

Geoffrey Roberts
University College Cork/University of Helsinki

Stalin and the Peace Movement

From its inception at the 1948 Wroclaw Congress of Intellectuals for Peace, the postwar communist peace movement grew into a global network of national and local organisations and activists. Its world congresses attracted thousands of delegates and were supported by a dazzling array of scientists, artists and intellectuals. Its anti-nuclear petitions were signed by hundreds of millions of people and by the mid-1950s its policies on peace, disarmament and collective security had widespread support across Europe and the world. Many peace movement leaders were awarded Stalin Peace Prizes and the movement is often seen as simply Stalin's weapon in the cold war with the west. Yet the movement was not a Stalin or even a Soviet initiative and there were tensions in relations between the movement and Moscow that were not resolved until after Stalin's death in 1953. Based on new research in Russian archives, this paper explores Stalin's attitude toward the peace movement and how its leaders negotiated their sometime prickly relations with the Soviet dictator.