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Beyond the Cold War

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Summary:

Lecture by EP Thompson before the Worcester City Guildhall seeking to define the Cold War in a contemporary context. Thompson argues that the standard dichotomous definitions of the past have become improper and the Cold War is now best defined as a developed habit supported by the material interests of each side, most importantly military and political actors. He describes the Cold War as a method for leaders to easily access the ideological regulation and social discipline needed to ensure their positions. Therefore, Thompson argues, since these leaders have a direct interest in its continuance, people, and not states, must bring about any significant change in the Cold War.

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E P THOMPSON

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**NOT the
Dimbleby Lecture**

BEYOND THE COLD WAR

by

E P Thompson

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Author's Note

This lecture was delivered in Worcester City Guildhall on November 26th 1981. I have corrected it and extended it at some points. It is an extended version of the lecture which I would have delivered on the BBC if the original suggestion that I might give the 1981 Dimbleby Lecture had not been withdrawn. My particular thanks are due to the Worcester Citizens Committee—a non-political committee representing individuals from the City Council, local societies and churches—which invited me to give the lecture in my own city; to Councillor Jeff Carpenter, its chairman; to the Mayor and Mayoress of Worcester, who were in attendance on the platform; and to Mr Jonathan Dimbleby who encouraged me to go ahead and to ensure that the Dimbleby Lecture (even if an unofficial one) was delivered in 1981.

It will be very clear to readers that this lecture was written before the tragic events—the imposition of martial law and the repression of Solidarity—commenced in Poland. It is impossible to foresee the outcome of these events as this lecture goes to the press. It may be thought that they confirm the more pessimistic part of my analysis and refute the more optimistic alternatives which I proposed.

I am uncertain. I will only say that these events make an analysis, on the lines of this lecture, more relevant and more urgent. The outcome may still depend on our own actions. The movement for peace, West and East, can no longer be content with contesting missiles. We must strive to loosen Europe from the military hegemony of both super-powers, and to press forward measures of demilitarisation in every part of our continent. Peace and freedom must now, more than ever, be seen as one cause. There is no other way.

E.P.T.

23 December 1981

BEYOND THE COLD WAR

I am honoured to have been invited to deliver this lecture, here in my own city, by a committee of fellow-citizens of no particular political persuasion, united by their concern for serious and open discussion. It is kind of you to open the Guildhall to me, and to make me so much at home.

My difficulty is that I have been favoured with so much publicity for a lecture which I did *not* deliver that any lecture which I do now deliver is bound to come as an anti-climax. It is as if the bishops were finally to assemble and open Joanna Southcott's mysterious box, and find nothing within it but a recipe for making muffins.

And yet I can glimpse, out of the corner of my eye, something which may be important. I wish I could see it more clearly, and describe it clearly to you. I think that we may now be living, this year and for several years ahead, through episodes as significant as any known in the human record.

I will not dwell on the perils. We are well aware of these. Human ingenuity has somehow created these immense destructive powers, which now appear to hang above us, alienated from all human control. They are now talking of siting laser weapons on the moon—weapons which, in a literal sense, will be lunatic.

We are aware, all of us, of the overplus of this nuclear weaponry, much of it crammed into our own continent: land-mines, artillery, torpedoes, depth-charges, missiles launched from the ground, from submarines, from the air. We may differ as to the exact 'balance' of weaponry held by the adversary parties. But we are also aware that, when the overkill capacity of weaponry is such as to enable the destruction of civilised conditions for life on our continent thirty times over, calculations of 'balance' are becoming

irrelevant.

We may also, after two years of mounting anxiety, begin to feel slight twinges of hope. The superpowers have at last been brought to the negotiating table. Something might even be done to halt or to reduce the weaponry in Europe.

This is good. But what an effort it has taken to get the politicians there! And what a discrepancy there is between the procedures of war and those of peace! The decisions to develop new weapons—to deploy the SS-20, to put the neutron bomb into production, to go ahead with cruise missiles—are taken by a few score people—at the most by a few hundred—secretively, behind closed doors, on both sides. But to check, or to reverse, any one of those decisions, nothing will do except the voluntary efforts of hundreds of thousands—late into the night and through weekends, month after month—addressing envelopes, collating information, raising money, meeting in churches or in school halls, debating in conferences, lobbying parliaments, marching through the streets of Europe's capital cities.

In the past 18 months I have visited fellow workers for peace in the United States, in Czechoslovakia, in Finland, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, Germany and France. The story is always the same. People are determined. They are encouraged by growing support. But they are running out of puff. How long can they go on?

And if they relax, then in two or three years the weapons—accompanied by new weapons of equal barbarity, nerve-gas, bacteriological warfare—will begin to come back. We are running the wrong way down an escalator: if we stop running we will be carried up to the top.

To check the missiles is something. But the political launch-pad for all these missiles is the adversary posture of the two great rival alliances, grouped around the USA and USSR: that is, the Cold War. If this adversary posture were to be modified—if it were to be undermined by new ideas and movements on *both* sides—then, not only the weapons, but the launch-pad for them would be taken away. And many of the difficulties attending disarmament, whether nuclear or conventional, would fall also.

This is what I shall examine in this lecture. I do not intend

to rehearse the history of the Cold War, nor to examine, once again, why it started. I will enquire into its real content *today*. What is the Cold War now about? Is it necessary? And, if it is, whose is the need?

Let us go back, first, not to the origin of the Cold War, but to a moment just before it broke out. My own generation is the last which witnessed that moment as adults. Our perception of 'Europe' remains, to this day, a little different from that of younger generations. Europe, for us, included Warsaw, Prague and Budapest and, more distantly, Leningrad and Moscow. But for many young Westerners, 'Europe' now means, first of all, the EEC.

The young have grown up within a fractured continent. The Cold War has been a received condition, which has set the first premises of politics and ideology from before the time of their birth. It is now a settled and unquestioned premise: a habit. Most people assume that the condition will persist—far into the 21st century, for the full length of their own lifetimes—if war does not supervene. It has always been there.

But it has not always been there. I do not suggest that Europe, before the Cold War, was in any way, politically or culturally, united. It was the seat of rival imperialisms which extended over the globe. It was the seat and source of two devastating world wars. It was a battlefield for opposing ideologies.

Yet the savage divisions among Europeans did not exist as a fracture splitting the continent in half. They ran deeply *within* the political and cultural life of each nation-state. European states went to war; yet Europeans remained within a common political discourse.

This was true, most of all, in the climactic years of the second world war. From 1941 to 1944 Nazi Germany and its allies occupied an area and commanded resources very much greater than the EEC. Yet, paradoxically, there grew up within occupied Europe a new internationalism of common resistance.

From Norway to Montenegro, from the coast of Kent to the suburbs of Stalingrad—and it is necessary to recall, with

an effort, that Britain and Russia then were allies and that it was the prodigious sacrifice of Soviet life which turned the tide of that war—there was a common movement of resistance. Polish and Czech units served alongside British forces; British liaison groups—among them Churchill's son, Randolph, and the Conservative M.P., Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean—served with the Yugoslav partisans.

It is the fashion to be cynical about all that now, and for good reasons. The expectations and hopes of that moment were naive. The alliance of anti-fascist resistance—the alliances of liberals, Communists, agrarians, social-democrats, Conservatives—were later dishonoured, and on both sides.

But we might also recall that they were honoured for a while, and honoured with sacrifice of life. The aspiration for a democratic Europe—extending the good faith of those alliances forward into the peace—was authentic.

Some of these expectations were to be betrayed. But they remain there, in the record. I have said that others now seem to us as naive. Here is a young British officer—aged twenty-two—writing in a private letter from the Middle-East in 1943:

How wonderful it would be to call Europe one's fatherland, and think of Krakow, Munich, Rome, Arles, Madrid as one's own cities. I am not yet educated to a broader nationalism, but for a United States of Europe I could feel a patriotism far transcending my love for England.

This Union he saw as 'the only alternative to disaster.' And later in the same year he wrote:

There is a spirit abroad in Europe which is finer and braver than anything that tired continent has known for centuries, and which cannot be withstood. You can, if you like, think of it in terms of politics, but it is broader and more generous than any dogma. It is the confident will of whole peoples, who have known the utmost humiliation and suffering and have triumphed over it, to build their own lives once and for all. . . There is a marvellous opportunity before us—and all that is required from Britain, America and the U.S.S.R. is imagination, help and sympathy. . .

What sad reading this makes today! Some will find it Euro-centric, others will find it sentimental or innocent in its view of the motives of politicians and states, all will know that the hopes were to be defeated, within two or three years, by events. But the expectations were commitments, to the extent of life itself, and they were shared by many thousands across the continent.

In January 1944 this officer wrote to his brother:

My eyes fill very quickly with tears when I think what a splendid Europe we shall build (I say Europe because that's the only continent I really know quite well) when all the vitality and talent of its indomitable peoples can be set free for co-operation and creation.

Ten days later he parachuted onto a high plateau in East Serbia—in the region of Tsrna Trava—where he was to serve as liaison officer with a contingent of Bulgarian partisans.

It is not my business now to record the savage warfare and the privations of the next months, as these partisans and their small British support-group were driven backwards and forwards across the snow-fields by superior forces. It is a complex story, clouded by the refusal of the British authorities, to this day, to release some archives. In May small Bulgarian partisan forces set off on an ill-planned and ill-fated drive directly into the heart of Bulgaria. They were overwhelmed; most of them were massacred; and the British officer, my brother, was executed. He was subsequently proclaimed a National Hero of Bulgaria, and despite some nasty twists and turns in Bulgarian politics, he remains that to this day. I have been, twice, along the route of that march; my wife and I two years ago visited the mountains around Tsrna Trava and talked with surviving partisans. The events of that time have not been forgotten, although they have been clouded by Cold War mythology, and on both sides. But that, again, is a different and complex story.

My point is this. My brother's aspirations for the future were not unusual, although his fate exemplified the cause of this common resistance in an unusual way. Throughout Europe men and women looked forward to the fruits of victory: a continent both democratic and at peace. There

would be different social systems, of course. But it was supposed that these systems would be chosen by each nation, with popular consent. The differences need not be occasions of war.

These expectations were becoming casualties when British forces confronted Greek partisans in Athens in December 1944. None survived the shock of the onset of the Cold War. The polarisation was absolute. I am not concerned, now, to examine why this happened. But happen it certainly did. Communists were expelled from the political life of the West: in France, in Italy, and to the prison islands of Greece. Liberals, social-democrats, agrarians, and, then, Communists who had proved to be too sympathetic to the alliance with democracy or too critical of Stalin: all these were purged from the political life of the East. Some were subjected to monstrous faked trials, were executed or imprisoned. The Cold War era, of two hostile Europes, commenced.

I will make only one, over-simplified, comment on that moment. The cause of freedom and the cause of peace seemed to break apart. The 'West' claimed freedom; the 'East' claimed the cause of peace. One might talk for hour upon hour in qualification of both claims. Each is made up of one part of truth and another part of hypocrisy. 'The West', whether directly through NATO or indirectly through the arrangements of the United States military, co-existed and co-exists easily enough with regimes notorious for their abuse of freedom and of human rights: with Salazar's Portugal, Franco's Spain, the Greece of the Colonels, or with the military tyranny in Turkey today. And this is before we look to Latin America, Asia or Africa. The Soviet Union's dedication to 'peace' co-existed with the military repression of unacceptable motions towards democracy or autonomy within its client states: notoriously in Hungary, 1956, and Czechoslovakia, 1968. And this is before we look towards the military support given to Third World regimes within the Soviet sphere of influence, or towards Afghanistan.

But, in the time open to me, I can only note both claims, which have long underpinned the ideological contestations of the Cold War. And I must add that, when every allowance is made for hypocrisy, both claims have a little colour. It is

not that 'the Free West' has been an exemplar of democratic practice. But it is in the West that certain important democratic practices have persisted, whereas in 'the East'—after *gulag* and faked trial, the repression of the Hungarian insurrection and of the Prague Spring, the psychiatric confinement of dissidents, and the monotonous State-licensed idiocy of Communist intellectual orthodoxy—the very term 'People's Democracy' became sick.

That is familiar, and a source of much self-congratulation to Westerners. What is less familiar—for the young are not taught this carefully in our schools—is that the West was perceived by the East—and perceived for good reasons—as the most threatening and irresponsible military power. The first atomic detonation over Hiroshima, by the United States (but with the assent of our own government) sent panic-waves across the Communist world which contributed much to the onset of Cold War. From that moment, and for over twenty years, there was no question of 'balance' in the nuclear arsenals of the two parties: the West had an overwhelming superiority in destructive nuclear power.

We have been reminded of this recently by two independent voices of authority, each of them dissenting voices from the opposed superpowers. George Kennan, the former American ambassador to Moscow whose famous despatch (by 'Mr. X' in *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947) contributed to the post-war policies of United States' 'containment' of the Soviet Union, has reminded Americans that 'it has been we. . . who, at almost every step of the road, have taken the lead in the development of this sort of weaponry.' (This is not, by the way, as the BBC Reith Lecturer for 1981 has alleged in his know-all way, 'at best a half truth': it is a plain, and easily verifiable, fact). And Roy Medvedev, the Soviet supporter of free intellectual enquiry and civil rights, has commented that, with the brief exception of the Soviet advance in satellite technology in 1957-8, the United States has always led in weapons technology—

obliging the USSR to try to catch up from a position of inferiority. This permanent dynamic has structured Russian responses deeply, creating a pervasive inferiority complex that has probably prevailed over rational calculations in the 70s.

It is a dramatic instance of the trajectory of our times that these two distinguished men, starting from such different presuppositions and passing through such differing experiences, should have now come to a common point of commitment in support for the active peace movement.

From August 1945 onwards there were voices enough to argue that 'the West' should put its advantage in nuclear weapons technology to use. These voices went on for many years—calling for a 'preventive war' or for the 'liberation' of Berlin or of East Europe. Some voices were influential enough—John Foster Dulles, James Forrestal (the paranoid United States Secretary for the Navy who went mad in office)—to induce a legitimate 'paranoia' on the other side. The United States has rattled its nuclear weapons in their scabbard, as a matter of state policy, on at least 19 occasions. By the end of the 1940s it had surrounded the Soviet Union with a ring of forward strategic air-bases, all—with the exception of Alaska—outside United States' territory. The only attempt by the Soviet Union to establish a comparable forward base was repelled by the direct ultimatum of nuclear attack: the Cuban missile crisis. The humiliation suffered then by the Soviet rulers powered the upward build-up of Soviet missiles in the 1960s.

I am not endorsing either claim without qualification. I mean only to repeat that both claims had colour: the West to 'freedom' and the East to 'peace'. And this placed the political culture of Europe in a permanent double-bind. Those who worked for freedom in the East were suspected or exposed as agents of Western imperialism. Those who worked for peace in the West were suspected or exposed as pro-Soviet 'fellow travellers' or dupes of the Kremlin. In this way the rival ideologies of the Cold War disarmed those, on both sides, who might have put Europe back together. Any transcontinental movement for peace *and* freedom became impossible. Such a movement glowed for a moment in 1956 and, again, in 1968. Each time it was, ironically, the 'peace-loving' Soviet forces which ground out the sparks under an armoured heel.

Let us move back to our own time. For I am addressing the

question—not what caused the Cold War, but what is it about today? And it is no good trying to answer this by standing at its source and stirring it about with a stick. For a river gathers up many tributaries on its way, and turns into unexpected courses.

Nor is it any good asking me to deliver to you some homilies called ‘the lessons of history’. History teaches no simple lessons, because it *never* repeats itself, even if certain large themes recur.

In fact, received notions of the ‘lessons’ of recent history are often actively unhelpful in dealing with the present, since these establish stereotypes which interfere with contemporary vision. This is very much the case with today’s Cold War. Because it was widely believed in the 1930s that World War I was ‘caused’ by an arms race and by inflexible structures of alliances, essential measures of collective security were not taken to halt Hitler and to prevent World War II. Today the ‘lesson’ of World War II has stuck in the public mind while the ‘lesson’ of World War I has been forgotten. Because it is widely believed that military weakness and appeasement ‘caused’ World War II, many people now condone new forms of militarisation which will, if unchecked, give us World War III.

At the same time there is, in both West and East, a simple transference of remembered images to the present. The 1930s burned in memory the image of a major militarist and expansionist power (Nazi Germany) whose appetite was only fed by each new scrap of appeasement; which had an insatiable drive to conquer all Europe, if not the world. Politicians and ideologists, West and East, have renamed this insatiable potential aggressor as (respectively) Russia or America. It is a compelling identification. Yet it rests on the assent of memory rather than upon analysis or evidence. It appears plausible simply because it looks so familiar.

But to understand the present we must first resist the great suggestive-power of memory. This is, surprisingly, where the historical discipline may be helpful, may teach ‘lessons’ of a different kind. For historians deal always with long-term eventuations—social, political, economic process—which continually defeat or contradict the expectations of

the leading historical actors themselves.

History never happens as the actors plan or expect. It is the record of *unintended* consequences. Revolutions are made, manifestos are issued, battles are won: but the outcome, twenty or thirty years on, is always something that no-one willed and no-one expected. Boris Pasternak, the great Russian poet, reflected in *Dr Zhivago* on the 'indirect results' of the October Revolution, which 'have begun to make themselves felt—the fruits of fruits, the consequences of consequences.'

I like this phrase, 'the consequences of consequences', and wish we could see the Cold War in this way and not in terms of the intentions of the actors in 1947. We might see it, then, more clearly, as an abnormal political condition. It was the product of particular contingencies at the end of World War II which struck the flowing rivers of political culture into glaciated stasis, and struck intellectual culture with an ideological permafrost. The Cold War frontiers were fixed, in some part, precisely by 'deterrence'—by the unprecedented destructive power of the nuclear weaponry which, by coincidence, was invented at this historical moment.

It is an odd and very dangerous condition. A line has been drawn across the whole continent, like some gigantic geological fault, with one great capital city catapulted across the fault and divided internally by a wall. On each side of this line there are not only vast accumulations of weaponry directed against the other, but also hostile ideologies, security operations, and political structures. Both sides are preparing, and over-preparing, for a war in which both would share in mutual ruin. Yet both parties deny any intention of attacking the other: both mutter on about 'deterrence' or 'defence.'

If we ask the partisans of either side what the Cold War is now about, they regard us with the glazed eyes of addicts. It is there because it is there. It is there (they might say) because of the irreconcilable antagonism between two political and social systems: totalitarianism versus democracy—or Communism versus capitalism or Western imperialism. Each must be motivated, of its own inherent nature, by the desire to vanquish the other. Only the mutual fear of

'deterrence' can stave off a total confrontation.

The trouble with these answers is that they are phrased in terms of the ideological justifications for the Cold War at the moment of its origin. They remain fixed, in the permafrost of that icy moment.

A brief survey will show us that the notion of two monolithic adversary systems conforms uneasily with the evidence of the past decades. To take the Communist bloc first: if it is aiming to vanquish Europe and then the World, it is making a bad job of it. It has lost Yugoslavia. It has lost Albania. The Soviet Union and China have split bitterly apart. From the time of the post-war settlement, which established a protective belt of client Communist states around Russia's western frontiers, there has been no further expansion into European territory. Twenty-five years ago Soviet and NATO forces were withdrawn from Austria, and the peace treaty which guaranteed Austria's neutrality has been honoured by both sides.

There has also been a major recession in pro-Soviet Communist movements in the West. The Cominform, established in 1947, was seen by Western ideologists as a Trojan horse within Western societies: or a whole set of Trojan horses, the largest being in Italy and France. The Cominform has long been broken up. Disgusted by the events of 1956, by the Soviet repression of the 'Prague Spring' in 1968, most Western parties have turned in a 'Eurocommunist' direction: they are sharply critical of the Soviet denial of civil rights, oppose Soviet military policies (including the intervention in Afghanistan), and in general have supported Polish Solidarity. This is true of the huge Italian Communist Party (which endorses a critical commitment to NATO), of the influential Spanish party, and of the small British party. The French Communist Party, which has been ambiguous on questions of civil rights has steadily lost support in the French electorate.

Or take the question of Marxism. In Cold War fiction Soviet Communism is supposed to be motivated by a philosophy, 'Godless Marxism', with universal claims. The strange development here is, not only that religion appears to be reviving in most parts of the Communist world, but

that the intellectual universe of Marxism is now in chaos. In the Warsaw Pact countries there is something called Marxism-Leninism, learned by rote, which is a necessary rhetoric for those who wish to advance within the career structures of the state. It provokes, in the public generally, nothing but a yawn. I can think of no Soviet intellectual who, *as a Marxist*, commands any intellectual authority outside the Soviet Union.

Yet, in an odd sideways movement, Marxism as an intellectual system has migrated to the West and to the Third World, just as certain liberal beliefs have been migrating to dissident circles in the Communist world. Marxism in the West has fragmented into a hundred argumentative schools. And most of these schools are profoundly critical of the Soviet Union and of Communist practice. Marxism is certainly a vigorous intellectual influence in the West and in the Third World—an influence at work in many universities, journals, and works of scholarship. But whatever this Marxism may be—and it is becoming difficult to say what it is—it has nothing whatsoever to do with Soviet expansionism.

Look where we will, the evidence is at odds with the Cold War fictions. Poland is only one of several East European nations which are now deeply indebted to Western banks. What are we to make of a 'people's democracy' in hock to the capitalists? The Soviet Union depends for grain upon the prairies of the Mid-West of America, and the farmers of the Mid-West depend, in turn, upon these annual sales. West Germany has recently completed an agreement which will bring natural gas from Siberia, to the extent of close on 10% of the country's energy needs. The French government is at present negotiating a similar agreement for natural gas which 'would make France depend on Soviet gas for 26% of its requirements in 1990.' (*Times*, 11 November 1981). Long-standing trade agreements traverse both blocs and there is even that phenomenon, which one observer has described as 'vodka-cola', by which Western multinationals have invested in Soviet and East European enterprises, taking advantage of the low labour costs and the absence of industrial conflict in the Communist world. Even the Soviet ICBMs may incorporate components of United States design

or manufacture. Of course the American military reserve the top-flight computers and technology for their own use. I do not know whether the American public should draw comfort from the fact that the ICBMs directed at them may be guided by second-rate components of their own design.

I am not saying that the social and political systems of East and West are identical or even comparable. I am saying that the first Cold War premise—of irreconcilable adversary posture between the blocs across the whole board—has become a fiction. And in the course of last year, events in Poland have made the old fiction look even odder. We now have a Polish pope. We also have a huge, nationalist and Catholic, but also socialist, Polish trade union movement, Solidarity, a great deal more insurgent, and more far-reaching in its demands, than any union movement in the West. To be sure, the Russians do not like this at all. But they have not, as yet, been able to stop it, and the longer it succeeds the more its example is likely to prove contagious. Once again, if we assume that the aim of Soviet Communism is to overrun all Europe, then it is not doing very well. It can't even hold what it has.

If we turn the picture around, and look at the West, we discover other contradictions. At the moment of the Cold War's origin—when the permafrost set in—the United States had emerged from the second world war, alone of all the advanced economies, with a huge unimpaired productive capacity. The 'American Century' was, exactly, *then*: economic and military strength were overwhelming, and diplomatic and cultural influence ensued. NATO, perforce, was an alliance expressive of United States hegemony, and, in its military structure, under direct American command.

But the American Century was not to last for a hundred years. In past decades the American economy has entered into a long secular decline in relation to its competitors: Japan, the EEC powers (notably West Germany and France). The cultural influence and the diplomatic authority of the United States has entered a similar decline. And United States conventional military forces also suffered a catastrophic defeat in Vietnam. Only the overwhelming nuclear strength has been maintained—has grown year after year—has been

protracted beyond the moment of its origin. United States militarism seeks to extend forward indefinitely—to cast its shadow across Europe—a supremacy of economic and political force which existed thirty years ago but which has long ceased to exist. In one sense the present crisis in Western Europe can be read in this way. The United States is seeking to use the muscle of its nuclear weaponry to compensate for its loss of real influence.

This crisis has been reflected first, and most sharply, within Western European Social-Democratic and Labour movements. When the Cold War first struck, there was a fierce contest within these movements. This was (I must simplify) seen as a contest between pro-American and pro-Communist tendencies. A small and honourable tendency argued for a 'third way' or 'third force' between both tendencies: it lost all influence when the Two Camps finally took up their adversary stance.

As a general rule, the pro-American, or Atlanticist tendency won, and the pro-Communist tendency was expelled or reduced to a grumbling opposition. But victorious Atlanticism placed Social-Democracy in an odd position. It entailed the submission of Social-Democratic and of Labour parties to the hegemony of the most vigorous capitalist power in the world in military, diplomatic, and even in some economic, political and cultural affairs. This did not extinguish the humanitarian impulse in the programmes of those parties. So long as the economies continued to grow, it was possible, despite this overarching hegemony, to re-distribute some wealth within the native economy, and to assert some priorities in the fields of welfare, health or education. It was possible to keep electorates—and party activists—satisfied.

This is no longer possible. The reasons are self-evident. Some are directly economic: recession no longer affords space for humanitarian programmes, while it also stimulates direct competition between United States and EEC economies. Others are ideological: there has been a resurgence of the uninhibited reproductive drives of capital, from its United States strongholds, taking directly imperialist forms in its pursuit of oil, uranium, scarce resources, and markets in the Second and Third Worlds, and propping up client military

tyrannies. These reasons alone might have brought Atlanticism to the point of crisis. But the crisis, today, is above all political and military.

It no longer makes any sense for American hegemony to be extended over Western Europe through the institutions of NATO when, in the intervening thirty-five years since the Cold War set in, the balance of real forces has tipped back perceptibly towards this side of the Atlantic. It makes no sense at all for decisions as to the siting of missiles—and as to the ownership and operation of American missiles on European soil—to be taken in the Pentagon, when these decisions affect the very survival of Europe.

I have crossed the Atlantic a good many times in the past 15 years; and I can testify that, while the flight-time is getting less, the Atlantic ocean is getting wider. The United States has many virtues, and, among these, it is a more open, less secretive, less stuffy society than our own. But its political culture is now at an immense distance from that of Western Europe. It is, for example, the only major advanced society which has never had a political Labour movement, or Social-Democratic party, participating directly in national government. Its electorate is apathetic, and each successive President, in the past four elections, has been returned by a steadily declining proportion of the eligible electorate. President Reagan came to power with the support of little more than one-quarter of the possible total.

American political life in the past two decades has been vulgarised (I am tempted to say brutalised) and domesticated: that is, increasingly subordinated to the demands of domestic log-rolling. The average American citizen learns nothing of European affairs in his local newspaper or on his local TV channels. The present United States administration is, in its preoccupation with domestic issues and with domestic public image, effectively isolationist in its mentality; but it is an isolationism armed with nukes. Military muscle, nuclear weapons, are seen as a substitute for, not a supplement to, diplomacy.

How is a European Atlanticist today to bring any influence to bear upon such an administration? No Senators or Congressmen for Europe sit in Washington. Nor can they

deliver any votes to the President, and ask for little services in return. When President Reagan wanted to site the MX missile on its giant tracks in Nevada and Utah he was forced to back away because he was losing the support of hard-core Republican electors. The Senator for the state of Nevada was one of his own political inner-set. But Chancellor Schmidt and Mrs Thatcher (if she were ever to harbour an un-American thought) are not part of his set. West Germany or Britain may be in an uproar about cruise missiles, but they have no voices in the Presidential electoral college.

It is this tension which is pulling Western European political formations—and especially those of Social-Democracy—apart. Atlanticism has outlived the rationale of its moment of formation: neither the socialist nor the European liberal tradition can consort easily any more with an overarching American hegemony, whose priorities are, ever more nakedly, determined by the reproductive needs of American capital. Some European socialist parties have simply opted out. The Spanish Socialists are now campaigning to revoke the entry of Spain into NATO, and in Greece the victorious socialist party, PASOK, is committed to expel US nuclear bases. In other countries—West Germany, Britain—the battle has been joined *within* the parties. It is the issue of Atlanticism, and not the issues which the media favour—constitutional squabbles, the personality of Tony Benn—which has contributed most to the formation of the British Social Democratic Party and the continuing conflicts within the Parliamentary Labour Party. An inherited ideological formation, an Atlanticist dogma, has come under challenge; the challengers are not pro-Soviet although they are the inheritors of the grumblers and the third wayers who lost out at the Cold War's origins; they are looking for a new alternative, but they cannot yet spell its name.

What, then, is the Cold War, as we enter the 1980s, *about*? The answer to this question can give us no comfort at all. If we look at the military scene, then nothing is receding. On the contrary, the military establishments of both super-powers continue to grow each year. The Cold War, in this sense, has broken free from the occasions at its origin, and

has acquired an independent inertial thrust of its own. What is the Cold war now about? It is about itself.

We face here, in the grimmest sense, the 'consequences of consequences'. The Cold War may be seen as a show which was put, by two rival entrepreneurs, upon the road in 1946 or 1947. The show has grown bigger and bigger; the entrepreneurs have lost control of it, as it has thrown up its own managers, administrators, producers and a huge supporting cast; these have a direct interest in its continuance, in its enlargement. Whatever happens, the show must go on.

The Cold War has become a habit, an addiction. But it is a habit supported by very powerful material interests in each bloc: the military-industrial and research establishments of both sides, the security services and intelligence operations, and the political servants of these interests. These interests command a large (and growing) allocation of the skills and resources of each society; they influence the direction of each society's economic and social development; and it is in the interest of these interests to increase that allocation and to influence this direction even more.

I don't mean to argue for an *identity* of process in the United States and the Soviet Union, nor for a perfect symmetry of forms. There are major divergencies, not only in political forms and controls, but also as between the steady expansionism of bureaucracy and the avarice of private capital. I mean to stress, rather, the *reciprocal* and inter-active character of the process. It is in the very nature of this Cold War show that there must be two adversaries: and each move by one must be matched by the other. This is the inner dynamic of the Cold War which determines that its military and security establishments are *self-reproducing*. Their missiles summon forward our missiles which summon forward their missiles in turn. NATO's hawks feed the hawks of the Warsaw bloc.

For the ideology of the Cold War is self-reproducing also. That is, the military and the security services and their political servants *need* the Cold War. They have a direct interest in its continuance.

This is not only because their own establishments and their own careers depend upon this. It is not only because

ruling groups can only justify their own privileges and their allocation of huge resources to 'defence' in the name of Cold War emergencies. And it is not only because the superpowers both need repeated Cold War alarms to keep their client states, in NATO or the Warsaw Pact, in line. All these explanations have force. But, at an even deeper level, there is a further explanation—which I will describe by the ugly word 'psycho-ideological'—which must occasion the grimmest pessimism.

The threat of an enemy—even recourse to war—has always afforded to uneasy rulers a means of internal ideological regulation and social discipline. This was a familiar notion to Shakespeare. The dying Henry IVth, knowing that the succession was beset with enemies, advised his son—

Therefore, my Harry,
Be it thy course to busy giddy minds
With foreign quarrels. . .

This advice led Henry Vth to Agincourt.

The fear or threat of the Other is grounded upon a profound and universal human need. It is intrinsic to human bonding. We cannot define whom 'we' are without also defining 'them'—those who are not 'us'. 'They' need not be perceived as threatening: they may be seen only as different from 'us'—from our family, our community, our nation: 'they' are others who do not 'belong'. But if 'they' are seen as threatening to us, then our own internal bonding will be all the stronger.

This bonding-by-exclusion is intrinsic to human socialisation. 'Love and Hate', William Blake wrote, 'are necessary to Human existence.' This will not go away because we do not think it nice. It is present in every strong human association: the family, the church or political party, in class formation and class consciousness. Moreover, this bonding-by-exclusion establishes not only the identity of a group, but some part of the self-identity of the individuals within it. We belong to a family, we are citizens of Worcester, we are middle-class or working-class, we are members of a party, we are British: and some of this is internalised, it is our own identity.

Throughout history, as bonding has gone on and as identities have changed, the Other has been necessary to this

process. Rome required barbarians, Christendom required pagans, Protestant and Catholic Europe required each other. The nation state bonded itself against other nations. Patriotism is love of one's own country; but it is also hatred or fear or suspicion of others.

This is not, in itself, a pessimistic finding, since we have developed very strong regulatory or counter-vailing influences to inhibit the aggressive constituent in bonding. We have 'civilised' ourselves, sometimes with success. In the early 19th century, a stranger or 'outcomling' walking through Lancashire might be hooted or pelted with stones. Or if a lad were to court a girl in the next village, in the West Riding, he might expect to be beaten up or driven out by the local youths. We do better today. We sublimate these aggressions in pop concerts or in football crowds. New racial conflicts in our society are alarming, but we do not despair of overcoming these ugly tensions also. We can even co-exist, except in disputed fishing-grounds or in academic philosophy, with the French.

Yet let us not take comfort too easily. War has been a constant recourse throughout history. It is an event as common in the human record as are nettles in the hedgerows. Despite all our 'civilisation' this century has seen already the two bloodiest wars in history, both engendered in the continent which prides itself most upon its civilised forms.

Let us return to today's Cold War. I have argued that the condition of the Cold War has broken free from the 'causes' at its origin: and that ruling interests on both sides have become ideologically addicted, they need its continuance. The Western hemisphere has been divided into two parts, each of which sees itself as threatened by the Other; yet at the same time this continuing threat has become necessary to provide internal bonding and social discipline within each part.

Moreover, this threat of the Other has been internalised within both Soviet and American culture, so that the very self-identity of many American and Soviet citizens is bound up with the ideological premises of the Cold War.

There are historical reasons for this, which have less to do with the actualities of communist or capitalist societies than

we may suppose. Americans, for a century or so, have had a growing problem of national identity. America has a population, dispersed across half a continent, gathered in from the four corners of the globe. Layer upon layer of immigrants have come in, and new layers are being laid down today: Vietnamese and Thailanders, Cubans and undocumented Hispanic workers. Internal bonding tends to fall, not upon horizontal nationwide lines—the bonding of social class remains weak—but in vertical, fissiparous ways: local, regional, or ethnic bonding—the blacks, the Hispanics, the Poles, the Irish, the Jewish lobby. The resounding, media-propagated myth of United States society is that of an open market society, an upwardly-mobile free-for-all: its objective not any communal goal but equality of ego-fulfilment for everyone.

But where, in all these centrifugal and individualistic forces, is any national bonding and sense of American self-identity to be found? American poets and novelists have suggested better answers—America (they have suggested) might be the most internationalist nation in the world—but the answer which has satisfied America's present rulers is, precisely, in the Cold War. The United States is the leader of 'the Free World', and the Commies are the Other. They need this Other to establish their own identity, not as blacks or Poles or Irish, but as free Americans. Only this pre-existent need, for bonding-by-exclusion, can explain the ease by which one populist rascal after another has been able to float to power—and even to the White House—on nothing but a flood of sensational Cold War propaganda. And anti-Communism can be turned to other internal uses as well. It can serve to knock trade unions on the head, or to keep dissident radical voices or peace movements ('soft on Communism') on the margins of political life.

But what about the Soviet Union? Is there a similar need to bond against the Other within Soviet culture? I can speak with less confidence here. But there are indications that this is so.

The Soviet Union is not 'Russia' but a ramshackle empire inherited from Tsarist times. It also has its own fissiparous tendencies, from Mongolia to the Baltic states. It has no need to invent an Other, in some fit of paranoia. It has been struck,

within active memory, by another, to the gates of Moscow, with a loss of some 20 million dead. One would suppose that Soviet rulers, while having good reason for a defensive mentality, would need the Cold War like a hole in the head. They would want it to go away. And, maybe, some of them do.

Yet the Cold War, as ideology, has a bonding function in the Soviet Union also. This huge collocation of peoples feels itself to be surrounded—it is surrounded—from Mongolia to the Arctic ice-cap to its Western frontiers. The bonding, the self-identity, of Soviet citizens comes from the notion that they are the heartland of the world's first socialist revolution, threatened by the Other—Western imperialism, in alliance with 1,000 million Chinese. The positive part of this rhetoric—the Marxist-Leninist, revolutionary bit—may now have worn exceedingly thin; but the negative part remains compelling. The one function of the Soviet rulers which commands consensual assent throughout the population is their self-proclaimed role as defenders of the Fatherland and defenders of peace.

There is nothing sinister about that. But the bonding function of Cold War ideology in the Soviet Union is directly disciplinary. The threat of the Other legitimates every measure of policing or intellectual control. In Stalin's time this took the form of indiscriminate terror against 'counter-revolutionaries'. The measures of terror or of discipline have now been greatly modified. This is important and this is hopeful. But the function of this disciplinary ideology remains the same.

What it does is to transform every social or intellectual conflict within the Soviet Union into a problem affecting the security of the state. Every critic of Soviet reality, every 'dissident', is defined as an ally of the Other: as alien, unpatriotic, and perhaps as an agent of the West. Every impulse towards democracy or autonomy in Eastern Europe—the Prague Spring of 1968, the Polish renewal—is defined as a security threat to the Soviet frontiers and to the defensive unity of the Warsaw powers.

Like the populist American denunciation of 'Commies', the Soviet denunciation of 'Western' penetration can be

turned to every purpose imaginable in the attempt to impose internal discipline:—but with the important difference that in the Soviet Union the attacks of the media and of political leaders are supplemented by more powerful and more intrusive security forces. Even juvenile delinquency, or the new wave of consumerism in the Soviet white-collar and professional groups can be denounced as Western attempts to ‘subvert’ Soviet society. And General Semyon Tsvigun, first deputy chairman of the KGB, writing recently in *Kommunist*, has instanced the ‘negative influence’ of Western styles and pop music upon Soviet young people as examples of the ‘subversive’ activities of the external ‘class enemy’.

This is the double-bind which the Soviet people cannot break through. It is weary but it works. And it works because the Cold Warriors of the West are eager to be in the same card-game, and to lead into the strong suits of their partners, the Cold Warriors of the East. The Western Warriors, by championing the cause of ‘human rights’, in the same moment define the dissidents of the East as allies of the West and as security risks. It is a hypocritical championship on several counts, but we will leave this aside. It is utterly counter-productive, and perhaps it is intended to be so. It does no-one, except the Cold Warriors of the other side, any good.

The boycott of the Moscow Olympics is a case in point. Initially this may have been welcomed by some dissident intellectuals in Eastern Europe and among some Soviet Jews. It was to do them no good. A Russian friend tells me that, as an operation promoting liberty, it was a disaster. The boycott bonded the Soviet people against the Other. In a state of siege and isolation for half-a-century, the Olympics offered to open international doors and to give them, for the first time, the role of host on the world stage. They were aggrieved by the boycott, not as Communists, but in their latent patriotism. They had allocated resources to the Olympics, they had rehearsed their dancers and their choirs. They were curious to meet the world’s athletes and visitors. Critics of the Olympics were felt to be disloyal, not only by the security services, but also by their workmates and neighbours. The boycott hence made possible the greatest crack-down

upon all critical centres of opinion in the Soviet Union in a decade. It was a gift, from the CIA to the KGB. Lord Killanan and the British Olympic team, who ignored President Carter and Mrs Thatcher, did the right thing, not only in support of the Olympic tradition but also in support of the cause of peace. But 'dissent' in the Soviet Union has not yet recovered from the Western Cold Warriors' kind attentions.

It can be seen now, also, why the most conservative elements in the Soviet leadership—the direct inheritors of Stalin—*need* the Cold War. This is not only because some part of this leadership has arisen from, or spent some years in the service of, the bureaucratic-military-security complex itself. And it is not only because the very heavy allocations to defence, running to perhaps 15% of the gross national product, must be justified in the eyes of the deprived public. It is also because these leaders are beset on every side by difficulties, by pressures to modernise, to reform or to democratise. Yet these pressures threaten their own position and privileges—once commenced, they might pass beyond control. The Polish renewal will have been watched, in the Soviet Union and in other Eastern European states, as an awful example of such a process—a process bringing instability and, with this, a threat to the security of the Communist world.

Hence Cold War ideology—the threat of the Other—is the strongest card left in the hand of the Soviet rulers. It is necessary for bonding. And the card is not a fake. For the Other—that is, the Cold Warriors of the West—is continually playing the same card back, whether in missiles or in arms agreements with China or in the suit of human rights.

We could not have led up to a more pessimistic conclusion. I have argued that the Cold War is now about itself. It is an ongoing, self-reproducing condition, to which both adversaries are addicted. The military establishments of the adversaries are in a reciprocal relationship of mutual nurture: each fosters the growth of the other. Both adversaries need to maintain a hostile ideological posture, as a means of internal bonding or discipline. This would be dangerous at any time; but with today's nuclear weaponry it is an immensely dangerous condition. For it contains a built-in logic which must

always tend to the worse: the military establishments will grow, the adversary postures become more implacable and more irrational.

That logic, if uncorrected, must prove terminal, and in the next two or three decades. I will not speculate on what accident or which contingency will bring us to that terminus. I am pointing out the logic and thrust of things, the current which is sweeping us towards Niagara Falls. As we go over those Falls we may comfort ourselves that it was really no-one's fault: that human culture has always contained within itself a malfunction, a principle of bonding-by-exclusion which must (with our present technologies of death) lead to auto-destruct. We might have guessed as much by looking at the nettles in history's hedges.

All this perhaps will happen. I think it at least probable that it will. We cannot expect to have the good fortune of having our planet invaded, in the 1990s, by some monsters from outer space, who would at last bond all humanity against an outer Other. And short of some science-fiction rescue operation like that, all proposals look like wish-fulfilment.

Yet I would ask you to cast your minds back to the considerations in the earlier part of this lecture. I have offered you a contradiction. I argued, at first, that a whole era of Cold War might be drawing to an end. Today's military confrontation is protracted long after the historical occasion for it has come to an end. And my argument here is close to a recent editorial comment in the *London Times* (2 October 1981):

The huge accumulations of weaponry which the two brandish at each other are wholly out of proportion to any genuine conflict of interests. There is no serious competition for essential resources, or for territory that is truly vital to the security of either, and the ideological fires have dwindled on both sides. In strictly objective terms a reasonable degree of accommodation should be easily attainable.

But I argued, subsequently, that the Cold War, as adversary military establishments and adversary ideological posture, was an on-going, self-reproducing road-show, which had

become necessary to ruling groups on both sides. Can we find, within that contradiction, any resolution short of war?

Perhaps we can. But the resolution will not be easy. A general revolt of reason and conscience against the instruments which immediately threaten us—a lived perception, informing multitudes, of the human ecological imperative: this is a necessary part of the answer. Such a revolt, such a shift in perception, is already growing across Europe. But this cannot be the whole answer. For if the Cold War has acquired a self-generating dynamic, then, as soon as public concern is quietened by a few measures of arms control, new dangers and new weapons will appear. We must do more than protest if we are to survive. We must go behind the missiles to the Cold War itself. We must begin to put Europe back into one piece.

And how could that be done? Very certainly it can not be done by the victory of one side over the other. That would mean war. We must retrace our steps to that moment, in 1944, before glaciation set in, and look once again for a third way.

If I had said this two years ago I would have despaired of holding your attention. But something remarkable is stirring in this continent today; movements which commenced in fear and which are now taking on the shape of hope; movements which cannot yet, with clarity, name their own demands. For the first time since the wartime Resistance there is a spirit abroad in Europe which carries a trans-continental aspiration. The Other which menaces us is being redefined—not as other nations, nor even as the other bloc, but as the forces leading both blocs to auto-destruction—not ‘Russia’ nor ‘America’ but their military, ideological and security establishments and their ritual oppositions.

And at the same time, as this Other is excluded, so a new kind of internal bonding is taking place. This takes the form of a growing commitment, by many thousands, to the imperative of survival and against the ideological or security imperatives of either bloc or their nation-states. In the words of the Appeal for European Nuclear Disarmament of April 1980:

We must commence to 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.

This is a large and improbable expectation. It has often been proclaimed in the past, and it has been as often disappointed. Yet what is improbable has already, in the past year, begun to happen. The military structures are under challenge. But something is happening of far greater significance. The ideological structures are under challenge also, and from *both* sides.

I said, at the beginning, that the Cold War had placed the political culture of Europe in a permanent double-bind: the cause of 'peace' and the cause of 'freedom' fell apart. What is now happening is that these two causes are returning to one cause—peace *and* freedom—and as this happens, so, by a hundred different channels, the transcontinental discourse of political culture can be resumed.

The peace movements which have developed with such astonishing rapidity in Northern, Western and Southern Europe—and which are now finding an echo in the East—are one part of this cause. They have arisen in response not only to a military and strategic situation but to a political situation also. What has aroused Europeans most is the spectacle of two superpowers, arguing above their heads about the deployment of weapons whose target would be the 'theatre' of Europe. These movements speak with new accents. They are, in most cases, neither pro-Soviet nor manipulated by the Communist-influenced World Peace Council. Their objective is to clear nuclear weapons and bases out of the whole continent, East and West, and then to roll back conventional forces. Nor is it correct to describe them as 'neutralist' or 'pacifist'. They are looking for a third way. A third way is an active way: it is not 'neutral' between the other ways, it goes somewhere else.

The Western peace movements, in majority opinion, bring together traditions—socialist, trade unionist, liberal, Christian, ecological—which have always been committed to civil rights. They extend their support to the Polish renewal and to Solidarity, and to movements of libertarian dissent in the

Warsaw bloc. And from Eastern Europe also, voice after voice is now reaching us—hesitant, cautious, but with growing confidence—searching for the same alliance: peace *and* freedom.

These voices signal that the whole thirty-five-year-old era of the Cold War could be coming to an end: the Ice Age could give way to turbulent torrents running from East to West and from West to East. And within the demands of the peace movements and also in movements of lower profile but of equal potential in Eastern Europe there is maturing a further—and a convergent—demand: to shake off the hegemony of the superpowers and to reclaim autonomy.

This demand was glimpsed by Dr Albert Schweitzer in a notable broadcast appeal from Oslo in April, 1958:

Today America with her batteries of nuclear rockets in Europe is present with mighty military power in Europe. Europe has become an in-between land between America and Russia, as if America by some displacement of a continent had come closer to her. But if atomic rockets were no longer in question, this unnatural state of affairs would come to an end. America would again become wholly America; Europe wholly Europe; the Atlantic again wholly the Atlantic Ocean—a sea providing distance in time and space.

In this way could come the beginning of the end of America's military presence in Europe, a presence arising from the two world wars. The great sacrifices that America made for Europe during the second world war, and in the years following it, will not be forgotten; the great and varied help that Europe received from her, and the thanks owing for this, will not be forgotten. But the unnatural situation created by the two world wars that led to a dominating military presence in Europe cannot continue indefinitely. It must gradually cease to exist, both for the sake of Europe and for the sake of America.

Now there will be shocked voices from all sides. What will become of poor Europe if American atomic weapons no longer defend it from within and from without? What will happen if Europe is delivered to the Soviet? Must it then not be prepared to languish in a communist babylonian form of imprisonment for long years?

Here it should be said that perhaps the Soviet Union is not quite so malicious as to think only of throwing itself on Europe at the first opportunity in order to devour it, and perhaps not quite so un-intelligent as to fail to consider whether there would be any

advantage in upsetting her stomach with this indigestible meal.

What Europe and the Europeans have to agree is that they belong together for better or for worse. This is a new historical fact that can no longer be by-passed politically.

Albert Schweitzer argued this, twenty-three years ago, from the perspective of a West European. In the long interval that has now passed it is possible to make this same argument from an Eastern European perspective also. We no longer speculate upon the old ambition of John Foster Dulles—the ‘West’ *liberating* the ‘East’. Eastern Europe has commenced its own self-liberation. In cautious ways, Romania, Hungary and East Germany have established small areas of autonomy, of foreign policy, economy or culture, while the Polish renewal signals a social transition so swift and far-reaching that speculation upon its outcome is futile. In Czechoslovakia, where social renewal was ruthlessly reversed in 1968, the hegemony of Soviet military power remains decisive. But here also courageous voices of dissent are beginning to consider a strategy in which the cause of freedom and the cause of peace can draw strength from each other as allies.

On November 16th, 1981, there was issued in Prague a statement by three spokespersons of Charter 77, the courageous organisation defending Czechoslovak human rights: Václav Malý, Dr Bedrich Placák, and Dr Jiri Hájek. This stresses the mutual interdependence of the causes of peace and of liberty. The Helsinki accord on human rights is an ‘integral and equal component’ of the cause of peace, since without respect for these rights ‘it is impossible to speak of an attitude to peace worthy of the name’. Yet (the statement continues) ‘it is difficult to regard as genuine champions of these rights and freedoms those who are stepping up the arms race and bringing closer the danger of war.’ ‘Our continent faces the threat of being turned into a nuclear battlefield, into the burial-ground of its nations and its civilisation which gave birth to the very concept of human rights.’ And it concludes by expressing the solidarity of Charter 77 with all those in the peace movement who are also upholding the rights endorsed by the Helsinki accord:

'It is our wish that they should continue their struggle for peace in its indivisibility, which not only applies to different geographic regions but also covers the various dimensions of human life. We do not have the opportunities which they have to express as loudly our common conviction that peace and freedom are indivisible.'

The question before Europeans today is not how many NATO forward-based systems might equal how many Soviet SS-20s. Beneath these equations there is a larger question: in what circumstances might *both* superpowers loosen the military grip which settled upon Europe in 1945 and which has been protracted long beyond its historical occasion? And how might such a retreat of hegemonies and loosening of blocs take place without endangering peace? Such an outcome would be profoundly in the interest, not only of the people of Europe, but of the peoples of the Soviet Union and the United States also—in relaxing tension and in relieving them of some of the burdens and dangers of their opposed military establishments. But what—unless it were to be our old enemy 'deterrence'—could monitor such a transition so that neither one nor the other party turned it to advantage?

We are not, it should be said, describing some novel stage in the process known as 'détente'. For in the early nineteen seventies 'détente' signified the cautious tuning-down of hostilities between states or blocs, but within the Cold War *status quo*. Détente (or 'peaceful co-existence') was licensed by the superpowers: it did not arise from the client states, still less from popular movements. The framework of East-West settlement was held rigid by 'deterrence': in the high noon of Kissinger's diplomacy détente was a horse-trade between the leaders of the blocs, in which any unseemly movement out of the framework was to be discouraged as 'de-stabilising'. Czechs or Italians were required to remain quiet in their client places, lest any rash movement should disturb the tetchy equilibrium of the superpowers.

But what we can glimpse now is something different: a détente of peoples rather than states—a movement of peoples which sometimes dislodges states from their blocs and brings them into a new diplomacy of conciliation, which sometimes runs beneath state structures, and which sometimes defies

the ideological and security structures of particular states. This will be a more fluid, unregulated, unpredictable movement. It may entail risk.

The risk must be taken. For the Cold War can be brought to an end in only two ways: by the destruction of European civilisation, or by the reunification of European political culture. The first will take place if the ruling groups in the rival superpowers, sensing that the ground is shifting beneath them and that their client states are becoming detached, succeed in compensating for their waning political and economic authority by more and more frenzied measures of militarisation. This is, exactly, what is happening now. The outcome will be terminal.

But we can now see a small opening towards the other alternative. And if we thought this alternative to be possible, then we should—every one of us—re-order all our priorities. We would invest nothing more in missiles, everything in all the skills of communication and exchange.

When I first offered a synopsis of this lecture to the BBC, I promised 'some practical proposals and even a programme, as to how this could be done'. But I realise now that, even if time permitted, such a programme would be over-ambitious. This cannot be written by any one citizen, in Worcester. It must be written by many hands—in Warsaw and in Athens, in Berlin and in Prague. All I can do now is indicate, briefly, programmes which are already in the making.

One such programme is that of limited nuclear-free zones. I have the honour to speak now in the Guildhall of the nuclear-free city of Worcester. I need not say here, Mr Mayor, that this is not just a gesture of self-preservation. It is a signal also, of international conciliation, and a signal which we hope will be reciprocated. Such signals are now arising across our continent. A Nordic nuclear-free zone is now under active consideration. And in the South-East of Europe, the incoming Greek government is pledged to initiate discussions with Bulgaria and Romania (in the Warsaw Pact) and with non-aligned Yugoslavia, for a further nuclear-free zone.

Such zones have political significance. Both states and local authorities can enlarge the notion to take in exchanges

between citizens, for direct uncensored discourse. In Central Europe a zone of this kind might go further to take in measures of conventional disarmament also, and the withdrawal of both Soviet and NATO forces from both Germanys. This proposal is now being actively canvassed in East Germany as well as West—the East German civil rights supporter, Dr Robert Havemann has raised the question directly in an open letter to Mr Brezhnev—and is now being discussed, in unofficial circles, in Poland and Czechoslovakia as well.

The objectives of such larger zones are clear: to make a space of lessened tension between the two blocs: to destroy the menacing symbolic affront of nuclear weapons: to bring nations both East and West within reciprocal agreements: and to loosen the bonds of the bloc system, allowing more autonomy, more initiative to the smaller states.

But at the same time there must be other initiatives, through a hundred different channels, by which citizens enlarge this discourse. It is absurd to expect the weapons systems of both sides to de-weaponise themselves, the security systems of both sides to fall into each other's arms. It is, precisely, at the top of the Cold War systems that deadlock, or worse, takes place. If we are to destructure the Cold War, then we must destabilise these systems from below.

I am talking of a new kind of politics which cannot (with however much goodwill) be conducted by politicians. It must be a politics of peace, informed by a new internationalist code of honour, conducted by citizens. And it is now being so conducted by the international medical profession, by churches, by writers and by many others.

Music can be a 'politics' of this kind. I will take an example from this city. We had the honour here, at the last Three Choirs Festival, to hear the first British performance of Sallinen's *Dies Irae*. This work is a setting of a poem about the threat to our planet from nuclear weapons by the Finnish poet, Arvo Turtianen, commissioned by the Ensemble of the Hungarian People's Army—I don't much like armies but I can't object to a military Ensemble which commissions a work on peace—first performed in Budapest, and then performed in our own city.

If this is a small, but beautiful, sound of reconciliation, then other sounds are large and loud. For across our continent the world of popular music is now making its own sounds of peace and freedom. There is, today, some generational cultural mutation taking place among the young people of Europe. The demonstrations for peace—Bonn, London, Madrid, Rome, Amsterdam—have been thronged with the young. The young are *bored* with the Cold War. There is a shift at a level below politics—expressed in style, in sound, in symbol, in dress—which could be more significant than any negotiations taking place in Geneva. The PA systems of these popular music bands are already capable of making transcontinental sounds. The bands may not be expert arms negotiators; but they might blast the youth of Europe into each others' arms.

It has been proposed that there might be a festival—it might be called 'Theatre of Peace'—somewhere in Central Europe in the summer of 1983. Young people (although their elders would not be excluded) would be called to assemble from every part of the continent, bringing with them their music, their living theatre, their art, their posters, their symbols and gifts. There would be rallies, workshops, and informal discussions. Every effort would be made to invite youth from 'the other side', not in pre-selected official parties but as individual visitors and strays. For 1982 the project may be too ambitious: but as a 'primer' for this plans are now afoot for a popular music festival on an island in the Danube close to Vienna early in August 1982. Already the first responses to the plan are such that the problem is one of keeping the numbers within the limits requested by hospitable Austrian authorities.

I return, in my conclusion, to the most sensitive, and the most significant, issue of all. How do we put the causes of freedom and of peace back together?

This cannot be done by provocative interventions in the affairs of other nations. And it certainly cannot be done by the old strategy of Cold War 'linkage'. If we look forward to democratic renewal on the other side of our common world, then this strategy is plainly counter-productive. No-one will

ever obtain civil or trade union rights in the East because the West is pressing missiles against their borders. On the contrary, this only enhances the security operations and the security-minded ideology of their rulers. The peoples of the East, as of the West, will obtain their own rights and liberties for themselves and in their own way—as the Portuguese, Spanish, Greek and Polish people have shown us. What is needed, from and for all of us, is a space free of Cold War crisis in which we can move.

There might, however, be a very different kind of citizen's linkage in which, as part of the people's *détente*, the movement for peace in the West and for freedom in the East recognised each other as natural allies. For this to be possible, we in the West must move first. As the military pressure upon the East begins to relax, so the old double-bind would begin to lose its force. And the Western peace movement (which can scarcely be cast convincingly by Soviet ideologists as an 'agent of Western imperialism') should press steadily upon the state structures of the East demands for greater openness of exchange, both of persons and of ideas.

A transcontinental discourse must begin to flow, in both directions, with the peace movement—a movement of unofficial persons with a code of conduct which disallows the pursuit of political advantage for either 'side'—as the conduit. We cannot be content to criticise nuclear missiles. We have to be, in every moment, critics also of the adversary posture of the powers. For we are threatened, not only by weapons, but by the ideological and security structures which divide our continent and which turn us into adversaries. So that the concession which the peace movement asks of the Soviet state is—not so much these SS-20s and those Backfire bombers—but its assistance in commencing to tear these structures down. And in good time one might look forward to a further change, in the Soviet Union itself, as the long-outworn ideology and structures inherited from Stalin's time gave way before internal pressures for a Soviet renewal.

It is optimistic to suppose so. Yet this is the only way in which the Cold War could be brought to an end. I have also conceded that an end of glaciation—with new and turbulent torrents across the East-West divide—will entail new risks. We

have observed this for a year as the Polish crisis has unfolded. To those who have been habituated to Cold War stasis this looks like dangerous 'instability'.

Yet I will argue, against these critics, that in such an emergency the peace movement itself may prove to be the strongest force making for stability. Only a non-aligned peace movement could moderate this great social transition, enabling our political cultures to grow back together, and restraining both NATO and Warsaw power rulers from intervening to check the change or from seeking to gain advantage from the discomfort of the other side. The peace movement must say—and has already been saying—'Let Poland be Polish and let Greece be Greek!'

We may be living now, and in the next few years, in the very eye of crisis. The Cold War road-show, which each year enlarges, is now lurching towards its terminus. But in this moment changes have arisen in our continent, of scarcely more than one year's growth, which signify a challenge to the Cold War itself. These are not 'political' changes, in the usual sense. They cut through the flesh of politics down to the human bone.

Dr Nicholas Humphrey, in his remarkable Bronowski lecture, warned us of one possible outcome. I have been proposing another. What I have proposed is improbable. But, if it commenced, it might gather pace with astonishing rapidity. There would not be decades of *détente*, as the glaciers slowly melt. There would be very rapid and unpredictable changes; nations would become unglued from their alliances; there would be sharp conflicts within nations; there would be successive risks. We could roll up the map of the Cold War, and travel without maps for a while.

I do not mean that Russia would become a Western democracy, nor that the West would go Communist. Immense differences in social system would remain. Nations, unglued from their alliances, might—as Poland and Greece are now showing us—fall back more strongly into their own inherited national traditions. I mean only that the flow of political and intellectual discourse, and of human exchange, would resume across the whole continent. The blocs would discover that they had forgotten what their adversary posture was about.

Where Dr Humphrey and I are united is in our conviction that we do not live in ordinary times. To work to bring the Cold War to an end is not one among three dozen things which we must remember to do. It must be, for tens of thousands of us in Europe in this decade, the first thing we must do; and it must inform everything we do.

Our species has been favoured on this planet, although we have not always been good caretakers of our globe's resources. Our stay here, in the spaces of geological time, has been brief. No-one can tell us our business. But I think it is something more than to consume as much as we can and then blow the place up.

We have, if not a duty, then a need, deeply engraved within our culture, to pass the place on no worse than we found it. Those of us who do not expect an after-life may see in this our only immortality: to pass on the succession of life, the succession of culture. It may even be that we are happier when we are engaged in matters larger than our own wants and ourselves.

We did not choose to live in this time. But there is no way of getting out of it. And it has given to us as significant a cause as has ever been known, a moment of opportunity which might never be renewed. If these weapons and then those weapons are added to the huge sum on our continent—if Poland drifts into civil war and if this calls down Soviet military intervention—if the United States launches some military adventure in the Middle East—can we be certain that this moment will ever come back? I do not think so. If my analysis is right, then the inertial thrust of the Cold War, from its formidable military and ideological bases, will have passed the point of no return.

The opportunity is *now*, when there is already an enhanced consciousness of danger informing millions. We can match this crisis only by a summoning of resources to a height like that of the greatest religious or political movement's of Europe's past. I think, once again, of 1944 and of the crest of the Resistance. There must be that kind of spirit abroad in Europe once more. But this time it must arise, not in the wake of war and repression, but before these take place. Five minutes afterwards, and it will be too late.

Humankind must at last grow up. We must recognise that the Other is ourselves.

E.P. Thompson, who has taken a leading part in the resurgence of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, is here questioning the fundamental condition of contemporary life, the Cold War and the adversary posture of the two blocs. His analysis of our current predicament will, we believe, help the process both of preserving peace and of restoring freedom to Europe. Edward Thompson brings to the subject a historian's knowledge, a writer's skill and the commitment of an activist in the Peace movement.

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The photo on the front cover (by courtesy of the Associated Press) shows the first meeting of the Russian and American soldiers on the Elbe April 1945.

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