

The Journals of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. A Global Perspective on the Cultural Cold War

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Bericht von: Charlotte Lerg, Amerika-Institut, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

The Lasky Center for Transatlantic Studies at the Ludwig-Maximilians University Munich, together with Leiden University, hosted a one-day intensive workshop on new approaches to the history of the cultural and intellectual Cold War. The focus was laid on the network of intellectuals, publications and conferences maintained by the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), which has been studied from the point of view of intellectual history as well as diplomatic history.¹ Studies have also poignantly dealt with the controversial links of the CCF to the CIA² at times not without sensationalism.³

There has always been an awareness of the global reach of the CCF's project; hence, it almost seems surprising that in the age of global and transnational history this perspective has not yet been explored further. While there are elaborate studies on various national contexts, for example in Germany⁴ or in France⁵, so far there has been little interconnection in the research on an institution that, effectively, had international networks at its core. The path towards a transnational history of the CCF can best be explored through the extensive stable of journals that it published and supported worldwide. In what will possibly be the basis for a larger project in the future, the workshop on October 24, 2014 in Munich, for the first time, brought together international scholars from different disciplines who are working on these journals and the larger cultural contexts of their publication.

GILES SCOTT-SMITH (Leiden) who organized the project with CHARLOTTE LERG (Munich), opened the discussion with observations on themes that had emerged from the pre-circulated papers. By looking beyond the North-Atlantic world, long the focus of CCF research, interesting questions can

be raised on the perception and constitution of center(s) and periphery during the Cold War. More specifically, issues of postcolonial identity suddenly become immensely relevant. Furthermore, we can see the movement not only of ideas and publications but also of people, who in their new surroundings create their own exile intellectual culture that provides a breeding ground for an international exchange, which they simultaneously sought to open, shape and control. The journals encapsulate a form of diaspora politics, with several of the key figures involved being migrants, émigrés or displaced persons who created their own mid-twentieth century intellectual homes via the CCF. In doing so, they often functioned as cultural brokers between the past and the future in cultural settings torn apart by world war and totalitarian politics. But how did the modernist universalisms of the CCF's western narrative play out in the soon to be post-colonial world?

The first session was concerned with the early CCF publications. Presenting his research on the British journal „Encounter“, JASON HARDING (Durham) pointed out that it was perceived by the reading public as a cultural magazine rather than a political one. On this basis he challenged the historians in the room by suggesting in this case to „treat the archives as supplement to the content,“ namely to take a step back from following the money trail and uncovering editorial decisions and to look at what was being published. After all, due to the prominent contributors, „Encounter“ was considered sophisticated and distinctly „prestigious“ within London literary and intellectual circles. This rep-

¹Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy. The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe*, New York 1989; Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture. The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA and Post-War American Hegemony*, London 2002.

²Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer. How the CIA Played America*, Cambridge Ma., 2009.

³Frances Stonor-Saunders, *Who Plaid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*, London 1999.

⁴Michael Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive? Der Kongress für kulturelle Freiheit und die Deutschen*, München 1998.

⁵Pierre Gremion, *Intelligence de l'Anticommunisme: Le Congrès pour la liberté de la culture à Paris 1950-1975*, Paris 1995.

utation would have been threatened by hard line anti-communism. Participants of the workshop agreed that the content of the journals ought to be considered more thoroughly but there was some discussion on the way an assessment of content ought to relate to the stories the archives tell. MATT SPENDER (London), son of former „Encounter“-editor and British poet Steven Spender, gave insights into the editorial work of his father and commented on the vision of the journal.

The „identity“ of the journal was also a key aspect in the paper by NICOLAS STENGER (Geneva) on „Preuves“. He explained that editorial autonomy should not be underestimated. Even if editor Francois Bondy was a central figure in the coordination of CCF publications in general, in his work for „Preuves“ he carefully balanced the journal between international ambitions and national audiences. When it came to topics like European federalism, „Preuves“ took a line that in many ways diverged from an American perspective. Furthermore, Stenger highlighted the impetus of the French publication to establish a dialogue with and to provide a platform for Eastern European intellectuals. The discussion that followed returned to the question of editorial influence both on the local level as well as from the central bureau of the CCF, and to what degree setting agendas may be linked to pressure or even censorship from the CCF’s executive committee.

TODD WIER (Belfast/Munich) gave a brief excursion on „Der Monat“. In a close reading of Melvin Lasky’s editorial statement in the journal’s first issue, he reflected upon the incongruence that stems from the German concept of „Weltanschauung“ as opposed to the Anglo-American term and concept of worldview or even ideology.

In her paper on „Tempo Presente“ CIARA MORBI (Birmingham) elaborated on the particular position of the CCF in Italy. She explained how prominent players like Ignazio Silone and Nicola Chiaromonte insisted on creating a „cultural third way“ of western idealism using the „signifier ‘America’“ only with great care. They wielded considerable power based on their international reputations. Anti-communism in its European interpretation, rooted in the decades before the

Second World War, invites us to fully engage with the „local cold war“ and not to dismiss it as a mere micro-reproduction of ideological conflicts on the macro level. This observation led into deliberations among the participants on the application of anti-communism in other national contexts.

In the afternoon ROY MCLEOD (Sydney) presented on the Journal „Minerva“, which he himself edited for over a decade. Focused on the history of science rather than literature, this publication is set apart from the other journals, and moreover, along with one or two others („China Quarterly“, „Quadrant“), it still exists. McLeod expounded how science and academia occupied a particularly prominent position within the cultural cold war, akin to arts and literature yet also distinct, especially due to a strong emphasis on academic freedom in western ideology. He then looked at Edward Shils, who played a decisive role in shaping the journal in its early years. McLeod’s analysis of the American sociologist’s reception of Max Weber’s notion of „Wertfreiheit“ in science added a thought-provoking dimension to the discussion about content, politics and policy. The discussion that followed revolved around the hypothesis that science had become the „ideology after the end of ideology.“ Moreover, a very specific understanding of modernity drove „Minerva“, which was distinct from the literary modernity prevailing in „Tempo Presente“ or „Encounter“.

From an Asian Studies perspective ANN SHERIF (Oberlin, OH) examined the Japanese journal „Jiyu“. In the Pacific, the relations to the United States were influenced by parameters that can only partially be compared to those of the North Atlantic. While the rather elitist editorial staff at „Jiyu“ was aiming to follow the Euro-American model, a „practice of affiliation“ developed. Sherif explained how articles by Japanese intellectuals were explicitly interspersed with so-called „imported authors“, translations of contributions from the European journals. The lack of specialists on Japan among the CCF organizers drew considerable influence for those who could act as cultural brokers, like Edward Seidensticker. The issue of language featured prominently in the comments from the other par-

ticipants: Jiyu means 'liberty', but what form does that liberty take? Furthermore, the question arose whether an ideology like the liberal anti-communist consensus, with its direct links to distinctly western conventions of thought, could even take root in a country based on entirely different philosophical and intellectual traditions.

The (post)colonial dimension of the subject was illustrated particularly strongly in the paper by OLGA GLONDYS (Barcelona) that dealt with the Latin American journal „Cuadernos“. She described the dominance of Spanish exiles in the editing board, which moreover convened not in Latin America but far away in Paris. Intellectual arrogance and/or ignorance towards indigenous topics led them to direct their vision of the journal's program almost exclusively towards Europe. This, often coupled with a rather dismissive tone and an almost outright colonial attitude, Glondys argued, resulted in detrimental criticism among Latin American intellectuals. More than any other journal, therefore, „Cuadernos“ had to struggle to keep its reputation in face of the local intellectual landscape. Eventually, the Cuban revolution ultimately sealed its fate. There were careful attempts to move further to the left, which ironically were welcomed more vigorously among the central CCF organizers than by some of the dominant (Spanish) personalities in the direct editorial staff. The journal represents a special case of the CCF attempting to radically change editorial direction due to changing local circumstances, but the attempt back-fired by stirring up new controversies.

Thanks to the pre-circulation of papers, a number of additional contributions by participants who could not make the trip to Munich also fed into the discussion and considerably broadened the scope of the workshop. Thus MARIA MUDROVICIC (Ann Arbor, MI) complemented the Latin American perspective in her paper on „Mundo Nuevo“, the journal that followed after Cuaderno's demise. PAOLA CARLUCCI (Richmond, VA) offered an additional view on „Tempo Presente“, CASANDRA PYBUS (Sydney) dealt with the Australian publication Quadrant and FELIX TWERASER (Carrolton, GA) analyzed Forum, originally edited by Friedrich Torberg

in Vienna. Finally, RODERICK MACFARQUHAR (Harvard) presented another editor's perspective in his piece on the „China Quarterly“.

The conclusions from this workshop will need further exploration in the future. Some issues may apply to all the journals like negotiating the balance between the national and the local ambitions and the autonomy of the editors. Others aspects like the relation between center and periphery come out more forcefully in certain contexts rather than in others. The influence of the CIA certainly continues to be relevant but it, too, has to be looked at in more detail, allowing for the fact that neither the CCF nor the CIA was a unified institution. Different degrees of intrusion in different local editorial processes and at different points in time need to be related to larger political developments.

The sense of entitlement among western intellectuals and a very elitist understanding of culture certainly informed the vision of the CCF. New research needs to also carefully consider the readership, both national and international, in order to get a clearer sense not only of what was being transmitted but also of what was being received. Thus, to hark back to a well-known metaphor, the question can no longer simply be: Who paid the piper? But rather: What instrument did the piper play and what did the tune sound like to those who listened?

Conference overview:

Giles Scott-Smith (Leiden) / Charlotte Lerg (Munich), Goals for the Project

Jason Harding (Durham) / Matt Spender (London), Encounter

Nicolas Stenger (Geneva), Preuves

Todd Wier (Munich/Belfast), Der Monat

Chiara Morbi (Birmingham), Tempo Presente

Roy Macleod (Sydney), Minerva

Ann Sherif (Obelrin, OH), Jiyu

Olga Glondys (Barcelona), Cuadernos

Maren Roth (Munich), Introduction to the Lasky Archive

Additional papers discussed:

Maria Mudrovicic (Ann Arbor, MI), Mundo Nuevo

Paola Carlucci (Richmond, VA), Tempo Presente

Casandra Pybus (Sydney), Quadrant

Felix Tweraser (Carrolton, GA), Forum

Roerick MacFarquhar (Cambridge, MASS), China Quarterly

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