ENDing the Cold War

by Patrick Burke

The years 1980 to 1984 saw the emergence and activity of a huge peace movement in Britain; it shared with other West European peace movements the goal of halting the deployment of US cruise and Pershing II missiles in Western Europe.

The largest component of this movement was the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, CND, which also supported unilateral nuclear disarmament for Britain. CND's influence was felt throughout society: in the Churches, the media, the trade unions, and in political parties. Ever larger demonstrations culminated in a 400,000-strong rally against cruise deployment in October 1983.

Alongside CND another group emerged: European Nuclear Disarmament, or END, founded by, among others, E. P. Thompson and Mary Kaldor.

END differed from CND in two ways. First, it was tiny. At its largest it had about 500 members. But its influence - in the UK, and in the rest of Europe, East and West - was much larger than its size suggested it should be. Secondly its programme was quite different: both its analysis (elaborated principally by E. P. Thompson) of the Cold War; and its strategy for overcoming it.

For, Thompson the arms race had become a self-generating, 'exterminist' process, no longer susceptible to 'conscious and collective' control by human beings. There were differences in the way each side participated in the arms race; but the distinguishing characteristic of the conflict was its 'reciprocal' and 'self-reproducing' nature: '[t]heir missiles summon forward our missiles which summon forward their missiles in turn. NATO's hawks feed the hawks of the Warsaw bloc.'

Moreover, on both sides, the Cold War and its ideology had become a 'habit, an addiction'. The 'military and the security services and their political servants *need* the Cold War. They have a direct interest in its continuance.'

Thompson's analysis was pessimistic about the possibility of any initiative to undermine the Cold War emerging from either of the two opposing establishments. Instead, popular movements would be the agents of the dissolution of the blocs. The END Appeal, END's founding document, summoned up a pan-European citizens' campaign against the Cold War; and its emphasis was on working *against* states: we must 'act as if a united, neutral and pacific Europe already exists. We must learn to be loyal, not to 'East' or 'West', but to each other. . . .'

Initial support for END came from Western Europe. Gradually, however, a dialogue developed between Western peace groups and East European independent citizens' groups, a dialogue which continued - sometimes becoming active cooperation - until 1989.

This was the first time in Cold War Europe that an attempt had been made to join in one campaign social movements in East and West Europe.

Among the achievements of this dialogue, in terms of the END Appeal, was the fact that it helped extend the range of East European dissidents' interests to include nuclear disarmament and the Cold War.

Some of the dissidents' own concerns, in turn, became central to the dialogue. Arguably the most important was that of the 'indivisibility of peace': that is, the notion that, without human rights, there could be no genuine peace.

However - to take Britain as an example - activists in CND had reservations about supporting the cause of human rights in Eastern Europe, and for various reasons: it was seen as a distraction from the defence of the greatest right of all, the 'right to life'; it raised the question of political change in Eastern Europe, and thus threatened to destabilise the East-West balance; they were afraid of appearing to use the hypocritical language of the Western Right;

parochialism: ridding Britain of the Bomb was the key issue; and because they believed that, since the principal (though not the only) threat to peace was American imperialism, rather than the Cold War, there was no point in challenging the Soviet Union's and its allies' 'domestic arrangements.'

The spectrum of views in END was rather different. But it shared with CND a further reason for being reticent about the 'indivisibility of peace'. Put bluntly, implicit in much of END's East-West work, as in CND's stance towards Eastern Europe, was the view that the East European regimes of 'actually existing socialism' could be 'renewed'.

END did not fully appreciate that these were would-be totalitarian states, constantly trying to destroy civil society. The existence and expansion of civil society - made up of, among others, the very independent groups with whom END was working - threatened the existence of the system.

So while END accepted the notion of the 'indivisibility of peace', it did not fully realise that, by doing so, and even just by talking to groups who proposed it, it was itself challenging the system of 'actually existing socialism'.

How did END resolve this dilemma? By not resolving it. Instead, it conducted 'balanced diplomacy': it talked to both official Peace Councils and to dissidents and other independent groups. Over the years, this approach became increasingly skewed towards the 'independents'. Key symbols of this included END's defence campaigns for East European activists, which at least implied greater support for systemic change in Eastern Europe; and, at the 1988 END Convention, the appearance on a platform, alongside Edward Thompson, of the leading Polish dissident Jacek Kuron.

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Multiculturalism

by Joseph Raz

Is not multiculturalism one of the central principles of the constitution of the UK since its foundation in a treaty which united two countries - England and Scotland - in a constitutional settlement based on recognising the rights of each to its own cultural heritage?

Given this history, is it not surprising that multiculturalism is regarded as a heretical novelty rather than a traditional principle? Not really, since the dominant English view was that the Celtic fringes should assimilate to them.

And why should it be otherwise? Does not the British experience, as well as that of countries such as Cyprus and Belgium, show that peace and stability in a state presuppose a common dominant culture?

Yes and no: the historical record is more ambiguous than the question suggests. It shows that repression and forced assimilation often lead to resentment and alienation from the state, and are among the main sources of insurrection and instability. I return below to the question of the precondition for peace and stability and try to decipher the oracular 'Yes and no'. I will get there by answering another question: why should one support multiculturalism? What is so good about it?

Michael Walzer, for example, supports it because of his deep humanism, and his capacity for empathy. This is the principle of putting people first, a principle which becomes ethically productive only when combined with the ability to see the other as he is, from within. This is where multiculturalism as an ethical possibility - as a set of policies which respond to the multiculturalism which is a fact of life - springs from. For, as Walzer has often, we should never forget two things.

The first is how human values inhabit social worlds with their own integrity. By this I mean that while there are many valuable activities and relationships around which people can build fulfilling lives, people do not have access to such valuable ways of life unless they and the people around them know them to be what they are, and unless they are socialised to absorb their meanings. By and large people can absorb and master the meanings of valuable activities and relationships only when they are familiar with them from the social practices of the society around them. It follows that to respect people involves respecting their social and cultural background, the existence of which conditions their ability to thrive in life.

The second point is that human dignity depends on recognition of the worth of the social world to which one belongs. This is because when socialisation is successful people take pride in the culture they inhabit. This is a condition for their ability to prosper by it. One cannot do so if one is alienated from the culture. So each person's sense of who he is becomes entangled with his sense of which 'we' he belongs to, and his sense of self-respect depends to a considerable degree on his ability to respect the groups he is part of, and which constitute his sense of who he is. A society which does not respect the cultural groups present within it does not respect its own people, and undermines their own ability to live with dignity and self-respect.

This sounds complacent and uncritical of cultures, and of their ability to cohabit. But no such complacency follows from these remarks. What follows is another point which Walzer has emphasised, namely, that social and ethical critique is invariably conducted from within, that is - and this is my own gloss - in terms of the values which the people engaging in the critique can understand. These are wider than those actually accessible to them in their own life. They include those they know of from history. But when thinking of multiculturalism the most important aspect of this critique comes from the fact that we all inhabit a *variety* of social and cultural worlds. Social and ethical criticism is one of the manifestations of the cross-fertilisation involved in multiculturalism.

Ethical multiculturalism is not the enterprise of cultural preservation, of valuing cultures for their own sake. It is motivated by concern for people, and by the thought that there are different ways of finding oneself, and finding a life for oneself, and that each culture makes a wealth of possibilities available to its members. But in a multicultural society people have contacts across cultural divides, and these contacts yield pressures for change in all the affected cultures, though not in all to the same degree. Such pressures, which nourish ethical and cultural criticism, lead to change and adjustments. None of the original cultures is preserved, and a degree of commonality grows among people across cultural divides.

This brings me back to my 'Yes and no' answer to the question of the lessons of historical experience. I have, above, painted a rosy picture of the motivation for ethical multiculturalism. But, as I noted, multiculturalism is viable only where people belong to many cultural groups, some of which overlap. This condition is often satisfied. Perforce more or less all the people share in the same political culture and all participate in the same economy. These facts create - to a degree - a commonality of language and some common interests. These commonalities are a precondition for the existence of the sense of mutual solidarity which is necessary for the existence of a stable and peaceful society where people have to accept a give and take without precise measure of winners and losers. They are the preconditions for people's willingness to call a multicultural state their own, to refer to its doings as what 'we' are doing.

But these are not enough. There must be beyond that a spirit of mutual respect, and a sharing of the ethical motivation discussed above. Enforcing multicultural policies when that spirit is absent is a recipe for disaster. Unfortunately, in all countries in the world that spirit is lacking.