SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL CHANGE: THE CASE OF "DÉTENTE FROM BELOW"

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Introduction

Can social movements cause change in international politics? Such a notion would be dismissed out of hand by conventional international relations thinkers, but held equally tenaciously by activists involved in transnational social movements. For example, there are peace activists and academics who believe that transnational peace movements played an integral part in the end of state socialism and the Cold War -- but others who would refute such a claim entirely. Thus, between such polarised views an impasse arises and those of differing perspectives make contradictory statements about the potency of "people power" in international politics. Within such an impasse, the danger exists of the underestimation or overestimation of the relevance of social movements to the international system (Petersen 1992).

One way to overcome this impasse is by conducting empirical research aimed at ascertaining the role of particular social movements in times of international political change. Yet, for reasons to be outlined below, international relations scholars have neglected such research and a dearth of material exists in this area. It is the intention of this paper to address part of this gap in the understanding of transnational social movements by presenting and analysing the results of one such piece of research. In this paper the claim mentioned above, that the transnational connections which existed between Western peace movements and East European independent social movements were instrumental in causing the end of the state socialism and the Cold War (Kaldor 1991, Wainwright 1991) will be investigated. The probity of this bold claim for the importance of transnational social movements will be examined through a case study of the connections between a West European peace movement, European Nuclear Disarmament (END), and indigenous social movements in Poland in the 1980s. Through this study, it will be possible to draw conclusions concerning the relevance of such transnational connections for the demise of state socialism in Poland and, as a result, to gain some insights into the relevance of social movements in international politics more generally.

Social Movements and International Politics

Traditionally, those occupying the mainstream of international relations theory have failed to take transnational social movement activity seriously (Meyer 1991: 17). The

primary reason for this disregard resides in the lengthy predominance of realist theory in the discipline. Without going into the detail of this particular theory, it can be noted that it has certain aspects which have militated against the serious study of transnational social movements.

Firstly, realism singles out the state as the primary actor in international politics. In effect, such state centrism throws a conceptual "cast iron grid" (Alger 1988: 322) over the international system, privileging the importance of states and the inviolability of their borders and thus denying that actors, like social movements, which seek to act below or across such supposedly impermeable boundaries, can be influential. The dismissal of social movements from international relations is reinforced by a second aspect of realism: its denial of the pertinence of questions of morality to the international sphere (Brown 1992: 25). Definitions of transnational social movements recognise that movements are characterised by their explicit concern with the realisation of values and commitments to achieving changes in global ethics such as the promotion of justice, peace or environmental sustenance (Pagnucco and Atwood 1994: 416). Therefore, as non-state, ethically oriented actors, social movements have been marginalised by a discipline immersed in the study of state centred power politics.

Yet recent developments in the field of international relations have taken issue with these and other tenets of realism. Much contemporary scholarship converges around the idea that the realist "cast iron" state system is not a satisfactory conceptualisation of the international system and this development has opened up the possibility for thinking about the role of non-state actors in international affairs. Accordingly, one element in the contemporary challenges to realist orthodoxy has been the emergence of more earnest consideration of transnational actors, including social movements (George and Campbell 1990: 287). Empirical work is now underway investigating the activities of transnational movements and the implications of their existence for the theoretical understanding of international relations. The special issues of journals devoted to these issues testify to this development (*Millennium* 1994, *Peace Review* 1994) as does the work of a number of scholars (see for example: Shaw 1994, Meyer and Marullo 1992, Chilton 1995). Martin Shaw (1994: 657-665), for instance, briefly discusses three movements -- the women's, peace and human rights movements -- and asserts that their role as transnational actors affecting the international system merits further investigation. Yet, he admits that further understanding of social movements as transnational actors is being hampered because, as yet "too little attention has been paid to the empirical analysis of such movements and their relevance to the global/interstate contexts" (Shaw 1994: 648). Until such work is undertaken, the impasse between those who overestimate and those who underestimate the relevance of transnational movements in international politics will continue to exist.

In Shaw's opinion, one movement deserving of further study is the transnational peace movement of the 1980s. In fact, such a study would be particularly useful to the question of establishing the significance of social movements in international politics because it was from certain members of the Western peace movement that a seemingly audacious claim for the relevance of transnational social movements to the "global/interstate context" was lodged.

This bold claim, concerning "détente from below", provides a particularly enticing route into the study of transnational social movements.

A Claim for Social Movement Efficacy : "Détente from Below"

In 1979 NATO's decision to deploy Cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe provoked an unprecedented wave of Western peace movement activism (Thompson 1982: 7). One movement which emerged with a distinctive philosophy and agenda from within this broad wave was the British based END. END's activism was premised on the view that the Cold War divide and its accompanying escalating arms race suited vested interests within both superpowers and thus would not be halted by those powers' own volition (Thompson 1982; Kaldor 1990). As a consequence of this analysis, END's founding Appeal (1980) argued that, rather than waiting for change from above, Europe's citizens should subvert the divide imposed upon them by the Cold War and show their opposition to nuclear armaments by creating transnational alliances below and across the Iron Curtain. By entering into co-operation together "from Poland to Portugal", Eastern and Western Europeans could "act as if a united, neutral and pacific Europe already exist(ed)" (END Appeal 1980) thus undermining the apparent inviolability of the Cold War and the arms race.

END's analysis and prescriptions were shared by some others in the Western peace movement such as the Dutch church-based movement, InterKerkelijk Vredesberaad (IKV). In order to implement their approach END and IKV activists sought throughout the 1980s to engage activists from Eastern Europe's emerging independent social movements in a process of transnational contact and co-operation. This process of East-West coalition building was dubbed "détente from below".

After 1989, those associated with END asserted that, from the early 1980s citizen level détente between East and West had manifested itself in dialogue and practical support which had traversed the Cold War divide. Through these links a supportive nexus had been created between Western and Eastern social movements which strengthened those in the East in their challenge to the legitimacy of their regimes and in their ability to hold on to emerging public spaces in Eastern Europe. Moreover, the existence of this nexus indicated that East-West alliances existed which were a visible challenge to the apparent inevitability of the Cold War divide, as perpetuated by the Superpowers. On the basis of these arguments, END activists felt able to claim that transnational social movements had played an integral part in both the collapse of state socialism and in the end of the Cold War (Kaldor 1991). In sum, ten years after he helped to launch END, E. P. Thompson could look back and make this claim for the movement he helped to inspire,

> From 1980 onwards we [END] put the causes of peace and freedom together. We repeatedly crossed East/West frontiers, entered into dialogue with official and unofficial voices and prised open the doors through which the events of 1989 came (Kaldor 1991: 16).

These are bold claims and as such they provide one obvious research route for those wishing to further empirical and analytical understanding of the relevance of social movements to international politics. Yet, very little material has hitherto been published which attempts to investigate this claim systematically. The writings of peace movement academic/activists tend to be strong on assertions but weak on providing detailed evidence to support their claims (see Kaldor 1991; Wainwright 1991). Furthermore, few academics beyond those involved in the peace activist community have engaged with the topic (exceptions include Tismaneanu 1990; Meyer 1991; Meyer & Marullo 1992).

One of the more substantial attempts by an activist/academic to argue the case that "détente from below" was efficacious comes from Patricia Chilton (1995). Chilton's aim is to establish the extent to which the existence of a network of support between Eastern and Western movements, which she terms the "Peace and Human Rights Trans-National Coalition" (PHR-TNC), was influential in affecting the manner and extent of regime change in Eastern Europe. She pursues this goal by means of comparative study, focusing on three states -- Hungary, the GDR and Romania -- each of which experienced different state/society relations and different levels of PHR-TNC activity. By gauging the level of independent civil society activity alongside the level of international contacts experienced in each case, she concludes that transnational PHR-TNC support was most important in cases, like the GDR, where civil society was nascent but beleaguered by a repressive state. On the other hand, in cases like Romania, with an extremely strong state and an almost non-existent civil society, the impact of transnational contact on regime change was negligible. In her third case, Hungary, Chilton contends that transnational contacts were well developed, but since in this case the state was also relatively weak and indigenous civil society fairly strong, she judges that PHR-TNC contact was probably "not essential for the regime change". However, she does assert that the PHR-TNC did play an important role as a further "catalyst" or "ginger group" in the process of change because the Western movements supported and influenced the thinking of prominent dissident groups like FIDESZ, who became key participant in Hungary's negotiated transition (Chilton 1995: 209).

According to Chilton, Poland can be classified in the same category as Hungary, since both were characterised by a strong indigenous civil society and both enjoyed high levels of collaboration in the PHR-TNC. Therefore by extension of her comparison, the Western peace movement can be considered to have been a catalyst of change in Poland. But is she correct in making these comparative assumptions about Poland -- that transnational contact was high and that PHR-TNC activity was catalytic in prompting change? A detailed study of END and its relationships to three Polish movements, Solidarity, the Committee for the Defence of Society (*Komitet Oporu Spolecznego -- KOS*) and Freedom and Peace (*Wolnosc i Pokoj -- WiP*) will reveal whether or not this was the case.[1]

END and Polish Social Movements

To choose Poland as a case study through which to test the efficacy of "détente from below" may on the surface seem an obvious and perhaps even loaded choice. After all, in this case there are few who would dispute the crucial role played by civil society and domestic social movements in the challenge to, and capitulation of, the state socialist regime of the Polish United Worker's Party (PZPR). The role of Solidarity as a continual threat to the regime is of course well-documented (Ash 1991; Goodwyn 1991) and it was by no means the only independent social movement which persistently challenged the regime in its final years.

Yet, when one does begin to research the extent of transnational interaction between Polish social movements and the Western peace movement, the results are perhaps surprisingly disappointing, particularly in relation to the period prior to 1985. Research reveals that there was little "détente" between END and Solidarity or between END and movements which emerged in the years immediately after Solidarity was forced underground. This lack of the development of "détente" will be described and explained below.

END and Solidarity

For various reasons there ought to have been grounds for the development of a close relationship between the West European peace movement and Solidarity: they shared a congruence in timing, they had a mass nature and both showed an ability to occupy the centre of the political stage which could bring effective pressure on governments of both sides (Ash 1991: 346). Yet, there is scant evidence of collaboration between these two movements. Thompson contended that END did attempt to make contact with Solidarity and tried to publish END's ideas in the Solidarity press, but received no encouragement from the Polish movement (*END Journal* no.8 1984: 25). Only a few traces of more successful contacts can be found. These include, messages of support being carried physically from END groups in Britain to Solidarity in Gdansk (Taylor 1981: 5), a rare statement of support from one delegate at Solidarity's Convention in favour of nuclear disarmament (Sanford 1990: 83), and one joint statement signed between IKV, END and the Solidarity Co-ordinating Office Abroad (IKV/END/ Solidarity n/d).[2]

Overall, this forms a paltry record of contact. So why was the potential for an alliance of these two movements which were so prominent in Europe in 1980-81 never realised? There are several reasons which can explain why an auspicious opportunity to create "détente from below" was apparently lost.

(1) Practicalities

At a very pragmatic level, communication across the Cold War divide was difficult. In 1980 Taylor recalls having to carry messages in person to Gdansk, as one of the few Western "political tourists" to arrive in the city just as Solidarity was emerging (Taylor 1981). In later times, the bureaucracy of the Polish regime would hinder dialogue by its refusal to grant visas to independent social movement activists thus preventing their attendance at the annual END Conventions in Western Europe. However, the causes of the lack of collaboration go far beyond the encumbrances posed by the political divide of Europe.

(2) The Confused Response of the Western Left to Solidarity

Despite carrying a message of support from his local END group to Solidarity, Taylor writes in a critical manner of the general response of the British Left and trade union movement to Solidarity. He notes that messages of support were confined to the initiatives of local groups, whilst the official response of the trade union movement could only be described as "sluggish" (Taylor 1981: 5-6). Such sluggishness is perhaps accountable if one realises that the rise of an independent trade union in what was ostensibly a socialist "workers' state" left many, particularly those of the "old" left in the West, unsure as to where their loyalties should lie.[3]

Given that END's roots lay more in the British "New Left", which was born out of criticism of the practices of state socialism,[4] its intellectual heritage should not have hampered the development of relations with the independent Polish movement to any great degree. However, there were indications that not all in the British New Left were convinced by END's philosophy. The peace movement encountered criticism from within the New Left over some of its thinking, for instance, the determination to ascribe blame for the Cold War to both Superpowers, instead of taking the normal left-wing position of blaming the USA (Thompson 1982).

Even in the New Left, consensus over the need to create "détente from below" was lacking. Yet, criticism of END's thinking did not only emanate from the British peace movement and the Left. As will be shown below, for a variety of reasons END also met criticism from the very movements in the East they were trying to engage.

(3) Solidarity's Concern with Domestic Politics

Part of the explanation for the lack of dialogue between END and Solidarity undoubtedly lies in the disavowal by the Polish movement of any attempt to become implicated in questions impinging on foreign policy. Studies of the thinking behind the activities of Solidarity tend to concur that one principal idea inspiring the movement was that of "self-limitation" (Staniszkis 1984). This philosophy, growing out of the dissident thinking

of the 1970s, involved a recognition that the movement's political context was one in which it would be futile to attempt a direct political challenge to the PZPR, which by extension would also be perceived as a challenge to the Soviet Union. Therefore, rather than aspiring to political power, Solidarity focused on the sphere of civil society and the workplace by promoting the idea of creating a "self-organised society". The following statement from Solidarity's National Co-ordinating Commission (KKP-NSZZ) illustrates this determination on the part of the movement to avoid overt interventions in the sphere of foreign policy:

> The KKP confirms that the constitutional order of the Polish People's Republic [PRL]...is not in danger. The political and state authorities affirm that it is their right to represent and defend the international interests of our country and fully guarantee that they will fulfil all duties resulting from the alliance pacts of the PRL and the international situation. Public opinion in this country, and with it the mass opinion of the union, shares this conviction (KKP-NSZZ 1981: 23).

During the period of its legal existence Solidarity largely abided by this precept. At the union's first Congress in September 1981, for instance, one delegate did speak in language reminiscent of END, asserting that, "it is not a question of criticising one of the blocs here. No, we shall oppose armaments by the East as well as by the West" (Sanford 1990: 183). Yet, this was to remain a unique statement at a Congress chiefly concerned with domestic issues. Later, when Solidarity was forced underground, this tendency to concentrate internally and avoid international questions became even more marked (*END Journal* no.15 1985: 6).

This position of domestic "self-limitation" was one reason why throughout its existence Solidarity was wary of raising an issue of international politics like nuclear disarmament, the very issue which had been the reason for END's foundation.

(4) The "Dulling of the Internationalist Nerve"

In his attempt to explain END's failure to establish a relationship with Solidarity, Thompson accepted the validity of these previous points, but only to an extent. For Thompson, the roots of Solidarity's determination not to pursue foreign policy questions were more complex than simply the movement's societal strategy and its wariness of the Soviet Union. Rather, according to him, the inability to establish citizen level détente with Poland in the early 1980s was a result of the focus of the Poles on an exclusively national level of concern. In his opinion the virtually legendary nationalism of the Poles, stemming from their traumatic history of 19th century partition, made it unlikely that Solidarity would act in a transnational manner. In effect Thompson's argument was that the sufferings and blighted national aspirations of the Poles had left them with a nationally introverted focus and a consequent "dulling of the internationalist nerve" (*END Journal* no.15 1985: 25).

This national introversion was confirmed by the experience of those members of END who travelled to Poland throughout the first half of the 1980s. In END's archival documents, travellers to Poland can be found devising terminology such as "Polo-centric" to describe the prevailing limits of the Polish socio-political imagination (Salter 1984: 10). Moreover, the END activists discovered such "Polo-centrism" was often accompanied by anti-Russian sentiments which were tantamount to "racist stereotyping" amongst the Poles with respect to Russians (Salter 1984: 9).

Overall, displays of national introversion and xenophobia clashed with the internationalist ethos of a movement like END, so further deterring "détente from below". However, there was another consequence of the Poles' traditional fear of Russia, which help to account for the lack of collaboration with END.

(5) Opposition to Nuclear Disarmament

END came into existence in order to campaign for the nuclear disarmament of both Superpowers. However, END members were to discover that the Polish inclination was to see the USSR as the main culprit in the Cold War and the nuclear balance of power as an effective deterrent to further Russian aggression.

In the first instance, those in Polish movements tended to disagree with END's analysis of the co-responsibility of both Superpowers for the Cold War. Rather, based on Poland's historical and political experience it remained their conviction that the Soviet Union was the guilty party. While they admonished the West for its role at Yalta, where Eastern Europe was tacitly consigned to the Soviet sphere of influence, the political situation which resulted in the East from the division of Europe was considered to be the greatest threat to human freedom and peace. The idea of achieving peace through disarmament was therefore regarded with outright alarm by those in Solidarity. Rather than being regarded as a threat to humanity, the possession of nuclear weapons by both sides was seen as an effective deterrent to what was perceived as Soviet expansionism and imperialism. Consequently, the Cold War policies of the USA were regarded in a positive light (Ash 1991).

These perceptions led Solidarity to adopt what to END appeared to be an "appalling stand on nuclear weapons" and a positive approach to Reagan and Thatcher's policies based on the premise that "my enemy's enemy is my friend".[5] As one END traveller reported, "there can be no doubt about the sympathetic regard felt for the USA, evident in the slogans adorning the walls of Nova Huta: 'Reagan is with us'" (END Journal no.15 1985: 6).

(6) The Devaluation of the Idea of Peace

Beyond this aversion to END's disarmament policies, the Western movement faced a broader antipathy simply for being a "peace movement." This problem grew from the fact that state socialist governments had long associated themselves with the concept of peace, claiming socialism was the "harbinger of world peace". Accordingly, a Soviet based World

Peace Council and Official Peace Committees (OPCs) in each satellite had been established. Thus the populations of Eastern Europe had become ingrained with cynicism in respect to peace movements and indeed the very ideal of peace (Vladislav 1987: 164-196). As Jan Jozef Lipski explained to Salter, "(in Poland) what you must understand is that the peace movement and talk of peace is part of the whole system of repression here" (Salter 1985: 3).

Some Western peace movements were in contact with this official peace bureaucracy[6] and the fact that Western peace activism was seen to be in any way allied with this officially approved ideology of peace denigrated it in the eyes of the independent social initiatives, both in Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

In sum, the official promotion of "peace" by the state and the state's approval of the activities of Western peace movements[7] led many Poles to have a jaundiced view of all peace movements, Eastern or Western.

(7) The Debate about Prioritising Human Rights or Peace

As seen above, the Polish political context fermented cynicism with regard to disarmament, peace movements, or indeed the very notion of "peace." Equally, as a consequence of the political context within which Polish movements existed, efforts to establish human rights were considered to be of paramount importance, taking precedence over disarmament as prioritised by the Western peace movement.

If one considers Solidarity documentation, evidence of this prioritisation of human rights is clear. Material from the union is characterised by concerns with civil and political rights such as rights to assembly, to strike, to workplace participation and to freedom of publication. Fulfilling economic and social rights were equally a union concern (Kemp-Welch 1991). In sum, Solidarity was very much committed to "stand up in the defence of human and citizens' rights" (Mikolajczak n/d: 7).

In contrast to the extensiveness of the trade union's discourse on human rights documentary evidence from Solidarity bears very little reference to the issues of peace and disarmament. For the union, overcoming the inhibition placed on human rights by the socialist system of governance was understood to be a necessary step prior to the creation of peace or the implementation of disarmament. As members of IKV discovered in their discussions with Solidarity, the trade union believed that "a society which does not put human rights into effect...but merely recognises them on paper in international treaties is not a society which is concerned to achieve a true peace" (Faber and Muller 1985: 5).

This divergence between Eastern and Western movements over prioritising peace or human rights may appear to be somewhat peculiar given that respect for human rights is surely integral to the realisation of positive peace. Indeed, as time progressed, END began to recognise the inseparability of the two values (see below). Yet, this division of priorities can be understood if one comprehends the differing contexts in which these movements existed. As Feher and Heller (1987: 169-170) summarise, the Western political context of insecurity prompted citizens to fear the threat of nuclear escalation whereas the surfeit of

security provided by the statism of the Eastern system inculcated in citizens a desire for rights and liberties.

Taken together, the seven factors identified here formed a gamut of obstacles to the creation of "détente from below" between END and Solidarity. They explain why, despite their coincidence of timing, the prominence of the movements and the avowed intention of END to seek dialogue with independent Eastern movements, the two movements failed to form an alliance across the Cold War divide. What is more, this unsuccessful attempt to establish a relationship between END and Solidarity was not unique in the history of END's relations with Poland. The failure to manifest "détente from below" was to persist, as a brief study of END's relations with one movement which succeeded Solidarity in the early 1980s will show.

END and KOS

KOS was a small movement of intellectual dissidents which emerged after Martial Law was imposed. Unlike Solidarity, KOS explicitly sought to create a dialogue with Western European peace movements and often distinguished itself from its predecessor by engaging with international questions and even criticising US policies.[8] KOS's tentative correspondence with END is recorded in two issues of the *END Journal* (no.7 1984; no.11 1984). From their letters it is clear however, that the disparities in Eastern and Western views, already noted above, were to reassert themselves and frustrate hopes for "détente from below" between END and KOS.

Correspondence began in a manner which appeared to foretell future rapport. In their opening letter KOS rejected the renewed arms race of the 1980s and called for protest on both sides of the Cold War divide. Yet, in contrast to END's views, KOS members expressed their belief that totalitarianism and the denial of rights, not nuclear weaponry, formed the greatest threat to peace. They also drew attention to the distortion of "peace" in states where government slogans extolled the righteousness of the "fight for peace". These considerations led KOS to a rejection of the idea of unilateral disarmament (*END Journal* No.7 1984: 8).

END's reply tried to stress the common causes of the two movements, yet remained insistent that unilateralism was a way to disarmament and repeated their view that "neither political system is innocent of blame" (*END Journal* no.7 1984). KOS's response to this letter focused almost entirely on the disputatious points between the movements. The members of KOS stated their apprehension at the views expressed by END and wrote frankly "we cannot accept your view that guilt falls squarely on both parties". They maintained that the USSR presented the greater menace and argued that the West should deploy weapons (*END Journal* no.11 1984: 27).

From these exchanges, it can be seen that in certain fundamental aspects the ideas of KOS contradicted those of its Western interlocutors. The areas of dispute were again those which had detracted from the possibility of creating an alliance with Solidarity, including

differing views on the roots of the Cold War, on the responsibilities of the Superpowers, on disarmament, on the meaning of peace and on the prioritisation of human rights. Such disagreements meant that END's dialogue with KOS was short-lived. By 1984 Salter was forced to concede that in relation to KOS he "felt that theoretical debate with us (END) was finished" (Salter 1984: 7).

At this point, on the basis of these two cases of END's relations with Polish social movements certain conclusions can be reached. Firstly, from the above evidence, it can be found that Chilton's contention that there was high level of PHR-TNC contact between Polish civil society and Western movements (Chilton 1995: 206) is exaggerated. Rather the evidence is that before 1985 contact was minimal and the Western peace movement faced rebuttals from the Polish opposition. Secondly, it can be discerned that this failure to establish a transnational coalition between Polish and Western movements was a consequence of fundamental differences over ideals and priorities between East and West, fostered by the movements' contrasting experiences within the Cold War context.

Even the END Polish working group seemed to concede this failure to foster "détente from below" with Polish movements, when they wrote in their 1986 report:

> When thinking about dialogue with the East a question all of us have to answer at some point is "yes -- but with whom?" To a few in the peace movement the answer in Poland's case was obvious from the start -- "civil society". So they tried. The response they got probably surprised and still surprises most peaceniks: the occasional glimmer of interest...On the whole the attitude of the Polish opposition and, one can safely say of Polish society has been at best sceptical and at worst downright hostile to the Western peace movement (END Polish Working Group 1987:1).

On the basis of this pre-1985 evidence, any conclusion about the existence of a PHR-TNC between END and Polish social movements, let alone the efficacy of such a coalition, would have to be a negative one. Yet, before any such conclusion can be accepted, there is a need to pay heed to the fact that after 1985 END did experience an upturn in its fortunes as a new movement emerged which, for various reasons, was more inclined to dialogue and alliance with the West.

Breakthrough in Polish-Western Co-operation: WiP

The period after 1985 was to see a marked decrease in the "downright hostility" previously experienced by END in Poland. This was caused in particular by the emergence of WiP, an independent Polish peace movement in 1985. Originally founded to campaign for the recognition of the right of conscientious objection to compulsory military service, WiP's programme was to develop beyond this to embrace broader questions of peace, thus providing END with a partner for dialogue in Poland.

Like KOS before them, WiP members made explicit their desire to contact movements in the West. As written in its founding statement, WiP "sought to co-operate with every movement, institution and person, both in Poland and abroad, that is ready to devote its activity to the cause of peace achieved on terms of freedom" (Wolnosc i Pokoj 1989: 20). This avowed desire to co-operate led to the pursuit of citizen level contacts between the members of END and WiP. Unlike the previous cases, there is plenty of evidence of interaction between these two movements.

A list of the active collaboration between END and WiP would include the following: END campaigns on behalf of WiP members imprisoned for refusing military service[9]; meetings in Poland at which "personal peace treaties" between WiP and END members were signed (*END Journal* no.26 1987: 7); and END members accompanying WiP activists on their annual pilgrimage to Otto Schimek's grave.[10] Moreover, occasionally WiP members managed to attend END conventions and Piotr Niemczyk, of Warsaw WiP, and Elzbieta Oledzka, a member in Poznan, journeyed through Western Europe seeking contacts with peace movements.[11]

The ultimate manifestation of this establishment of the practice of "détente from below" in Poland was the hosting of a seminar in Warsaw in 1987 by WiP which brought together peace activists from East and West to address directly aspects of the "détente from below" agenda. The fact that the seminar managed to take place was remarkable in itself and probably the presence of a substantial number of activists from Western Europe was influential in ensuring that the Polish authorities did not prevent the seminar from occurring. The Warsaw event in its size and content was unprecedented in the history of concrete connections between Eastern and Western peace movements. Lynne Jones, a delegate from END commented, "WiP has succeeded to do what we have noticeably failed to do in Western Europe and that is bring together independent peace activists from East and West for productive discussion." In Jones' view the event was so heartening that she also wrote:

> perhaps there really is a new beginning here, the possibility of forming some kind of independent and effective co-operation between peace, human rights and ecology movements that does stretch across frontiers (Jones 1987: 8).

From the evidence above, it is apparently the case that from a context which had previously offered scant prospect for "détente from below", relations between END and WiP had produced a substantial manifestation of the process. To account for this unexpected turn of events and WiP's positive inclination towards contact with the Western peace movement, it is necessary to understand the nature of WiP as a new social movement shaped by the political situation in Poland in the mid 1980s.

(1) WiP as a New Social Movement

Describing WiP, Elzbieta Oledzka suggested that it constituted Poland's first "new social movement" in the sense of the term usually applied by political sociologists to post-1960s movements in the West.[12] The term was coined to analyse a generation of Western movements which included the peace, women's, and gay and lesbian movements. These were considered "new" because they emerged from a critique of "old paradigm" conventional politics and advocated a "new paradigm" centering on unexplored issues such as the environment, sexuality or patriarchy to be pursued through the development of new forms of unconventional political action, such as peace camps, "outings" or consciousness raising (Offe 1987: 73).

There are clear signs that WiP was akin to such movements in the West despite its different political context. Firstly, WiP arose from a critique of the "old politics" of the PZPR but also of preceding social movements in Poland. The younger generation of activists who composed WiP were somewhat excluded from underground Solidarity by virtue of their age but they were also critical of that movement for its conservatism on issues such as international politics, the environment, women's rights and personal lifestyle. In searching for a new political terrain, as yet untouched by the opposition, WiP consciously took up these issues which Solidarity had studiously avoided. Secondly, in seeking to forward these new concerns, they also adopted unconventional political activities reminiscent of those used by new social movements in the West (see below).

Thus while WiP was reacting to the particular Polish context of the mid 1980s, in doing so the movement was also obviously paralleling similar trends observable contemporaneously in Western new social movements. As Lipski affirmed, "WiP connected environmental and pacifist questions in a way that is popular in Poland as well as the West" (*END Journal* no. 26 1987: 6). This similarity in concerns, ethos and activities was to provide the basis for mutual collaboration between WiP and Western peace movements.

(2) The Renewal of Political Thought and Collective Action

Seeking a "new paradigm" for Polish politics, members of WiP saw in the Western peace movement's alternative analysis of international relations an intellectual model for their desire to create a novel political discourse in Poland. As Jacek Czaputowicz of Warsaw WiP believed, "we need something that will help to renew Polish political thought and we see a source of this in the peace movement in the West" (*Sojourners* 1987: 21).

WiP thus perceived dialogue and the intellectual exchange of ideas with the Western peace movement as a way to reinvigorate Polish socio-political thinking and approaches to action. As an example of the effects of this interchange, Czaputowicz himself cites WiP's adoption of one of the precepts fundamental to END -- the concept of the co-responsibility of both Superpowers for the Cold War. Diverging from the consensus in Polish society, WiP became openly and equally critical of the actions of the USA as of the USSR, criticising the

US for its intervention in Central America and the Soviet's for their role in Afghanistan (*Sojourners* 1987: 21). Elsewhere, members of WiP also endorsed END's view that the means to subvert the Superpower impasse lay in citizens taking action across state boundaries. One statement made together by the Polish and Dutch peace movements asserted that "we do not accept the division of Europe...civil society...is a central vehicle for bringing a divided Europe together" (Wolnosc i Pokoj 1989: 84).

Besides drawing upon ideas from the West as a means of renewal, engaging in dialogue with the West was also perceived as a means to reinvigorate methods of collective action. The philosophy and practice of non-violent direct action, which had been so central to Western peace movements during the period of opposition to the deployment of NATO's modernised weaponry, was of interest to WiP members and translations of articles from the West about the philosophy of non-violence were published in Gdansk WiP's magazine, *Accappella* (1988: 2). By adopting forms of action such as the "happening",[13] hunger strike and roof-top protest, WiP was drawing on the "repertoire of collective action" possessed by its Western counterparts.

(3) Mutual Intellectual Exchange

The above points show that WiP demonstrated an intellectual inclination towards the ideas and actions of movements such as END. A further distinguishing feature of WiP, which was to facilitate relations with the West, was the Polish movement's conviction that intellectual exchange was a mutually influential process. Unlike KOS for example, with whom dialogue ceased due to irreconcilable differences in political analysis and moral priorities, there was a conviction on the part of WiP that, while it drew inspiration from contact with the West, the Western peace movement was simultaneously adapting itself to certain perspectives expressed by WiP and other East European social movements.

From its very name, Wolnosc i Pokoj -- Freedom and Peace -- it is obvious that WiP correlated the two ideals. Even the founding document's call for contacts with movements abroad contained the proviso, as quoted above, that such contacts should be with movements who aspired to create peace "achieved on terms of freedom." As with preceding Polish movements, there was a suspicion on the part of WiP that movements like END prioritised the achievement of peace through disarmament at the expense of realising respect for human rights. This debate was indeed pursued throughout the whole period of the two movements relations. Even in the very last issue of END's Journal a letter from a WiP supporter was published which argued that the whole concept of "détente from below" was degraded by a situation where political freedom in the East was still not achieved (*END Journal* no.37 1989: 47).

Yet there were members of WiP who, rather than seeing this ongoing debate over peace and human rights as a hindrance to the realisation of citizens' détente, saw it as the particular intellectual contribution which the East could bring to the dialogue. In Czaputowicz's opinion (1989: 8), the advocacy of the idea that peace and human rights were

inseparable was the significant addition which WiP and other Eastern European social movements could make to the idea and practice of "détente from below". Indeed, throughout the 1980s there is evidence that END was making an intellectual journey towards accepting the argument that freedom and peace were inseparable. END's initial sole commitment to nuclear disarmament was reassessed as a result of arguments from the East which stressed that campaigning for the recognition of human rights by socialist regimes was a prerequisite to enable peace activism and the creation of genuine peace. A specific example of the effect of this shift can be seen in relation to Poland. As Jones recalls, during conversations with peace activists in Poland, WiP members expressed to her the belief that dialogue with the Western movement was being enhanced by the fact that those in the West were sharing more explicitly WiP's demand for respect for human rights (*END Journal* no.26 1987: 7). By the time of the 1988 END convention in Lund, Thompson could welcome the presence of prominent Polish dissident Jacek Kuron to the Convention with the conviction that the phase had ended when "the partisans of peace and the partisans of freedom were forced into opposition with each other" (*END Journal* no.36 1988-89: 25).

Although, some of the disputes which had dogged END's relations with previous Polish movements did emerge in END-WiP relations (*END Journal* no.28/29 1987), there can be little doubt that the emergence of WiP brought about the recovery of END's previously thwarted attempts to foster a citizen level détente with Polish civil society. There was a process of mutual intellectual exchange and empathy between WiP and END which provided the basis for the establishment of physical contacts and on-going dialogue between the two movements. The presence of END at the Warsaw seminar probably did facilitate its occurrence, thus lending credence to Western claims to have held open public space for the Eastern movement. The existence of this relationship, therefore, does allow us to concur with Chilton that a degree of PHR-TNC activity did occur between Polish and Western movements after 1985. Moreover, the mutual exchange of ideas and activities between the movements does imply that the Western movement did play a catalytic role in inspiring and encouraging the Polish peace movement.

Overall, however, the cases of the relations between END and the three movements presented here do constitute a chequered history of PHR-TNC activity. Therefore what can we conclude from this study about the claim for the efficacy of "détente from below"? Furthermore, what does this specific, empirical case tell us about the role of social movements in international political change more generally?

"Détente from Below" and the Demise of Polish State Socialism

After 1989, END activists trenchantly expressed their views. To them social movements, East and West, were the "main actors" in the events of that year as "the spontaneous agents of historical change" (Wainwright 1991: 17). Yet, on the basis of this examination of Polish/END relations, can their claims be substantiated?

There is little doubt that the existence of domestic social movements, in particular Solidarity, was a fundamental cause of regime breakdown in Poland. Throughout its last years the PZPR was constantly under pressure. Unable to prevent the emergence of a succession of social movements or to quash dissident ideas about creating an independent civil society, the regime made numerous concessions to the populace in a vain attempt to gain some legitimacy. Establishing a constitutional court, holding a reform referendum and conceding to conscientious objectors are just some examples of a regime no longer "directing Polish society but responding to it" (Brown 1991: 79). The existence of such strong opposition also tempered the nature of regime demise, providing an obvious partner for the PZPR in the Round Table negotiations which allowed for a peaceful transfer of power and set a precedent for the rest of Eastern Europe.

The "détente from below" argument, that an alliance between these indigenous movements and Western movements was also of importance in the challenge to Polish state socialism, is however harder to sustain. Importantly, the investigations detailed above show that relations between END and Solidarity were practically non-existent and the potential for alliance was questionable given the fundamental differences in perspectives which marked these two movements. END members themselves recognised that their contacts with Polish independent opinion were fragile and would easily be undermined (Burke 1985: 2). A frank assessment suggests that Solidarity's persistence and eventual triumph in Poland cannot be attributed to support derived from contacts with the Western peace movement.

This assessment appears unassailable, particularly if one is making a practical judgement based on evidence of concrete manifestations of a "supportive nexus" and harmonious collaboration across the Cold War. A relationship like that did not exist between END, Solidarity and KOS, as there was too much dissonance in "détente from below". However, it can also be argued that the fact that such transnational dialogue was occurring at all, no matter how tenuous and disputatious, was of significance (Waller 1988). It was significant because this dialogue, however quarrelsome, illustrated that Polish social movements remained unsubdued and that the PZPR was incapable of silencing civil society. Studying "détente from below" therefore imparts something of the internal crisis of state socialism and the persistence of societal self organisation, both of which were causes of regime breakdown.

Moreover, the emergence of WiP also moderates the conclusion that "détente from below" was insignificant in the Polish case. Here a process of exchange, dialogue, dispute and support was established and END can legitimately claim some credit for strengthening this movement both in ideas and practicalities. Yet, given the smallness of WiP, the fact that it adopted issues like pacifism and feminism which were generally taboo in Polish society and the dominance of Solidarity, can any great significance be ascribed to this more successful manifestation of "détente from below"? Arguably yes, because it can be concluded that, despite its size, WiP was a highly significant movement given that it was established at a point in the mid 1980s when Solidarity was illegal and Polish society somewhat subdued. This was a period when Jacek Kuron noted that Polish society had become divided

between a silent majority (*milczacy wiekszosci*) and an engaged minority (*zaangazowanej mniejszosci*) composed mainly of a younger generation of activists (Kuron 1988: 3). As one such new social movement, WiP adopted innovative issues and activities, thereby helping to reinvigorate Polish civil society at a moment when the mass social movement was dispersed. As a "small moral group when small moral groups were all that were possible" (Czaputowicz 1989), it was of importance in sustaining Polish civil society. In such a scenario, support derived from the West was significant in maintaining this manifestation of independent activism. Furthermore, WiP's importance stretched into the process of transition as several members of the movement eventually became involved in collaboration with Solidarity in the Round Table and the post-communist administration.

Overall, it must be acknowledged that END's relations with Solidarity (and KOS) were minimal and fraught and, given the fundamental role of Solidarity in the challenge to the PZPR, doubt must be cast on the role of the PHR-TNC in the demise of Polish state socialism. Yet, given END's collaboration with WiP and the importance of that movement in the latter half of the 1980s, there is some reason to concur with Thompson's assertion that the Western movement "helped prise open the door through which the events of 89 came" (Kaldor 1991: 16).

Transnational Social Movements and International Politics

On the assessment above, this empirical study of a case of "détente from below" seems to deflate the more audacious claims favouring the view that social movements are catalysts of international change. Rather, the claim for "détente from below" might be judged as an overestimation of the efficacy of transnational social movements in international politics, thereby encouraging concurrence with those on the dismissive side of the debate. However, such a conclusion would be unwarranted. Although transnational social movements may not independently have caused the collapse of state socialism and the end of the Cold War, a study of their involvement in these events does challenge conventional accounts of how we understand international politics in a number of ways.

In this study a series of contacts, amiable or otherwise, across and below the Cold War divide were uncovered. The existence of such contacts diverts attention from the exclusive study of states and belies the "cast iron grid" conceptualisation of the international system. Instead attention is directed to transnational actors, which subvert the supposedly impenetrable borders of the state system, and to domestic actors, which as in the case of Poland, can be so fundamental to change in domestic and international politics.

Beyond challenging the acceptability of the "cast iron", state centred view of the world, the study of transnational social movements can challenge orthodox views of international politics in other ways. Importantly, by studying social movements one realises that there are alternative ways of understanding the international system and thus there are alternative futures for the world. As it stands, realist orthodoxy presents a rather unmalleable

view of international politics, with competitive, aggressive, "power politics" being seen as the inevitable consequence of an anarchical international system. Yet, social movements themselves proffer alternative analyses and visions of international politics. This study of the pan European peace movement of the 1980s illustrates both these points.

The study of END reveals that the movement based its activism on an alternative analysis of the Cold War international system. Rather than accepting the orthodox view that the Cold War was an inevitable clash between two competing blocs, END intellectuals argued that the Cold War was a ruse, mutually maintained by the superpowers because it suited their own ends (Kaldor 1990). From this analysis that the Cold War was created -- and not given -- action became possible and ordinary people could be called upon to "challenge the ideological blockade" of Europe by acting "as if" the Cold War divide was ephemeral (*END Appeal* 1980). The study of transnational social movements therefore raises awareness that such different understandings of international politics are possible and can be empowering.

Beyond this elaboration of alternative understandings of the present, the study of transnational social movements also suggests that the future of the international system is malleable, again challenging the pessimistic prognoses of realism. Once more the example of the pan European peace movement illuminates this point.

Despite their fears about the escalating nuclear threat and their awareness of the might of the superpowers, Western peace movement activists believed that a future "civilisation of the international" (Hegedus 1989: 28) was possible through the collaboration of Europe's citizens. In Kaldor's view "the task of the peace movement (was) to build an ethical politics" (Kaldor in *END Journal* no.30 1987: 9) which would challenge the status quo. Studying the activities and visions of transnational social movements therefore alerts one to the possibility that future international politics could be characterised by "civility, decency, good sense, compromise (and) negotiation" (Garner 1994: 432).

Finally, for the above reasons, the study of transnational social movements carries with it a message of hope (Wignaraja 1993). Although by conventional criteria the study of "détente from below" might be considered a failure, the existence of such movements remain symbols of hope. These movements suggest that conventional wisdom is changeable, that alternative visions are feasible and that people living "as if" can be symbolic of a future desirable international society.

Conclusion

This paper sought to ascertain whether transnational social movements cause change in international politics. At the outset, it was argued that an answer to this question requires empirical work, which has hitherto been lacking in the field of international relations. This paper presented the results of one such investigation, testing the claim that "détente from

below" was influential in the events of 1989. The claim was assessed through an analysis of transnational relations between END and three Polish social movements during the 1980s.

The study of the Polish case produced equivocal conclusions. Only tenuous and troubled transnational contacts were uncovered between Solidarity, KOS and END. The reasons for this lack of coalition building were found to lie in the divergent perspectives and priorities of Eastern and Western social movements, which arose from their differing political contexts. Yet, it was argued, even such dissonant détente was significant because it signalled the irrepressibility of Polish civil society. Moreover, the later good relations between END and WiP illustrated that the Western movement was a source of innovative ideas and support for Poland's emerging "new social movements."

The fact that the Polish case produced such equivocal results suggests there is a need for further research work. Comparative empirical research, investigating the Western peace movement's relations with social movements in other Eastern European states, is one possible means for furthering understanding of the role of transnational social movements in the events of 1989.

Despite these equivocal findings and the recognised need for more research work, has the empirical case, detailed here, done anything to resolve the original question: can social movements cause change in international politics? The answer is, perhaps not if we accept the orthodox view of international politics but perhaps, as suggested above, these transnational social movements themselves can cause us to change the way we see international politics, giving us new analyses, visions and hopes.

Notes

1. This research was carried out by use of archive material and interviews with peace activists in both Britain and Poland between 1993 and 1995.

2. This statement was not only a rarity its signing by Kaldor and Faber (of IKV) was controversial because it equated peace with the Helsinki process of "Détente from Above" and the prioritisation of human rights therein. In doing so Faber and Kaldor were signing up to a disputed view in the Western peace movement.

3. This lack of support was epitomised by Arthur Scargill, leader of the British Mineworkers, who attained infamy in Poland for his failure to support Solidarity.

4. The New Left emerged in Britain after the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 convinced many left wing intellectuals to distance themselves from socialism as practised in the Eastern block. E.P. Thompson, one of the founders of END, was a prominent participant in this move on the British Left.

5. The words of Lynne Jones, END activist in an interview, Edinburgh 14.9.93.

6. For example the British based Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). Yet, even END, which specifically sought dialogue with unofficial movements, never wholeheartedly spurned contact with OPCs, and received criticism from WiP for this.

7. For instance, the Solidarity Congress noted the approval the official Polish press gave the British Labour Party's unilateral disarmament policy (Sanford 1990: 188).

8. As a result of making these overtures to the West, KOS attracted the opprobrium of the PZPR. One official report described KOS as a conspiratorial group which had fallen into co-operation with independent peace movements in the West. Thus "attempt(ing) to internationalise anti-socialist forces under the guise of concentrating efforts on creating a lasting international peace"(Kwiecien 1986).

9. END members were to claim that their actions did lead to the release of WiP members from prison (END Polish Working Group 1987:1).

10. Schimek, a Wehrmacht soldier in World War Two, was allegedly executed for refusing to shoot Polish civilians. WiP's choice of a German "deserter" as an icon of non-violence affronted the Polish authorities (Wolnosc i Pokokj 1989: 32).

11. Information derived from interview and material from Lynne Jones, Edinburgh 14.9.93, and interview with Elzbieta Oledzka 14.7.95, Poznan.

12. Interview with Elzbieta Oledzka 14.7.95, Poznan.

13. "Happenings" refer to public manifestations, such as street theatre and festivals. The Polish experts at "happenings" were members of a group in Wroclaw, the Orange Alternative (Pomaranczowa Alternatywna).

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