editions of this official Soviet publication, *New Times*, Moscow, 14, no. 39 (Sept. 1956): 8–9; 10–11.

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congress, which was scheduled to take place in New Delhi early in 1957. The question of Kapitza's attendance, however, was much more perplexing for the Soviet authorities to resolve than those pertaining to the more conventional Academicians who were already on the list of initiators. Kapitza's relationship with the Kremlin had rarely been comfortable ever since his forced detention in Moscow in 1934 after a dozen years of study in Cambridge. Although he ultimately achieved an accommodation of sorts with the Soviet scientific and political establishments—and, indeed, oversaw much important research—he fell completely out of favour after the Second World War and had only recently, since Stalin's death, been rehabilitated. Thereafter, he continued to court controversy with his forthright criticism of the conduct of Soviet science.<sup>76</sup> On 24 November the prospect of the maverick physicist travelling to New Delhi was reviewed by the Science and Education Department of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's Central Committee and judged "inappropriate".<sup>77</sup> This ruling was decidedly moot, however, for the conference had already been postponed because of the twin crises of Suez and Hungary and the consequent deterioration of the international political atmosphere.

When the 22 participants of the first Pugwash Conference eventually did assemble at Cyrus Eaton's retreat in the Nova Scotia village by which the movement became known, there were three Soviets, a Chinese and a Pole present.<sup>78</sup> The extent of the cross-bloc representation signified a major triumph for Russell. But the ideological diversity which he had deemed so essential created certain political risks. The whole enterprise could easily be discredited as a Communist front if the western contingent had too pronounced a left-wing bias. Even if the scientists from the West were not dismissed as fellow-travellers, they could be tarred as dupes of the Soviet Union. Previously Russell had judged his association with Eric Burhop to be "valuable because of his contacts with

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<sup>76</sup> See Lawrence Badash, *Kapitza, Rutherford, and the Kremlin* (New Haven and London: Yale U.P., 1985), pp. 111–15.

<sup>77</sup> "Bertran Rassel, Petr Kapitsa i TsK KPSS", *Istoricheski arkhiv*, no. 1 (1995): 140. (I am grateful for this reference to Professor Stephen White of the University of Glasgow.)

<sup>78</sup> The three Soviets were Skobeltzyn, Topchiev (see above n. 73 and n. 74), and the biophysicist, A. M. Kuzin. Kapitza was not present, but he did assume a role in Pugwash later. The Chinese and Polish representatives were, respectively, Zhou Pei-yuan and Marian Danysz—both physicists.

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Communists”.<sup>79</sup> But his more trusted collaborator in the venture, Joseph Rotblat, recalls that Russell was also “afraid that Burhop’s involvement might be harmful to the project.”<sup>80</sup> Notwithstanding the latter’s important preparatory work and attendance at Pugwash as part of a scientific staff, Russell ensured that Burhop was not on the list of official participants. Furthermore, Cyrus Eaton was by no means the perfect patron. The Canadian-born Cleveland industrialist was not content to remain in the background and was also inclined to make pro-Soviet pronouncements. When in 1959 Khrushchev called upon the UN to bring about universal disarmament, Russell and Rotblat were resolutely opposed to Eaton’s suggestion that Pugwash endorse the Soviet leader’s appeal. Eaton’s acceptance of the Lenin Peace Prize the following year was a source of further embarrassment to a movement which prized its growing reputation for political independence. By this time, however, the leaders of Pugwash had succeeded in minimizing Eaton’s attempts to direct their affairs.<sup>81</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Given the delicate position of the Pugwash scientists, it had been essential for them to maintain an appearance of strict impartiality, as Russell understood only too well.<sup>82</sup> In the years when the movement was consolidating its position as a credible voice for sanity in the nuclear arms race, the issue of cooperation or non-cooperation with Communists in the wider peace movement became less central. The underlying reason for this change was the increasingly robust nature of anti-nuclear politics in the West. By the late 1950s, new—and certainly independent—organizations were operating in many countries. Russell, of course, played a pivotal role in establishing and sustaining the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. To a considerable extent, the vitality of such non-aligned peace groups had been achieved at the expense of the Communist-led movement, which had been placed on the defensive by a

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<sup>79</sup> To Max Born, 10 Jan. 1956 (RA3 Rec. Acq. 804).

<sup>80</sup> “Bertrand Russell and the Pugwash Movement: Personal Reminiscences” (“The 1998 Bertrand Russell Peace Lectures”, 11), *Russell*, n.s. 18 (1998): 11.

<sup>81</sup> Rotblat, pp. 16–17; Clark, p. 546.

<sup>82</sup> Rotblat, pp. 11–13.

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wave of desertions from western Communist parties. This internal crisis had been triggered by Khrushchev's revelations about Stalin to the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956 and by the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolt eight months later. The World Peace Council undermined its own position by refusing to condemn the Soviet action in Hungary. "Once able to dominate public discussion of peace and disarmament," writes Wittner, "the WPC declined into a marginal force in many parts of the world" (*Resisting the Bomb*, p. 95). Meanwhile, many erstwhile Party members, as well as the apostates from the World Peace Council's affiliates, became core supporters of the newer, non-aligned organizations. In the British context, the backbone of CND was also strengthened by a fresh cohort of protesters energized by political and moral outrage at the Franco-British attack on Suez in November 1956.

The decline of the Communist-aligned movement did not completely remove the delicate political problem confronted by Russell during the initial phase of his anti-nuclear campaigning. As a leader of CND, he stayed alert to the possibility of political damage from too cosy an association with overtly pro-Soviet voices. Thus, in November 1957, he refused a nomination for a peace prize awarded by the World Peace Council, and the following July he withdrew his sponsorship of the forthcoming Stockholm Peace Congress, to be held under the auspices of the WPC. On these two occasions and on those which have been examined in more detail in the body of this article, Russell demonstrated a shrewd understanding of the delicate balance that it was imperative to strike between accommodating and excluding pro-Soviet elements in the wider peace movement. "He had not only to hold the balance but be seen to be holding it," writes Ronald Clark, "a tricky operation which only the aristocrat would have attempted with equanimity and which Russell, almost alone among living men, had the background and resolution to carry out with some chance of success" (Clark, pp. 545–6). But more than background and temperament enabled Russell to tread this fine line. His unstinting opposition to the Soviet Union over many years provided a useful layer of protection against criticism from the right; at the same time his more recent adoption of an anti-anti-Communist position in response to McCarthyism lent a certain credibility to his efforts to eliminate, or at least to minimize, "Man's Peril".

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