

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: THE DEMISE OF THE CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM: TRANSATLANTIC INTELLECTUAL CONSENSUS AND “VITAL CENTER” LIBERALISM, 1950-1967

Scott Kamen, Master of Arts, 2011

Directed By: Saverio Giovacchini, Associate Professor,
Department of History

From the 1950 to 1967, the U.S. government, employing the newly formed CIA, covertly provided the majority of the funding for an international organization comprised primarily of Western non-communist left intellectuals known as the Congress for Cultural Freedom. The Paris-based Congress saw its primary mission as facilitating cooperative networks of non-communist left intellectuals in order to sway the intelligentsia of Western Europe away from its lingering fascination with communism. This thesis explores how the Congress largely succeeded in the 1950s in establishing a cohesive international network of intellectuals by fostering a transatlantic consensus around “vital center” liberalism as a necessary guardian of the Western cultural intellectual tradition in the face of perceived communist threats. By examining the ways in which developments in the 1960s shattered this transatlantic consensus this thesis demonstrates how the Congress suffered an inevitable demise as Western intellectuals became disillusioned with American liberalism of the “vital center.”

THE DEMISE OF THE CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM:
TRANSATLANTIC INTELLECTUAL CONSENSUS AND “VITAL CENTER”
LIBERALISM, 1950-1967

By

Scott C. Kamen

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
2011

Advisory Committee:
Professor Saverio Giovacchini, Chair
Professor David Freund
Professor James Gilbert
Professor Mario Del Pero (de facto)

© Copyright by
Scott C. Kamen
2011

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: A Changing Cold War and the Turn to “Vital Center” Liberalism.....	20
Chapter 2: The “End of Ideology,” the New Left, and Fragmentation of the “Vital Center”	46
Chapter 3: The Radicalization of the Civil Rights Movement, the Failures of “Vital Center” Liberalism, and the Neoconservative Turn	74
Chapter 4: The Vietnam War and the Demise of “Vital Center” Liberalism	97
Conclusion	124
Bibliography	132

Introduction

During the tense early years of the Cold War, the United States government, employing the newly formed Central Intelligence Agency, covertly provided the majority of the funding for an international organization comprised primarily of non-communist left (NCL) intellectuals known as the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF). The Paris-based CCF saw its primary mission as facilitating cooperative networks of NCL intellectuals and sought to draw upon the cultural influence of these individuals to sway the intelligentsia of Western Europe away from its lingering fascination with communism and its sympathetic views of the Soviet Union. The CCF stressed that communism presented an urgent and dangerous threat to the tradition of cultural-intellectual freedom venerated by Western intellectuals. In the words of Michael Josselson, Executive Secretary and CIA liaison for the organization, the CCF “could seize the initiative from the Communists by reaffirming the fundamental ideals governing cultural (and political) action in the Western world and the repudiation of all totalitarian challenges.”¹ Despite the challenges in bringing together an often-quarrelsome collection of intellectuals, the Congress found success amid the tense struggle of the early Cold War in building a coalition united in opposing the popular belief among European intellectuals that communism was more accommodating to culture than liberal or “bourgeois” democracy.²

¹ Michael Josselson quoted in Michael Warner, “Origins of the Congress for Cultural Freedom 1949-1950,” *Studies in Intelligence* 38, no.5 (2007): 93. As a historian with the CIA’s History Staff, Warner utilized classified documents unavailable to other scholars in the writing of this article. While these documents allow Warner to provide highly valuable insights into the CCF, his work is that of an in-house historian, containing deliberate omissions and aiming to defend the role of the CIA, and should be read as such.

² Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 1999), 1.

At the height of its operations in the 1950s, the CCF established national committees in thirty-five countries, organized international conferences and seminars, published a family of magazines consisting of over twenty journals, and provided patronage and venues for artists, writers, and musicians. This scale of operations was made possible by the deep pockets of the CIA and its decision to embrace the NCL as a reliable anti-communist force that would come to be the theoretical foundation of the Agency's political operations against communism over the next fifteen years.³ International Operations Divisions (IOD) Deputy Director, Cord Meyer, stressed the importance of the NCL in Europe when he argued that the primary competition for "votes and influence was focused on the left side of the political spectrum, where the struggle for the allegiance of the European working class and liberal intelligentsia would be decided."⁴ Representing the CIA's view of the NCL as a reliable anti-communist force, IOD Director, Thomas Braden later remarked, "in much of Europe in the 1950s, socialists, people who called themselves 'left'-the very people whom many Americans thought no better than Communists--were the only people who gave a damn about fighting Communism."⁵

The extensive range of operations conducted by the Congress and supported by the CIA was intended to gain the backing of the European NCL with the aim of establishing a cohesive network of influential intellectuals united in opposition to communism. In its facilitation of a European NCL intellectual network, the Congress stressed the shared cultural-intellectual tradition of Western Europe and the US in its

³ Saunders, 63.

⁴ Cord Meyer, *Facing Reality: From World Federalism to the CIA* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 57.

⁵ Thomas Braden, "I'm Glad the CIA is 'Immoral,'" *Saturday Evening Post*, May 20 1967, 10.

effort to foster a transatlantic intellectual consensus between European and American intellectuals. Viewing Soviet-directed international Communism as a significant threat to the freedoms upon which this tradition was based, the Congress urged intellectuals to take a stand and vigorously defend cultural freedom. Clearly demarcating the borders of acceptability, the Congress defined the debate over communism as a struggle over cultural freedom and argued that those who opposed the defense of cultural freedom or remained neutral on the cause must be presented as beyond the pale of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition.⁶

While CIA funding allowed the Congress to operate on a scale that would have otherwise been impossible, Agency backing alone does not explain the significant role in the Western intellectual landscape that the organization enjoyed in the early postwar years. The Congress succeeded in attracting distinguished Western intellectuals with reputations to lose by establishing itself as a serious and seemingly independent cultural-intellectual organization that responded to the needs of the Western intelligentsia in the 1950s. The Congress became a vigorous, influential, and cohesive organization in its first decade of existence by establishing a transatlantic intellectual consensus around the notion that the “vital center” of American liberalism espoused by Arthur Schlesinger and other postwar liberals not only satisfied postwar European needs for social stability by mitigating the appeal of political extremes but also represented the foundation for the continued prosperity of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition. When the 1950s gave way to the 1960s, the emergence of the New Left, radicalization of the Civil Rights Movement, and escalation of the Vietnam

⁶ Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA and Post-War American Hegemony*, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 99.

War discredited “vital center” liberalism in the eyes of many Western intellectuals and shattered the CCF’s transatlantic intellectual consensus around this political philosophy as a necessary guardian of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition. With its transatlantic intellectual consensus around “vital center” liberalism providing more contention than cohesion, the Congress suffered a demise in the 1960s that would have occurred irrespective of revelations of CIA funding in 1966 and 1967.

This thesis examines the demise of the Congress in order to illuminate aspects of the organization’s transatlantic intellectual consensus and role in the Cultural Cold War that have been overlooked by the existing scholarship. By seriously examining the CCF and its motivations within a theoretical framework, this thesis aims to avoid the tendency towards pejorative or apologetic assessments that have plagued a great deal of work on the Congress. Beginning the propensity of historians to portray the Congress as either a reprehensible instrument of the CIA or a virtuous and autonomous organization, Christopher Lasch produced the first scholarly assessment of the organization with a scathing treatment in his 1968 work, *Agony of the American Left*.⁷ The Congress received little further attention until Peter Coleman wrote the first monograph devoted to the organization with his 1989 effort, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe*.⁸ Coleman, who served for a number of years as editor of the CCF’s Australian journal, *Quadrant*, responded to Lasch’s earlier attacks with a largely apologetic account of the Congress that stressed the vital importance of its mission. Far greater scholarly attention has been given to the Congress in the wake of

⁷ Christopher Lasch, *The Agony of the American Left* (New York: Knopf, 1968).

⁸ Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe* (New York: The Free Press, 1989).

Frances Stonor Saunders' commercially successful and colorful 1999 work, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*.⁹ Published in the UK with the more provocative title, *Who Paid the Piper?: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*, Saunders' use of exclusive interviews and other previously unavailable sources shed new light on various personalities and relationships in the organization but offered little to further our understanding of the ideas at work in the Congress or the nature of its role in the Cold War.¹⁰

By examining the Congress with an assessment grounded in Gramscian theory, Giles Scott-Smith produced the first serious attempt to locate the organization within a theoretical framework with his 2002 work, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA and Post-War American Hegemony*.¹¹ Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony provided Scott-Smith with the conceptual means to escape the protracted arguments concerning dependence and autonomy that have often characterized scholarship on the Congress and the broader Cultural Cold War. Scott-Smith's analysis accentuated the common interest of Congress members and the CIA in fostering a broad transatlantic consensus that stressed both the Western cultural-intellectual tradition shared by intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic and the urgency with which this tradition needed to be defended from communist threats.¹² By emphasizing this congruence of interests between the Western intellectuals who comprised the Congress and the CIA, he presented the

⁹ Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 1999).

¹⁰ Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta Books, 1999).

¹¹ Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA and Post-War American Hegemony*, (New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹² *Ibid.*, 99.

CCF's relationship with the CIA and its general support for American foreign policy as part of a hegemonic coalition of Atlanticists allied against the Soviet Union.¹³ This thesis provides a more comprehensive understanding of the Atlanticist consensus fostered by the Congress by stressing the importance of "vital center" liberalism to the successful establishment of this consensus in the 1950s. By diving deeply into the deterioration of the Congress and examining the ways in which the disintegration of consensus around "vital center" liberalism in the 1960s led to its demise, we gain a greater understanding of how the Congress functioned during its successful years in the 1950s and the fundamental contributions of a viable "vital center" to that success. Told as part of the larger story of transatlantic relations amid the decline of postwar American liberalism, the fracturing of consensus around "vital center" liberalism within the Congress provides a unique prospective from which to approach a well-trodden facet of postwar political and intellectual history.

In many ways, the political and intellectual currents of the early postwar years grew out of reflections upon the Holocaust, the Great Terror, and other unthinkable extremes and horrors experienced in the first half of the twentieth century. When they reflected on these events in the wake of World War II, many Western intellectuals came to a profound disillusionment with politics of the far right and far left. As these intellectuals eschewed the political extremes of their past, many came to embrace a form of liberalism that would find its most salient articulation in Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s seminal 1949 work, *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom*.¹⁴ In particular, European intellectuals of the NCL came to a stronger embrace of the liberal "vital

¹³ Ibid., 4.

¹⁴ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom* (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1949).

center” and its value as a guardian of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition as they watched the Communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia and worried about the power and influence wielded by the Communist Party in Italy, France, and other Western European countries. Though broadly concerned with the expansion of Soviet geopolitical influence in Europe in the early postwar years, European NCL intellectuals, and their American counterparts, expressed particular concern towards the allure that communism held for many in the European intelligentsia. Perceiving themselves as an underrepresented minority in a European intellectual community often represented by prominent communist or fellow-traveling figures such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Pablo Picasso, the individuals who comprised the early Congress viewed their mission to organize European NCL intellectuals into a cohesive network as a matter of grave and urgent importance.¹⁵

As leading American and European NCL intellectuals who would go on to form the CCF, such as Benedetto Croce, John Dewey, Sidney Hook, Arthur Koestler, Bertrand Russell, and Ignazio Silone, expressed increasing anxiety over the direction of the European intellectual climate in the early postwar years, a convergence developed between the views of these intellectuals and the agenda put forward by the “combination of Ivy League, anglophile, liberal, can-do gentlemen, academics, and idealists who constituted the new CIA.”¹⁶ While there remains a tremendous amount of uncertainty and controversy concerning the degree to which the CIA exerted influence over the CCF, it is clear that the Congress did not originate simply as an

¹⁵ Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

Agency creation.¹⁷ Rather, the organizational apparatus of the Congress grew out of efforts by Hook and individuals largely associated with the avant-garde, left-leaning, anti-Stalinist intellectual circle centered around Columbia University, New York University and The City College of New York known as the New York Intellectuals.¹⁸ While the New York Intellectuals provided the initial organizational foundation of the organization, the Congress should not be seen as the creation of Hook and his associates but rather as an international organization that succeeded because it represented a manifestation of concerns and interests held by intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic.

Such concerns came to bear when the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) staged its most daring provocation of the Cold War with the 1949 Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City. Reflecting concerns resonating in the broader Western intelligentsia over increased Soviet efforts to attract the support of Western intellectuals, Hook and others associated with the New York Intellectuals organized a counter-offensive to the Cominform Conference. Renting the honeymoon suite on the hotel's tenth floor to serve as their headquarters, Hook and the Americans for Intellectual Freedom deliberately asked difficult and awkward questions of the Soviet delegates and

¹⁷ The question of the degree to which the CIA exerted influence on the Congress is a particularly contentious issue. As CIA records on the Congress remain largely unavailable, scholars have had to rely primarily on records from the CCF and consequently have produced a wide range of interpretations concerning the CIA-CCF relationship. For an interpretation of the CIA-CCF relationship that stresses the Congress as an instrument of the CIA see Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*. For a contrasting interpretation, stressing the relative autonomy of the Congress, see Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America*. For an interpretation of the Congress as a hegemonic institution in the European intellectual landscape that both reflected the genuine concerns of Western intellectuals and served the interests of the CIA see Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA and Post-War American Hegemony*.

¹⁸ Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 73.

organized a well-attended counter-rally at nearby Bryant Park.¹⁹ Following this successful effort to thwart Soviet initiatives aimed at monopolizing the “Peace Movement”, Hook traveled to Europe to take part in the organization of a similar counter-rally against the Cominform sponsored Paris World Peace Conference. While in Paris, he met with Melvin Lasky, a young associate of the New York Intellectuals who worked for the American military government in Germany as editor for the U.S. sponsored cultural-intellectual review *Der Monat*.²⁰

Hoping to build on the momentum generated by earlier sporadic counter-rallies, Hook and Lasky discussed the possibility of creating a permanent and cohesive network of anti-communist intellectuals to serve as democratic opposition to Cominform efforts.²¹ Pressing forward with their plans, Hook consulted Ruth Fischer, a former Communist International (Comintern) officer and prominent German anti-Stalinist, who was already planning a large-scale anti-communist demonstration in Berlin to give “the Politburo hell right at the gate of their own hell.”²² Fischer and Hook’s plan to organize an anti-communist demonstration in defense of intellectual and cultural freedom was well received by Josselson, who was then stationed in Berlin as a CIA officer and had previously attended the Americans for Intellectual Freedom counter-rally in New York. Hoping to forge a more permanent apparatus by building upon the energy and success he had witnessed in New York, Josselson forwarded the plan for a Berlin demonstration to his supervisor, Office of Policy

¹⁹ Ibid., 70-71.

²⁰ Ibid., 78.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ruth Fischer quoted in Warner, 92.

Coordination Director, Frank Wisner. The CIA approved the project in April 1950 with plans for the CCF's inaugural conference to take place in June.²³

Though not a creation of the CIA, the CCF's continued financial existence and ability to project its message on a large scale were nonetheless only made possible by Agency funding. By placing the Congress alongside other cases of covert CIA funding of ostensibly independent domestic and international organizations, such as the AFL-CIO, the American Society of African Culture and the National Student Association, the CIA-CCF relationship can be seen as the primary cultural-intellectual facet of an extensive system of state-private networks utilized by the CIA to amplify existing voices sympathetic to its position in order to influence foreign individuals and societies. As with other examples of state-private network intervention in the Cold War, the impetus for the Congress emanated not from the State by means of the CIA but rather through the efforts of private European and American citizens.²⁴ The CCF, along with the other organizations that comprised the CIA's system of state-private networks, held membership significantly composed of private American citizens who had preexisting links to similar groups overseas. Such links were often based on a shared identity: racial in the case of the American Society of African Culture, generational in the case of the National Student Association, that of being an intellectual in the case of the CCF, and so on. These preexisting links and organizations supplied the foundation for state-private networks and provided the

²³ Wilford, 78-79.

²⁴ W. Scott Lucas, "Beyond Freedom, Beyond Control: Approaches to Culture and the State-Private Network in the Cold War," in *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe, 1945-1960*, eds. Giles Scott-Smith and Hans Krabbendam (Portland: Frank Cass, 2003), 60.

CIA with the means to influence strategically important segments of foreign populations.²⁵

Though origins in the initiatives of private US and European citizens provided a sense of authenticity and independence that would not have been possible had the Congress been a State creation, the CCF ultimately succeeded in exerting influence and establishing consensus in the 1950s primarily because it responded to the existing concerns and needs of Western intellectuals. For Western, particularly European, intellectuals who feared the potential threats of communist influence on traditional Western cultural-intellectual values, the urgency of the early years of the Cold War and the ascendancy of a “vital center” of American liberalism both served to underscore the importance of the US as a necessary guardian of the Western tradition and as a more palatable political, intellectual and cultural leader. While the US government had, for some time, possessed the political, economic, and military clout to assume a leadership role in the Western world, European intellectuals had generally found little attractive, or worthy of emulation, in the realms of American culture or politics.²⁶ Though the efforts of the Congress focused extensively on improving European perceptions of American cultural productions and political philosophies of the US, the organization did not have to build a consensus from the ground up. Rather, the Congress found itself able to solidify and expand the notion that had become increasingly prevalent among European intellectuals in the early postwar period in the value of a “vital center” of political consensus as a necessary

²⁵ Wilford, 8.

²⁶ Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture Since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 156-157.

bulwark of freedom against threatening communist expansion.²⁷ The support of such European intellectuals for a liberal “vital center” as a necessary guardian of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition emanated from a genuine belief in this political philosophy as providing the means to achieve social stability for postwar Europe. For the European members of the Congress and their American counterparts, “vital center” liberalism provided a broad political umbrella from which to address major socio-economic issues and an effective means to thwart the threatening expansion of communist influence.

While the anti-communist convictions of the European NCL and their recognition of the shared cultural-intellectual tradition of Europe and the US significantly aided Congress efforts to forge a transatlantic intellectual consensus, the legacy of the New Deal and the ascendancy of the postwar liberal order in the US allowed the Congress to attract those European intellectuals who were put off by the militant anti-communism and reactionary politics that had long been representative of the US. Soon after the organization’s formation, Josselson and other leading members of the Congress realized that a single-minded focus on anti-communism and an explicitly pro-American position would prove counterproductive in reaching out to many left-of-center European intellectuals, particularly in France and Italy.²⁸ Relegating Arthur Koestler and other hardline anti-communists with conservative political tendencies to the margins of the organization, the Congress endorsed the aggressively internationalist and anti-communist, but still fundamentally liberal,

²⁷ Scott-Smith, 81.

²⁸ Coleman, 35.

politics outlined by Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and later developed by leading members such as Daniel Bell.²⁹

Along with a growing canon of work by postwar liberals, Schlesinger's *The Vital Center* came to be a fundamental element in the intellectual foundation of the Congress. Schlesinger's insistence on the international applicability of postwar American style liberalism and the need to promote social progress in order to establish space for a liberal "vital center" of political consensus to avoid the excesses of extreme positions on both the right and the left found a receptive audience among leading members of the Congress.³⁰ Involved with the Congress from its formation, Schlesinger belonged to the contingent of American intellectuals in the organization who sought to overcome European reservations and neutrality towards the increasingly hostile relationship developing between the US and the Soviet Union.³¹ Embracing Schlesinger's "vital center," the Congress further developed its political and intellectual platform around the "end of ideology" thesis championed by Raymond Aron, Daniel Bell, and Seymour Lipset. Led by Daniel Bell, proponents of the "end of ideology" maintained that the ideologies of strict capitalism or socialism no longer had a place in the political and economic context of the 1950s and that essentially all socio-economic issues could be addressed by a technocratic application of somewhat greater or lesser government intervention into the economy.³² With the death of Stalin and the relative decline of urgency in Europe amid an emerging détente, the focus of the Congress shifted from the more aggressive anti-communism

²⁹ Coleman, 33-34.

³⁰ Scott-Smith, 107, 108.

³¹ Scott-Smith, 54.

³² Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (New York: The Free Press, 1962), 402

of its early years to an emphasis on “the end of ideology” and its presumption that the debate over communism had already concluded in favor of technocracy and the welfare liberalism of the “vital center.”³³

Even amid the often-militant anti-communist rhetoric of the CCF’s early existence, leading figures of the Congress expressed a nascent sense that the organization would need to stand for more than simply anti-communism to succeed as a coherent and ongoing organization. Among those members of the Congress who hoped to emphasize the positive aspects of “vital center” liberalism rather than a negative focus on anti-communism, Ignazio Silone, in his opening speech at the 1950 Berlin Conference, stressed rather than militant anti-communism the need for the West to promote social and political reform to mitigate the moral appeal that communism’s emphasis on social justice often held for intellectuals. Silone recognized and emphasized the tendency of militant anti-communism to lead to totalitarian methods in its opposition of totalitarian communism. Rallying against single-minded anti-communists who sought to use methods he viewed as essentially totalitarian, he eloquently proclaimed, “A democracy which, in order to be

³³ While the technocratic approach to governance began to gain significant support among the political establishment in the postwar era, the intellectual roots of technocracy precede its acceptance among political circles. Providing an early influence on technocratic concepts that would later be picked up by postwar thinkers, Walter Lippmann’s *Public Opinion*, published in 1922, critically assessed democratic government and the self-serving irrational social perceptions that influence individual behavior. In stressing the limited ability of the public to define its own interests, Lippmann advanced the “manufacture of consent” as a necessary means to identify the “common interests” of the public that are often not evident. In order to illuminate such “common interests” Lippmann proposed that a professional “specialized class” present their conclusions to the political establishment, which would employ the “art of persuasion” to inform the public about the decisions and circumstances affecting them. Lippmann further stressed the value of a professional “specialized class,” or technocrats, in his 1925 work, *Phantom Public*. In his representation of “the public” as an abstract illusion, Lippmann divided society between “insiders” who make decisions and the “outsiders” of society who largely act as bystanders. By throwing his support behind the “insiders” Lippmann, who later wrote the CCF’s German journal *Der Monat*, emerged as an early supporter of technocracy that would later find significant support from postwar intellectuals such as Daniel Bell, Richard Hofstadter, and Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

efficacious, imitates totalitarian actions and reveals a uniform, behaves, in fact, like a man who, through fear of death, commits suicide.”³⁴ By embracing Silone’s emphasis on liberal reform and refusal to abandon liberal principles over Koestler’s firebrand anti-communism, the Congress demonstrated an understanding that in order to bring together a disparate group of Western intellectuals it would not simply be able to depend solely on opposing something but would have to in fact stand for something.

With a belief in the “vital center” of American liberalism as the foundation for the continued prosperity of the cultural-intellectual tradition shared by Europe and the US, the Congress found something to stand for and a point around which to rally an often-disparate collection of Western NCL intellectuals. Assessing the 1950 conference in Berlin, the American novelist, James Farrell, stressed the positive influence the ascendancy of American liberalism had on the forging of a transatlantic consensus with the contention that “all of the speeches at Berlin, the very Congress itself, were made possible...by the social gains, the social advances made by the American labor unions and the positive legacy of Roosevelt.”³⁵ Just as the Marshall Plan sought to internationalize the American liberalism of the New Deal, the Congress emerged out of an effort to internationalize the efforts American NCL intellectuals. Still, the Congress should not be seen merely as an instrument of the US government. On its own, the financial support of the CIA would never have been able to forge or maintain consensus among a disparate collection of anti-communist intellectuals. The Congress found success in forming a transatlantic intellectual

³⁴ Ignazio Silone, “Address by Mr. Ignazio Silone at the Inaugural Meeting of the Berlin Congress for Cultural Freedom”, June 25, 1950, Series III, Box 1, Folder 2, p3, “International Association for Cultural Freedom Collection”, Special Collections Research Center, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Chicago Illinois, (From here on noted as IACF).

³⁵ James Farrell, “Congress Comments”, Series III, Box 1, Folder 1, IACF.

consensus in the 1950s by emphasizing a form of liberalism that responded to the existing intellectual needs and concerns of the Western intelligentsia. Responding to the threats presented by Soviet communism towards the Western cultural-intellectual tradition perceived by intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic, the Congress stressed that the mixed economy of “vital center” liberalism not only provided the means to solve all socio-economic problems through technocratic management but also represented a necessary guardian of Western cultural-intellectual values in a intellectual and geopolitical landscape in which those values were increasingly threatened. With the ascendancy of a liberal “vital center” and the increasing currency of “the end of ideology” among Western intellectuals in the 1950s, the Congress succeeded in its first decade of existence in bringing together a significant cohort of European intellectuals, who both opposed Soviet communism and accepted a more prominent and influential role of the US in European political, cultural, and intellectual affairs.³⁶

The most successful years of the Congress came as it shifted from the currents of militant anti-communism expressed at the 1950 Berlin Conference to a more inclusive transatlantic intellectual consensus around liberalism of the “vital center.” This shift occurred as the Congress responded to a transformed Cold War that featured an emerging détente between the US and Soviet Union in place of the monolithic Stalinist threat of the early postwar years. However, by the mid-1960s a significant contingency of intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic had moved to the right or to the left of the liberal “vital center” in response to the emergence of the New Left, radicalization of the Civil Rights Movement, and escalation of the Vietnam

³⁶ Scott-Smith, 102, 108, 154.

War. With the “vital center” of American liberalism discredited in the eyes of a significant number of Western intellectuals, the transatlantic intellectual consensus around this “vital center” as an attractive and necessary guardian of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition that the Congress had succeeded in forging during the 1950s fell apart in the 1960s. Existing independently from CIA influence, the CCF’s enduring support for a liberal “vital center” represented a genuine belief among its members in the US and its political order as a necessary bulwark of freedom against the threats of Soviet communism. With the failure of “vital center” liberalism to address an array of urgent political and social issues in the 1960s, a significant element of the Western intelligentsia advanced radical challenges to the “vital center” from the left while an equally significant contingent drifted from liberal anti-communism to neoconservatism and mounted challenges from the right.

When consensus around the liberal “vital center” deteriorated within the Congress and the broader Western intelligentsia, a “middle ground” of agreement among a broad array of Western intellectuals no longer remained possible. The notion of a “middle ground” of cultural, intellectual, and political interaction developed by historian Richard White provides a constructive way of examining how the Congress employed “vital center” liberalism to foster consensus. White views the disparate parties who came to the “middle ground” as doing so out of a recognition that none of the sides involved in negotiation possessed the means to achieve their ends through force. Seeking their ends instead through persuasion, the parties concerned pursued both actual and perceived congruencies among their counterparts. Whether or not

such congruencies were rooted in reality does not matter.³⁷ White contends that “any congruence, no matter how tenuous, can be put to work and can take on a life of its own if it is accepted by both sides. Cultural conventions do not have to be true to be effective any more than legal precedents do. They have only to be accepted.”³⁸ In the urgent years of the early postwar period before New Left radicalism, black militancy, and the escalation of the Vietnam War, the intellectuals of the Congress could avoid highlighting inconvenient political divergences within the organization and gather under the broad political umbrella of “vital center” liberalism. When developments in the 1960s shattered consensus around “vital center” liberalism and simply labeling oneself a liberal ceased to be enough, the Congress lost the “middle ground” that had allowed it to bring together a diverse grouping of Western intellectuals.³⁹

³⁷ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1680-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 52.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

³⁹ Richard White developed the concept of a “middle ground” in the context of French and Algonquian relations in the Great Lakes region from the 17th through the 19th centuries. In his analysis of negotiations between the French and Algonquians, White identifies a “middle ground,” which developed on the basis that neither side could gain their ends through force and had to resort to alternative ways of gaining the cooperation or consent of foreigners. . For White, the willingness of individual Frenchmen and Algonquins to justify their own actions in terms of what they perceived be their counterpart’s cultural premises provided the defining aspect of the “middle ground.” He contends that in efforts of persuasion, both sides sought out congruencies, either perceived or actual, between the two cultures. White notes that while the congruencies arrived at were often based on misunderstandings, any congruence, no matter how unsubstantiated, could be utilized and become vital in its own right if it is accepted by both sides. In the case of the NCL intellectuals who came together under the umbrella of “vital center” liberalism as part of the efforts of the Congress, members engaged in deliberate misunderstandings of one another’s views on liberalism in order to join together as a relatively cohesive force. With members convinced of the urgent necessity of coming together as a cohesive left-of-center anti-communist force in the 1950s, such misunderstandings were not put to the test. As developments in the 1960s accentuated these misunderstandings and illuminated the substantial political differences among those who embraced the “vital center” label, many within the Congress no longer accepted the tenuous congruences upon which the “middle ground” rested. When simply labeling oneself a liberal ceased to be enough in the 1960s, the Congress lost the “middle ground” that had allowed the organization to successfully foster a transatlantic intellectual consensus around “vital center” liberalism as a necessary foundation for the continued prosperity of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition.

While the Congress neither needed nor sought to speak with a monolithic political voice, the “vital center” had provided the organization with the means for cohesion around a broad political consensus in opposition to communism and in support of a mixed economy and the welfare state. Whether attacked from the right or the left, the discrediting of American liberalism of the “vital center” fractured the consensus fostered by the Congress around this political philosophy as a necessary guardian of Western cultural-intellectual values. In examining how this transatlantic intellectual consensus fell apart in the latter half of the 1960s, this thesis illuminates the importance of “vital center” liberalism to the success enjoyed by the Congress in the 1950s. When the discrediting of “vital center” liberalism rendered consensus among its members untenable, the Congress ceased to be a functional cultural-intellectual organization in its own right or a valuable ally for the CIA in the Cultural Cold War. By focusing the lens of examination on the crumbling of its transatlantic intellectual consensus around “vital center” liberalism, we gain a greater understanding of a demise the Congress would have suffered whether or not its CIA funding had been revealed.

A Changing Cold War and the Turn to “Vital Center” Liberalism

As the 1950s gave way to the 1960s, the Congress faced a strikingly transformed Cold War from the often unpredictable and confrontational relations seen during the embryonic stages of the struggle between the US and Soviet Union in the years immediately following World War II. Stalin’s death in 1953, increasingly strained Sino-Soviet relations culminating in official Chinese acknowledgement of the Sino-Soviet split in 1961, and greater acceptance of co-existence and easing of tensions between the US and Soviet Union known as *détente* rewrote the rules of the Cold War game in which the CCF participated. While these and other developments in the Cold War affected US Soviet relations in a complex variety of ways they nonetheless served to normalize the Cold War struggle by reinforcing the status quo of superpower relations through encouraging greater diplomatic dialogue and effectively putting an end to the notion of the Cold War as a confrontation in which one side could or would “win.”⁴⁰

The end of a monolithic Stalinist communist bloc and the nascent emergence of *détente* presented the CCF with remarkable opportunities as well as challenges. While a seemingly less aggressive and unified Communist Bloc and greater contact between East and West provided the Congress with tremendous opportunities to engage the other side of the Iron Curtain, it also held the potential to weaken the anti-communist convictions of Western intellectuals which had significantly contributed to the transatlantic intellectual consensus forged by the organization during the 1950s. Though the new circumstances of the Cold War presented the Congress with an array

⁴⁰ Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 5.

of serious challenges, the CCF's transatlantic intellectual consensus around a liberal "vital center" as a necessary foundation for the continued prosperity of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition provided the means to adapt to these new developments in ways that would not have been possible had the organization continued to embrace the currents of reactionary and militant anti-communism expressed at the 1950 Berlin Conference. With a profoundly transformed Cold War pushing the Congress further towards a positive interpretation of "vital center" liberalism in its early years of existence, its members increasingly coalesced around the transatlantic intellectual consensus that contributed to its most influential and successful years in the 1950s.

The near universal support voiced for a positive interpretation of "vital center" liberalism by members of the Congress from the mid-1950s onwards represented a marked shift from the often reactionary and militant focus on anti-communism expressed at the organization's inaugural conference in Berlin. When Arthur Koestler presented the "Manifesto of the Congress for Cultural Freedom" in the wake of North Korea's invasion of South Korea to a cheering crowd of some 15,000 in the British sector of Berlin in 1950, his hard-line rhetoric fell upon receptive ears. Koestler proved a successful spokesperson for the "Freedom Manifesto" by drawing on the heightened sense of anti-communist urgency in the early postwar years. While his harsh rhetoric found a largely receptive audience in 1950, Koestler's fellow contributors to the Manifesto recognized the long-term risks and limitations of over-emphasizing and becoming overly dependent on anti-communism. Penned by Koestler and moderated in tone and substance by A.J. Ayer, Manés Sperber and Hugh Trevor-Roper, the "Freedom Manifesto" sought to avoid the perils of militant anti-

communism and neutral endorsement of the status quo.⁴¹ Seeking to mitigate accusations of overly fervent anti-communism, the Manifesto's authors couched its anti-communist emphasis in a purportedly objective rhetoric focused on the importance of defending cultural freedom from existing and expanding socio-political threats in order to attract as large of a swath of the political spectrum as possible.

In order to reach a broad political base of intellectuals the "Freedom Manifesto" carefully avoided striking too forceful an anti-communist stance and thus alienating Europe's left-leaning intellectuals, particularly in France and Italy. In order to maintain the objectivity of their position and avoid alienation of left-of-center intellectuals, the writers of the thirteen article "Freedom Manifesto" dulled their Cold War swords by tactfully avoiding specific mention of communism. Nonetheless, the anti-communist direction of the document became evident in its numerous implicit statements of opposition to communism and the Soviet political system. Article six indirectly attacked communist ideology, declaring, "no political philosophy or economic theory can claim the sole right to represent freedom in the abstract. We hold that the value of such theories is to be judged by the range of concrete freedom which they accord the individual in practice."⁴² The authors of the Manifesto directly opposed the role of the Communist Party as a vanguard or dictatorship of the proletariat with the declaration that "no race, nation, class or religion can claim the sole right to represent the idea of freedom, nor the right to deny freedom to other groups or creeds in the name of any ultimate ideal or lofty aim whatsoever."

Likewise, the authors challenged the historic role and appeal of the Soviet Union to

⁴¹ Coleman, 31-32.

⁴² For this and the immediately subsequent references to the "Freedom Manifesto" see "Freedom Manifesto," Series III, Box 1, Folder 1, IACF.

many intellectuals, proclaiming, “the historical contribution of any society is to be judged by the extent and quality of freedom which its members actually enjoy.”

With the insistence that when in “times of emergency, restrictions on the freedom of the individual are imposed in the real or assumed interest of the community” such restrictions must be “confined to a minimum of clearly specified actions” the writers of the Manifesto made a significant overture towards a left-of-center audience repulsed by the reactionary anti-communism of McCarthyism. Additionally, the Manifesto demanded that these restrictions must be “understood to be temporary and limited” and “that the measures restricting freedom be themselves subject to free criticism and democratic control.” Highlighting the similarity between McCarthyism and the arbitrary and aggressive nature of Soviet repression, the Manifesto writers proclaimed that these necessary safeguards would provide “a reasonable assurance that emergency measures restricting individual freedom will not degenerate into a permanent tyranny.”

While the “Freedom Manifesto” carefully avoided the ugly excesses of McCarthyism and overt reference to communism as the primary danger to cultural and intellectual freedom, Koestler’s hardline anti-communism and strident insistence on opposition to neutralism permeate the document. Though Koestler played a prominent role in shaping the formation of the CCF and its inaugural 1950 conference in Berlin, he quickly became a marginalized figure in the organization in the following years.⁴³ Koestler’s increasingly marginalized position resulted primarily from Josselson’s decision to forgo his harshly militant anti-communism in favor of Ignazio Silone’s approach of urging the West to promote social and political reform

⁴³ Coleman, 33-34.

to mitigate the moral appeal to intellectuals that communism's emphasis on social justice often held over capitalist democracy.⁴⁴

The alternative approaches of Koestler's rhetorical frontal assault on communism and Silone's more gentle and subtle approach were put on display to Josselson and conference participants in their opening speeches, which provided two starkly different visions of what the Congress ought to be and do. Koestler wasted few words in stressing the urgency of the CCF's mission and centered his speech on his desire that the organization represent a turning point when intellectuals abandoned their "contemplative detachment" and acknowledged the urgent international emergency generated by aggressive communist governments and the appeal of Western Communist Parties. To make clear his belief in the urgent importance of immediate action for the present situation, Koestler described the emergency using Ludwig van Beethoven's words, "fate knocks at the gate of existence" and stressed that it was necessary for intellectuals to act with "the unhesitating assurance of an organic reflex."⁴⁵ In strong language, he scorned intellectuals who maintained neutral views towards totalitarian governments, such as the of the Soviet Union, famously describing them as, "clever imbeciles who preach neutrality toward the bubonic plague."⁴⁶

Contrasting with Koestler's fierce rhetoric, Silone's opening speech presented a more inclusive vision for the organization less focused on dogmatic anti-communism and instead centered on incorporating a diversity of positions into the

⁴⁴ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁵ Arthur Koestler, "Address by Mr. Arthur Koestler at the Inaugural Meeting of the Berlin Congress for Cultural Freedom," p3, June 25, 1950, 3, Series III, Box 1, Folder 2, IACF.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

effort to promote social and political reform in democratic nations. Directly attacking the rhetoric of Koestler and the more vigilant anti-communists of the Congress, Silone's speech stressed that the organization would "intend to attack the problems of cultural liberty without the usual restrictions imposed by fanaticism or propaganda."⁴⁷ While making certain to make no direct reference to Koestler, Silone derided those individuals who preferred to fight for cultural freedom rather than work towards solving the problems that thwarted it, proclaiming that "The best way of dealing with these problems is certainly to solve them-but those who lack courage, wisdom and daring seem to think that it would be easier and quicker to fight."⁴⁸

While much of Silone's speech amounted to a direct attack on Koestler and the hard-line anti-communists of the Congress, his position on the importance of having a diversity of views in the organization both tempered what would have otherwise been a more polarizing speech and served to provide an inclusive platform that would allow the CCF to face the new developments of the Cold War in the years to come. In describing the political and ideological divergences of the participants at the 1950 conference, Silone stressed that such differences could represent not the weakness but the strength of the organization. Describing the strength that could be drawn from this diversity in views, Silone remarked, "The greatest contribution to freedom consists in the differentiation of the energies it stirs up. Freedom certainly does not exclude agreement but it does exclude synchronization."⁴⁹ Silone's insistence that the synchronization of ideas in a democratic society, or the CCF, undermines its potential resonated with many participants at the Berlin conference

⁴⁷ Silone, 5.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 6.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

and would help to shape the primary outlook of the organization in the following years.⁵⁰

While the Congress fully embraced Silone's emphasis on Western social and political reform to mitigate the appeal of communism, limits were placed on the "differentiation of energies" so that the Congress could achieve sufficient consensus with which to function as a coherent organization. With an organized structure in place and funding secured in the months after the 1950 Berlin conference, members of the Congress increasingly recognized that they would need more than a broad agreement on anti-communism in order to settle objectives and priorities.⁵¹ When the Executive Committee convened in February 1951 to discuss a proposal to hold another high profile conference in Paris in the mold of the one in Berlin, Raymond Aron mounted strong opposition. Aron contended that by imitating the Berlin conference and hosting another polemical event, the Congress would only draw attention to how little had been done in the eight months since the organization's inaugural conference.⁵² For Aron and the other members of the Executive Committee who ultimately voted down the proposal, the polemics of the Berlin conference, however successful and exciting, provided little in the way of shaping the Congress into a coherent and vibrant organization with a long-term vision.

In place of the polemics expressed at Berlin, the themes of "vital center" liberalism as a foundation for the Western cultural-intellectual tradition and a celebration of the "end of ideology" emerged as the primary bases for the CCF's transatlantic intellectual consensus. As the Congress came to embrace Silone's

⁵⁰ Saunders, 90.

⁵¹ Coleman, 50.

⁵² Ibid., 51.

emphasis on Western political and social reform, Koestler and his supporters, with their militant and sometimes reactionary anti-communism, were marginalized as the organization's consensus became increasingly tied to the liberal "vital center." During the postwar years, American style consensus liberalism of the "vital center" and the widespread celebration of an "end of ideology" had come to the forefront of intellectual discussion after decades of dogmatic ideology, propaganda, and war. Such developments provided much of the inspiration for the 1949 collection of essays *The God That Failed*. With essays penned by Louis Fischer, André Gide, Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, Stephen Spender, and Richard Wright, all of whom would later participate in the CCF, *The God That Failed* detailed the well-known authors' disillusionment with and abandonment of communism.⁵³ While the Congress would draw heavily upon the theme of disillusionment with communism in espousing the "end of ideology," the organization responded to the end of a monolithic Stalinist threat and the beginnings of détente by stressing the potential for social and political progress in a post-ideological age. When the "end of ideology" emerged as the basis of virtually all of the CCF's activity in the years following the Berlin conference, proponents of the thesis expressed a decidedly optimistic mood, placing greater emphasis on the freedom from ideological dogmas than "the God that failed."⁵⁴

As they turned away from the polemics of Berlin in favor of an emphasis on a positive interpretation of "vital center" liberalism and freedom from ideological dogma, Josselson and the Executive Committee, comprised of Irving Brown Arthur Koestler, Eugen Kogon, Denis de Rougemont, David Rousset, Ignazio Silone, and

⁵³ Richard Crossman, ed., *The God That Failed* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 1-2.

⁵⁴ Coleman, 55.

Stephen Spender, stressed the need to develop the Congress into a more permanent and ongoing operation.⁵⁵ While Berlin had provided the Congress with a high-profile conference that brought together a significant contingent of Western intellectuals for a demonstration of solidarity against communism, intermittent conferences, whatever their profile, would not have provided the organization with the means to maintain this fragile transatlantic consensus. The Congress needed to establish a permanent intellectual locale, or series of locales, around which the organization's transatlantic intellectual consensus could develop and coalesce. The Congress successfully established such permanent intellectual locales through the creation of a series of cultural-intellectual journals, which sought to maintain the highest cultural and literary standards while expressing the political positions and public identity of the organization on a regular basis.⁵⁶ Among a family of magazines that would eventually include over twenty publications, *Encounter*, *Preuves*, and *Tempo Presente* soon established themselves in their respective markets and formed the core of the CCF's ongoing operations. Seeking to combat the particularly pervasive communist support found in intellectual circles in France and Italy, *Preuves*, edited by François Bondy, and *Tempo Presente*, edited by Nicola Chiaromonte and Ignazio Silone, became essential to the CCF's efforts in what it viewed as the two most "endangered" Western European nations.⁵⁷

While the Congress did not perceive the same degree of communist sympathy or support among British intellectuals as it did among French and Italian intellectuals, the pervasiveness of neutralism among the British intelligentsia and the de facto

⁵⁵ Coleman, 34, 37.

⁵⁶ Scott-Smith, 125.

⁵⁷ Coleman, 124.

status of English as an international language contributed to *Encounter*'s emergence as the foremost mouthpiece of the organization. Viewing *Encounter*'s potential readership as stretching beyond a British audience, Josselson and Secretary General Nicolas Nabokov stressed the importance of an English language journal that could reach intellectuals in Asia, and other regions, such as Scandinavia, where English was the second language and "neutralism is the strongest force."⁵⁸ Writing to proposed English co-editor, Stephen Spender in 1952, Josselson expressed his desire for *Encounter* to appeal to an international market, contending that "the Congress is not primarily interested in reaching readers in England and the US. because a communist or neutralist problem does not exist in those two countries."⁵⁹ Though perhaps underestimating the prevalence of British neutralism compared to the concerns expressed by his fellow members in the Congress, Josselson aptly recognized the value an internationally read English language journal could offer to the efforts of the Congress in establishing an international intellectual consensus. In order to attract a broadly international Anglophone readership, Josselson stressed that *Encounter* would have to avoid the pitfalls of "Anglo-American provincialism."⁶⁰

Despite Josselson's relative lack of concern with the state of the British intelligentsia, other members of the Congress and the CIA expressed disappointment with the uninspiring British showing at the Berlin conference and a desire to address the rampant neutralism and simplistic anti-Americanism found among British

⁵⁸ Michael Josselson to Stephen Spender, Nicolas Nabokov to Irving Kristol, 1953, Series II, Box 94, Folder 7, IACF.

⁵⁹ Michael Josselson to Stephen Spender, 1952, Series II, Box 94, Folder 6, IACF.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

intellectuals.⁶¹ When the Executive Committee surveyed the state of British cultural-intellectual journals following the 1950 Berlin conference, they noted the lack of a magazine expressing the organization's position in the Cold War. With Cyril Connolly's *Horizon* and John Lehmann's *Penguin New Writing* ceasing publication in 1950 and both Michael Oakeshott's *Cambridge Journal* and F.R. Leavis's *Scrutiny* closing their doors in 1953, the Congress viewed the state of the British cultural-intellectual journal market as rather bleak. In the midst of these closings, Kingsley Martin's overtly political and neutralist *New Statesman and Nation* became the most commercially successful among British literary journals with a left-of-center political perspective as it achieved a circulation of some 85,000.⁶²

After the meager success found in limited financial support of the heavily criticized *The Twentieth Century*, it became clear to the Executive Committee that it would have to establish its own British journal. As plans for a new journal developed within the Congress, support for a new "Anglo-American Left-of-Center publication" grew simultaneously within the CIA, the British Foreign Office's Information Research Department (IRD), and the CCF's headquarters in Paris.⁶³ Both the CIA and leading members of the Congress were eager to discredit the neutralism prevalent among British intellectuals with a Congress journal intended to "engage in a permanent polemic with *The New Statesman and Nation*."⁶⁴ The CIA and many in the Paris office sought for *Encounter* to directly oppose the left-wing neutralism of *New Statesman* and its influence on British intellectuals while simultaneously desiring for

⁶¹ Saunders, 166.

⁶² Coleman., 59.

⁶³ Scott-Smith, 128.

⁶⁴ Jasper Ridley quoted in Saunders, 166.

the journal to reach a broadly international audience of Anglophone intellectuals. With these often conflicting demands pulling them in different directions, *Encounter's* editors regularly faced the challenges of walking the fine line between giving attention to the particulars of the British political and cultural landscape while avoiding the pitfalls of British provincialism.⁶⁵ When forced to choose, the Paris-based headquarters of the Congress and *Encounter's* series of American co-editors regularly ensured that an international Atlanticist perspective won out over a narrowly British orientation.⁶⁶

Equally literary and political, *Encounter* was intended to portray an internationalist, anti-communist, anti-neutralist ethos by drawing on a distinguished NCL stable of writers from the UK, continental Europe and the US.⁶⁷ Initially edited by the English poet, novelist and essayist, Stephen Spender, and the American journalist, Irving Kristol, *Encounter* initially struggled but soon after established its respectability and attracted distinguished contributors largely on the merits of its cultural offerings. Despite the view of later co-editor Melvin Lasky that Spender's focus on literary and cultural pieces was a bunch of "Elizabeth Bowen and all that crap," many, such as Isaiah Berlin, believed that it was Spender and his insistence on the magazine's cultural emphasis that provided it with a "certificate of respectability to the British intelligentsia."⁶⁸

Appearing alongside highly regarded poetry, short works of literature, book reviews and other cultural works, *Encounter's* political articles often emphasized not

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 130-131.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 60-61.

⁶⁸ Melvin Lasky and Isaiah Berlin quoted in *ibid.*, 331.

only the threats posed by communism to cultural freedom but also the danger of detached neutralism in the ideological showdown between the US and Soviet Union. In contrast to France, Italy, and other Western European nations with powerful Communist Parties, the relatively small number of British Communist Party members and fellow travelers represented less of a concern for the Congress than the neutralist positions widespread among the British intelligentsia. In its aim to convince readers of the “follies of neutralism” *Encounter* embraced the rhetoric of American actor Robert Montgomery, who had declared at the 1950 Berlin conference “there is no neutral corner in Freedom’s room.”⁶⁹

When the first issue of *Encounter* arrived in October of 1953, its opening editorial, “After the Apocalypse,” clearly articulated both the journal’s anti-neutralist position and its insistence on drawing upon a diversity of voices to combat the dangers of neutralism and communism.⁷⁰ Published only six months after the death of Stalin, this de facto mission statement depicted a world scene no longer featuring Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin as heralding in an epic period of transformation providing tremendous prospects and risks for the fate of the West and its intelligentsia. The editorial’s authors highlighted a recent uprising of “real factory workers” in Eastern Germany and Czechoslovakia whose actions “unambiguously dissociated themselves from a hypothetical Proletariat, achieving by that simple action what a thousand subtle arguments could not do: the destruction of the Marxist-Leninist creed.”⁷¹ In light of such events and the death of an earlier generation of dictators, the editorial’s authors expressed their hopes that “perhaps, words will again

⁶⁹ Scott-Smith, 129, Robert Montgomery quoted in Coleman, 29.

⁷⁰ “After the Apocalypse,” *Encounter* 1, no.1 (1953): 1.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

mean what they say, and we shall be spared the tedious sophistry by which despotism could pose as a higher form of freedom, murder as a supreme humanism.”⁷² While emphasizing the considerable opportunity for positive change in this transformative period, the authors made clear their dissatisfaction with the status quo of communist influence, poetically lamenting, “The dark side of the moon may no longer be mistaken for the rising sun, but it is still there and still dark.”⁷³

Appearing at a time both promising and perilous, the opening editorial provided a stark contrast with the utilization of art and culture demanded by the Soviet policy of Socialist Realism with the insistence that *Encounter* sought to “promote no line” and regarded “literature and the arts as being values in themselves, in need of no ulterior justification.”⁷⁴ The editorial’s authors proudly reported a distinguished and international list of honorary chairmen containing Benedetto Croce, John Dewey, Karl Jaspers, Salvador de Madariaga, Jacques Maritain, and Bertrand Russel as evidence of the diversity of distinguished voices represented by the journal. Imbued by Silone’s emphasis on a “differentiation of energies”, the authors contended that only two things brought together this often divisive group to a “middle ground”: “a love of liberty and a respect for that part of human endeavor that goes by the name of culture.”⁷⁵

In response to initial criticism from a number of leading British intellectuals and the *Times Literary Supplement* that it espoused a negative-liberalism consisting primarily of opposition to and fear of communism, *Encounter* shifted towards a more

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid, White, 50-53.

positive interpretation of “vital center” liberalism that stressed this political philosophy’s progressive potential. By interpreting vital center “liberalism” in a more positive manner and showcasing its high standard of cultural and literary work, *Encounter* quickly turned around many of the critical assessments received in its infancy.⁷⁶ With the often-militant co-editor Irving Kristol pushed by the central office in Paris to moderate his negative anti-communism and further accommodate the well regarded cultural and literary offerings of co-editor Stephen Spender, *Encounter*’s editors reported to Paris in 1957 that the harsh critiques of the early issues were no longer being received and that “the most eloquent of our critics, like A.J.P. Taylor and Graham Hough, now contribute happily.”⁷⁷ The following year, Kristol and Spender delightedly informed the Executive committee that *Encounter*’s circulation had reached almost 16,000; making it the most widely circulated cultural-intellectual review of its kind in the English language. By avoiding the pitfalls of British provincialism, an over emphasis on militant anti-communism, and highlighting the well regarded cultural and literary work found in the journal, Kristol realized his ambition of establishing *Encounter* as “the English-language cultural periodical.”⁷⁸ Echoing Kristol’s assessment of *Encounter*’s leading position among Anglophone cultural-intellectual journals, Raymond Aron later wrote that “*Encounter*...remains...the first, the best monthly review in English.”⁷⁹ Pleased with the success and influence achieved by the journal, Josselson stressed the importance

⁷⁶ Tity de Vries, “*Encounter*: An Intellectual Concept of Atlanticism in the 1950s,” in *The American Columbiad: “Discovering” America, Inventing the United States*, eds. Mario Materassi, Maria Irene Ramalho, and De Sousa Santos (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1996), 269.

⁷⁷ Irving Kristol and Stephen Spender to Michael Josselson, 1954, Series II, Box 94, Folder 8, IACF.

⁷⁸ Irving Kristol to Michael Josselson, 1954, Series II, Box 94, Folder 8, IACF.

⁷⁹ Raymond Aron, *Mémoires: 50 ans de réflexion politique* (Paris: Julliard, 1983), 238.

of *Encounter* to the Congress, writing in 1964 the organization had “always considered *Encounter* to be our greatest asset.”⁸⁰

In the wake of Stalin’s death and the crumbling of world communism as a Soviet-centered monolith, *Encounter* further moderated its militant anti-communism and placed greater emphasis on a positive interpretation of “vital center” liberalism and an outlook molded around the “end of ideology.”⁸¹ A high profile 1954 series of articles, “Democracy and its Discontents” noted existing social and political problems in Western democracies but emphasized the ability of “vital center” liberalism to adapt to change and social pressures.⁸² In 1955, a follow up series, “The Intellectuals” examined the newly important role of intellectuals whose abilities were required by the increasingly technocratic approach of postwar liberalism to politics and governance.⁸³ In their charting of the significant social changes taking place in most major Western democracies, this series of articles embraced the technocratic role of intellectuals in postwar society. In his contribution to the series, Golo Mann presented both the transatlantic identity shared by Western intellectuals and their increasingly technocratic position in society as forgone conclusions, contending that “the age-old conflict between the Western and the ‘pure German’ intellectual has died down, for everybody is somehow pro-Western now and everybody a good German to boot.”⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Michael Josselson to Edward Shils, February 17 1964, Diana Josselson Papers, Geneva

⁸¹ Scott-Smith, 130.

⁸² Nobert Muhlen, “Democracy and its Discontents I: Germany,” *Encounter* 2, no. 4 (1954), Hubert Lüthy, “Democracy and its Discontents II: France,” *Encounter* 2, no. 5 (1954), Max Beloff, “Democracy and its Discontents III: Great Britain,” *Encounter* 2, no. 6 (1954), Daniel J. Boorstin, “Democracy and its Discontents IV: The United States,” *Encounter* 2, no. 7 (1954).

⁸³ Edward Shils, “The Intellectuals I: Great Britain,” *Encounter* 4, no. 4 (1955), Marcus Cunliffe, “The Intellectuals II: The United States,” *Encounter* 4, no. 5 (1955), Golo Mann, “The Intellectuals III: Germany,” *Encounter* 4, no. 6 (1955), Hubert Lüthy, “The Intellectuals IV: France,” *Encounter* 5 no. 2 (1955).

⁸⁴ Golo Mann, “The Intellectuals III: Germany,” 45.

Despite the contention of *Dissent* editor Lewis Coser that in a context in which “world Communism no longer exists as a unified political force of ideological vision” and “Western Europe is no longer menaced by either Soviet expansion or internal Communist takeover” that the static *raison d’être* of the Congress no longer had a place, contributors to *Encounter* demonstrated that “vital center” liberalism and the “end of ideology” provided resilient platforms able to adapt to these new circumstances.⁸⁵

Providing one of the most comprehensive reactions found in *Encounter* to both the end of monolithic Stalinism and the nascent emergence of détente, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who originally coined the “vital center” label and would soon after serve as a sort of “court historian” for the Kennedy Administration, demonstrated the resiliency of “vital center” liberalism and the “end of ideology” in facing the newly transformed circumstances of the Cold War in his article “Varieties of Communist Experience.”⁸⁶ In titling the article and setting its tone, Schlesinger drew on the title of William James’ *The Varieties of Religious Experience* to evoke the same communism as religion theme found earlier in *The God that Failed*. His article stands in contrast to the contentions later made by Coser and other critics that members of the Congress maintained into the 1960s a static Cold War logic formed in the early postwar years. In his recognition of the ways in which the Cold War had changed, he sought to demonstrate how the adaptable platform of “vital center” liberalism provided the means to encourage Soviet reform and the development of peaceful co-

⁸⁵ Lewis Coser in “Liberal Anti-Communism Revisited,” ed. Norman Podhoretz *Commentary*, September 1967, 41.

⁸⁶ Sam Tanenhaus, “History, Written in the Present Tense,” *New York Times*, March 4, 2007, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., “Varieties of Communist Experience,” *Encounter* 14, no. 1 (1960): 46.

existence between East and West.⁸⁷ He outlined the contours of a reformed Soviet Union further committed to the “consumer-goods-merry-go-round” that largely relinquished the “interior tyranny” of Stalin and thus no longer required the “external crisis” of international tension to reconcile its people with State repression.⁸⁸ In light of what he believed to be a genuine interest in pursuing détente on the part of Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, he maintained that to deal with Khrushchev with the same policies developed in the age of Stalin would represent a tremendous missed opportunity to encourage reform and develop contact with the Soviet Union.⁸⁹ In responding to a potential easing of tensions, Schlesinger’s position in the liberal “vital center” allowed him to strike a balance between ardently maintaining an anti-communist perspective while encouraging further development of the American-Soviet relationship by encouraging reform in the Soviet Union. While the militant rhetoric and hardline anti-communism of Arthur Koestler and other members who enjoyed prominence in the early years of the Congress may have had a place in the age of Stalin, their approach would have precluded the balancing act described by Schlesinger as necessary to take advantage of new opportunities in a strikingly different Cold War.

Though ready to engage an easing of tensions between the U.S. and Soviet Union that figures such as Koestler would have categorically rejected, Schlesinger stressed this position of negotiating with the Soviet Union from the “vital center” did not entail conceding Western interests at all costs for the sake of furthering the U.S.-Soviet relationship. While insisting that détente should not be pursued on grounds

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 56-57.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 57.

that would endanger vital Western interests, such as the independence of West Berlin and West Germany, he maintained that, in general, significant reform in the Soviet Union would greatly benefit the interests of the West. Framed within a broader discussion of the emerging semi-liberal reforms and relatively non-totalitarian communist systems in Poland and Yugoslavia, Schlesinger argued that the Polish-Yugoslav reforms provided an excellent model of what the West should encourage in the Soviet Union and that only through a relaxation of international tensions would such reforms be possible.⁹⁰

While insisting that the US and its allies needed to be careful in how they pursued détente, Schlesinger remained adamant that, on the whole, increased contact and a relaxation of tension offered at least as many benefits to the West as it did to the East. Utilizing a limited interpretation of Silone's "differentiation of energies" and a full embrace of his encouragement of social and political reform as the most powerful tools of the West in the Cold War struggle, Schlesinger drew upon a positive interpretation of "vital center" liberalism in his interpretation of détente as a process of encouraging pluralism and tolerance that would "dissolve the ideological dogmatism of Soviet society."⁹¹ In response to militant Cold Warriors who contended that a plan to face the Soviet Union with tolerance and reconciliation rather than confrontation represented a position of weakness, Schlesinger defended the power of encouraging more normative relations, elegantly writing, "Normality seems a weak and sketchy emotion, but, given time, it can split a monolith as ivy can split a block of

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Ibid., 58

granite.”⁹²

An opposition to the popular tendency to rigidly divide the world between “democratic” or “capitalist” and the “socialist” or “communist” significantly contributed to Schlesinger’s approach to the Cold War and his support for détente.⁹³ Embracing the “end of ideology” thesis put forward by Daniel Bell and other leading members of the Congress, he argued that by assuming that “these platonic essences are more ‘real’ than their confused and imperfect approximations in the concrete experience of contemporary society” both West and East have ignored Bell’s recognition that in the twentieth century “‘capitalism’ only survived by strong injections of ‘collectivism,’ and ‘collectivism’ only survived by strong injections of ‘capitalism.’”⁹⁴ Schlesinger demanded his Western readers to “reject the mystique of Either/Or, and lead the world back to intellectual sanity.”⁹⁵ Appealing to the shared cultural-intellectual tradition of the US and Europe, he maintained that Westerners have a generally “pragmatic” and “pluralistic” tradition and only become “dogmatists and monists” in times of emergency and panic.⁹⁶ In his embrace of the “pragmatic” Western intellectual tradition, Schlesinger stressed the importance of how living up to the ideals of the this tradition could encourage reform in the East when he rhetorically asked how one could hope to “restrain others from turning into raving ideologues” if the West itself were to “abandon the empirical approach to life” in its dealings with the East.⁹⁷

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 57.

⁹⁴ Bell, 402, Schlesinger, 57-58.

⁹⁵ Schlesinger, 58.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

In his insistence that the US and its allies must not abandon the cherished ideals of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition in their relations with the East, Schlesinger laid out a plan for confronting the Soviet Union that clearly distinguished himself from hawkish Cold Warriors represented in the nascent Congress by Arthur Koestler. By encouraging the West to embrace its cultural, intellectual, and political ideals in its relations with the Soviet Union, he demonstrated how the transatlantic intellectual consensus of the Congress around liberalism of the “vital center” as a foundation for the Western cultural-intellectual tradition represented not only an asset to be protected but also a valuable tool to be employed in the Cold War. Schlesinger maintained that by engaging the Soviet Union within the framework of the “pragmatic” Western intellectual tradition, the Congress would not only protect and promote this tradition but further the development of détente by diminishing the roles of “raving ideologues” on both the Eastern and Western sides of the negotiating table.⁹⁸ In the context of pluralistic communism and the emergence of détente in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Schlesinger demonstrated that the Congress could project the strength of its transatlantic intellectual consensus by approaching the Soviet Union in terms of the “end of ideology” and by way of a liberal “vital center.”

Providing another of *Encounter*'s more comprehensive treatments of the changing circumstances of the Cold War, Richard Löwenthal addressed a détente that had become increasingly mature since 1960 in his two-part 1965 article, “Has the Revolution a Future?”⁹⁹ Löwenthal, the journal's principal contributor of coverage on international politics, began his article with the ready pronouncement that “The

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Richard Löwenthal, “Has the Revolution a Future?” *Encounter* 22, no. 1 (1965): 3.

History of World Communism, conceived as a united movement with a common doctrine and strategy formulated from a single center, is at an end.”¹⁰⁰ Though his article primarily focused on developments in the communist world, he provided glimpses into the potential to be found in engaging the East from the perspective of the liberal “vital center.”¹⁰¹ While noting the potential challenges to Western interests presented by new developments in the Cold War, Löwenthal ultimately emphasized the ways in which the West’s liberalism of the “vital center” could adapt to and benefit from such circumstances.

In particular, he pointed to Khrushchev’s efforts in de-Stalinization along with the resulting test of the Soviet government’s pretense of infallibility and control over the Soviet Bloc as key developments in the Cold War.¹⁰² On one hand, the relative decline of Soviet control and cohesiveness among the Warsaw Pact nations provided an obvious edge to the Western democracies of NATO in the Cold War struggle. On the other hand, a decrease in Soviet control of the Communist Bloc meant greater autonomy for Western Communist Parties and greater potential to attract the support of European intellectuals wary of a Soviet puppet. While noting the complex nuances of differing national contexts, Löwenthal centered his analysis of the potentially positive future prospects for Western Communist Parties on the Italian Communist Party (PCI), which believed that “visible proof” of its independence from the Kremlin would remove the primary obstacle along the “peaceful road” to power.¹⁰³

Assessing the differences between Khrushchev and Stalin, Löwenthal

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid., 4.

¹⁰³ Richard Löwenthal, “Has the Revolution a Future? (II),” *Encounter* 22, no. 2 (1965): 23.

highlighted the significance of Khrushchev's domestic reforms and in doing so painted a complex picture of a new Soviet leader less focused on the abstract theory of world revolution and more focused on pragmatic economic development. Withholding blanket endorsement for Khrushchev's Soviet Union as an automatic improvement over its Stalinist predecessor, Löwenthal insisted that while trends toward a de-ideologized Soviet regime should be acknowledged and encouraged, it would be "foolish" and "dangerous" for the West to regard such changes as complete before the existence of "direct and unmistakable proofs".¹⁰⁴ Echoing Schlesinger's earlier recognition of the increasing political and economic orientation of the Soviet Union towards consumer goods, Löwenthal's analysis of the reforms undertaken by Khrushchev stressed the Soviet tendency towards abandoning Stalin's "deliberate use of state power as an agent of transformation" in the form of "mass terrorism" towards a focus on material incentives for the ordinary industrial and agricultural worker.¹⁰⁵ His analysis of Khrushchev's apparent emphasis on material benefits for Soviet citizens over pursuit of world revolution stressed that while this trend did not yet represent an accomplished fact, a Soviet regime more focused on fostering a climate of stability than permanent tension nonetheless represented a tremendous opportunity for the West to further normalize its relationship with the Soviet Union and press for greater reform.¹⁰⁶ By approaching the Soviet Union via the nuanced anti-communism of the liberal "vital center," Löwenthal, like Schlesinger, found the means to encourage Soviet reform when militant anti-communists in the mold of Arthur Koestler would

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 26.

¹⁰⁵ Löwenthal, "Has the Revolution a Future?," 6,7.

¹⁰⁶ Löwenthal, "Has the Revolution a Future (II)?," 26.

have simply written off any such engagement as being weak on communism.”¹⁰⁷

As with the opportunities and challenges provided by the greater autonomy of Western Communist Parties from the Kremlin, Löwenthal framed his discussion of a less ideological Soviet Union in terms of the obstacles and possibilities this development entailed for the West, and consequently the Congress. Throughout the article, Löwenthal avoided the popular tendency to view the Cold War as either a strictly ideological struggle or as an essentially geo-political confrontation between the world’s two superpowers. Employing a sophisticated understanding of the Cold War, Löwenthal faced the task of reconciling encouragement of seemingly liberal reforms in the Soviet Union with the danger of presenting such reforms as complete and consequently depicting the Soviet Union as a harmless potential ally of the West.¹⁰⁸ While he acknowledged the opportunities and potential benefits to the West in encouraging Soviet reform, his careful insistence on highlighting the incompleteness of such reform as well as the often-aggressive position of Russian national interests marked Löwenthal’s intention to reach out to neutralists and ensure that they did not view the Soviet Union as an increasingly harmless player in the Cold War struggle.

In concluding his two-part article Löwenthal came to apply the “end of ideology” not only to the capitalist West but also the communist East with the contention that in light of pluralistic communism and the Soviet de-emphasis of ideology “world revolution no longer has a clearly defined meaning.”¹⁰⁹ Though by no means contending that ideology had been discredited and displaced in the

¹⁰⁷ Coleman, 33.

¹⁰⁸ Löwenthal, “Has the Revolution a Future (II)?,” 26.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

Communist Bloc to the degree that such an “end of ideology” had occurred in the West, his analysis of the Soviet turn from ideological devotion drew upon the wide-ranging efforts of members of the Congress to describe the “end of ideology” in the West and the inevitable turn of the East to a similar direction. Drawing upon influential works from the CCF’s “end of ideology” canon such as Bertrand de Jouvenel’s “Some Fundamental Similarities between the Soviet and Capitalistic Economic Systems,” Löwenthal stressed the importance of calmly assessing the implications of liberalization in the Soviet system for the West.¹¹⁰ Whereas Koestler and his fellow militant rhetoricians at the 1950 Berlin Conference would not have engaged in the objective analysis necessary to identify and take advantage of new developments in the Communist world, Löwenthal and the “end of ideology” proponents who had come to the fore of the Congress calmly identified such openings by viewing Soviet communism not as an intrinsic evil but rather as a socio-economic phenomenon to be examined.¹¹¹ In “calmly” examining the socio-economic implications of Soviet reform, Löwenthal’s perspective from the liberal “vital center” allowed him to negotiate the demands of encouraging liberal reform in the Soviet Union while maintaining a position of strength that did not concede vital Western interests.

While other developments of the 1960s would significantly challenge the transatlantic intellectual consensus around liberalism of the “vital center” as a necessary foundation of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition, Löwenthal, Schlesinger, and other leading contributors to *Encounter* demonstrated that “vital

¹¹⁰ Edward Shils, “Letter from Milan: The End of Ideology?,” *Encounter* 5, no. 11 (1955): 53.

¹¹¹ Scott-Smith, 147.

center” liberalism and the “end of ideology” provided the Congress with the means to adapt to the end of a monolithic Stalinist threat and the emergence of détente. While insisting that liberals, by their very nature, must oppose communism, Schlesinger and the Congress promoted a “rational anti-communism” and rejected the “obsessive anti-communism” that remained on the table of the CCF’s approaches to the Cold War in its early years.¹¹² By applying a positive interpretation of “vital center” liberalism and embracing the “end of ideology” thesis, the Congress found the means to avoid engaging a transformed Cold War “in terms of stereotypes and strategies left over from the fight a generation ago against Stalinism.”¹¹³ While the Congress benefited from greater solidarity as these Cold War developments pushed the organization towards a firmer embrace of consensus around “vital center” liberalism, the emergence of a radical New Left in the 1960s challenged this form of liberalism as it questioned whether the “end of ideology” represented a positive development. Unable to address many of the issues raised by the New Left, and recognizing their own culpability in setting the ground the for this movement’s radicalism, leading figures in the Congress came to question the value of “vital center” liberalism and the “end of ideology” themselves.

¹¹² Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. in “Liberal Anti-Communism Revisited,” 69.

¹¹³ Ibid.

The “End of Ideology,” the New Left, and the Fragmentation of the “Vital Center”

While a consensus rooted in “vital center” liberalism and drawn heavily from Daniel Bell’s “end of ideology” allowed the Congress to adapt to challenges presented by the end of a monolithic Stalinist threat and the emergence of détente, the emerging New Left challenged this consensus as it came to question the value of a liberal “vital center” and ideological exhaustion. The “end of ideology” came to the fore of the CCF’s consensus at the organization’s 1955 conference in Milan and marked a significant change of direction from the themes of the inaugural 1950 conference in Berlin. Whereas Berlin had been a rallying call to Western intellectuals to defend their intellectual heritage in the face of actual or potential repression, Milan displayed a detachment from the earlier conference’s aggressive positions and rhetoric. With the new circumstances of the Cold War and the need for greater consensus leading the Congress away from the polemics of Berlin, participants at the Milan conference viewed Soviet communism less as an immoral potential aggressor and more as a socio-economic phenomenon to be examined. The aggressive positions of the Berlin conference as espoused by Arthur Koestler and other key figures had roots in the political struggles of the 1930s. Milan, on the other hand, displayed greater resonance with the issues of a post-Stalinist Cold War.¹¹⁴ While anti-communism had been thematic at Berlin, by the time of the Milan conference in 1955, it had become a presupposition.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Scott-Smith, 147.

¹¹⁵ Job Dittberner, *The End of Ideology in American Social Thought, 1930-1960*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Research Press, 1979) 119.

Though finding its most comprehensive treatment in Bell's seminal 1960 work, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties*, the "end of ideology" thesis originated from a broad contingency of leading figures in the Congress who by 1955 had a certain air of complacency that "communism had lost the battle of ideas" and viewed the Milan conference as a sort of "post-victory celebration."¹¹⁶ Though expressing the theme with subtle variations, Bell along with Raymond Aron, Seymour Lipset, Edward Shils, and other influential members of the Congress advanced the "end of ideology" thesis through much of their work in the mid-to-late 1950s. At its root, the "end of ideology" suggested that a clear dichotomy of capitalism and socialism had become blurred by a greater acceptance across the political spectrum of state intervention in the economy.¹¹⁷ For proponents of the "end of ideology," the ascendancy of a mixed economy and the social welfare state meant that, according to Lipset, "the ideological issues dividing left and right had been reduced to a little more or a little less government ownership and economic planning."¹¹⁸ Explaining his view that the great political and ideological questions of the past had become policy issues of a technical nature, Lipset pointed to a dramatic shift in Western politics:

The fundamental political problems of the industrial revolution have been solved: the workers have achieved industrial and political citizenship; the conservatives have accepted the welfare state; and the democratic left has recognized that an increase in over-all state power carries with it more dangers to freedom than solutions for economic problems. This very triumph of the democratic social revolution in the West ends domestic politics for those intellectuals who must have ideologies or utopias to motivate them to political action.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Max Beloff quoted in Scott-Smith, 147.

¹¹⁷ Scott-Smith 146.

¹¹⁸ Seymour Lipset, *Political Man*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 439.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Expressing a seemingly smug satisfaction with the social, political, and economic structure of the status quo, Lipset along with Aron, Bells, and Shils intended for the 1955 Milan conference to provide a launching point for the theme that would come to form the basis of the organization's activity for the remainder of its existence.¹²⁰

Foremost among the challenges in forming a broad consensus around the “end of ideology” was the necessary task of convincing the wider intellectual community of the West that the “end of ideology” did not simply imply a conservative support for existing political, economic, and social circumstances. Drawing on many of the same concepts that would come to form the basis of fellow Congress participant J.K. Galbraith's influential 1958 work, *The Affluent Society*, proponents of the “end of ideology” stressed the potential for a large-scale technocratic approach to solve the vast array of socio-economic problems found in a modern industrial society.¹²¹ In their view, technocrats had achieved their deserved ascendancy in the wake of developed welfare-state capitalism and the end of scarcity. In this technocratic age, a classless society was being achieved by non-revolutionary means as the “articulators of ideologies” gave way to empirically motivated “engineers of cooperation.”¹²²

Contrary to critics who saw a conservative support of the status quo, “end of ideology” proponents viewed themselves not as reactionaries but rather as existing at the forefront of progressive political discourse. Lipset considered himself “a man of the left” and Bell contended that the perspective he subscribed to was “anti-ideological, but not conservative” on the basis that “a repudiation of ideology, to be

¹²⁰ Coleman, 55.

¹²¹ Scott-Smith, 149.

¹²² Ibid., 140.

meaningful, must not mean only criticism of the utopian order but of existing society as well.” Aron, Bell, Lipset, Shils, and the other leading figures who brought the “end of ideology” to the center of the CCF’ transatlantic intellectual consensus exerted considerable energy in framing the approach as non-conservative. Despite these efforts, when the New Left emerged in the decade following the 1955 Milan Conference, the radical intellectuals of the Movement remained unconvinced that support for the “end of ideology” represented anything other than a reactionary embrace of the existing circumstances of postwar liberalism. As leading figures of the New Left came to greater prominence in the Western intellectual landscape they recognized the development of the “end of ideology” but came to see it not as a positive development but rather as a circumstance that would have to be overcome in order for social and political progress to be achieved.

The New Left’s perception of the Congress and its support for the “end of ideology” as conservative intensified as a number of Congress members associated with the New York Intellectuals began a rightward drift away from the liberal “vital center” and towards neoconservatism . This rightward turn occurred as these members came to terms with their own responsibility in setting the ground for the New Left’s radicalism and emphasized the need to protect cherished liberal values they viewed as greatly endangered by such radicalism. For onlookers of the New Left, the conservative turn of former “vital center” liberals who championed the “end of ideology” further accentuated the conservative basis upon which such notions of ideological exhaustion were founded. While the bulk of his fellow New York intellectuals moved to the right of the “vital center” in response to the New Left,

prominent Congress contributor Dwight Macdonald sided with student radicals and challenged “vital center” liberalism from the left. Whether abandoned for positions further to the right or to the left, the increasing difficulty faced by the Congress in maintaining the “vital center” as a broad political umbrella under which to foster consensus around “vital center” liberalism as a necessary foundation of the Western cultural-intellectual came under tremendous strain.

In the years prior to the New Left’s entry into the Western intellectual landscape, the “end of ideology” emerged alongside “vital center” liberalism at the core of the CCF’s transnational intellectual consensus at the 1955 “The Future of Freedom” conference in Milan. Reporting on the proceedings and ideas of the conference in his “Letter from Milan: The End of Ideology” in the November, 1955 issue of *Encounter*, Shils made sure to emphasize the non-conservative nature of the “end of ideology” with the assertion that “an attachment to moderation in action and orderliness and stability in change” should not entail an “uncritical acceptance of tradition.”¹²³ In his brief highlighting of the many papers presented at Milan, Shils emphasized the importance of “representatives of American sociological wisdom” for an “end of ideology” thesis rooted in a notion of social science as providing empirical and technocratic solutions to what had previously been seen as political or ideological issues. In accordance with the rising prominence of social science and its acceptance as a field of empirical study in the 1950s, he bolstered the objective credentials of a sociological approach, writing that the papers in this mold were “sometimes turgid

¹²³ Shils, 57.

and seldom elegant but [brought] to the conference an insistent independence of thought and an original feeling for the reality of social life.”¹²⁴

In addition to the valuable contributions of American sociologists, Shils devoted considerable attention to Raymond Aron’s paper on the ways in which the foundations of the great ideological conflicts of the first part of the twentieth century had largely disappeared. For Aron, the once clear distinction between “right” and “left” became blurred by the development of combinations of circumstances previously alleged by ideologues to be impossible. Among the examples of previously unimaginable combinations listed by Aron were the co-existence of public ownership and tyranny, full employment in a capitalist economy, and extensive government regulations with public liberties. In particular, he pointed to an awareness that nationalization was not a universal solution for economic problems and that British socialism had not led to tyranny as fundamentally weakening the viability of pure socialism and pure neo-liberalism as political and economic philosophies.¹²⁵

Echoing the sentiment expressed by a number of conference participants, Shils depicted the atmosphere in Milan as something like a “post-victory ball” over communist ideology.¹²⁶ Further supporting his impression that the conferees displayed none of the defensiveness towards communism displayed at earlier Congress conferences, he described an attitude towards McCarthyism that lacked the anxiety towards communist subversion previously displayed by liberals and conservatives alike. Struck by the general lack of concern towards the potential of communist influence in the West displayed in conference papers, Shils rhetorically

¹²⁴ Ibid., 53.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 54.

asked, “Have Communists come to appear so preposterous to our Western intellectuals that it is no longer conceivable that they could be effectively subversive?”¹²⁷

Hoping to check potentially undue complacency on the part of Western intellectuals espousing the “end of ideology,” Shils contended that the Milan conference demonstrated that much work remained to be done as intellectuals needed to avoid the temptation “to construct new ideologies, as rigid, as eager for consistency and for universal observance as those which have been now transcended.”¹²⁸

Seemingly forecasting the New Left that would emerge in the years following the Milan conference, he warned that seeking to undo all of the “old errors” by simply moving in the opposite direction will only “rehabilitate the need for ideology; it will creep in through the back door, or more particularly, through a rebellious younger generation.”¹²⁹ Along with prescriptions on how to avoid the pitfalls of ideology, Shils concluded his article with an assertion that the “end of ideology” need not imply a reactionary position. Insisting that in rejecting ideologies intellectuals must examine what should be salvaged from them, Shils failed to offer any specificity as to how such choices ought to be made or how one could critically question the structural issues of a society in which, as Lipset contended, “the fundamental political problems of the industrial revolution have been solved.”¹³⁰ Though he conceded that every society needs a certain amount of ideals drawn from “grandiose visions,” such glib pronouncements would offer little assurance to the intellectuals of the New Left when

¹²⁷ Ibid., 56.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 57.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

they later came to prominence in the 1960s that there was any substantial room to question the seemingly complete solutions of the mixed economy and the social-welfare state.¹³¹

Building on the paper he presented at the Milan conference, along with several other articles on the theme written in subsequent years, Daniel Bell further developed the “end of ideology” in his 1960 book-length treatment of the thesis in *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties*. Primarily focused on recent developments in the developed West, Bell contended that the 1950s saw an exhaustion of the major nineteenth century ideologies, particularly Marxism, as intellectual systems that claimed the universal truth of their views of the world. In celebrating the end of the ideological age as a positive development, Bell made certain to stress that his anti-ideological perspective did not represent a conservative position. Bell sought to demonstrate his perspective as non-conservative by contrasting the “end of ideology” with nineteenth century ideologies he represented as compelling the total intellectual and emotional commitment of the masses and leading intellectuals to fear the masses or any significant form of social action. Bell saw this fear of the masses and social action as the basis for neo-conservative politics and distinguished the “end of ideology” from the neo-conservative movement that would attract significant numbers of ex-radicals, including a number of leading members of the Congress, by insisting on the importance of criticizing not only “the utopian order” but also the existing circumstances of society.¹³²

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Bell, 405.

Still, as with Lipset, Bell offered little insight into how to balance a criticism of utopian aspirations and existing circumstances while providing even less indication of how one could critically question an existing order viewed as having solved the major issues faced by society. Providing little more than minimal assurances that the “end of ideology” did not imply an end of critically questioning the status quo of the mixed economy and the welfare-state, he focused instead on establishing the “end of ideology” as an empirical development of twentieth century history. For Bell, calamities such as the Moscow Show Trials, the Nazi-Soviet pact, and the suppression of striking Hungarian workers had destroyed the mythic attraction of communism for intellectuals. On the other side of the ideological spectrum, Bell noted how the ascendancy of the Welfare State had eroded the allure of pure *laissez faire* capitalism. In light of these developments, Bell saw in the emergence of youthful radicalism, a generation of intellectuals “with no meaningful memory of these old debates” that “finds itself seeking new purposes within a framework of political society that had rejected, intellectually speaking, the old apocalyptic and chiliastic visions.”¹³³

Bell’s insistence that support for the “end of ideology” did not stem from reactionary politics benefited little from his assertion in the concluding pages of the book that the virtual non-existence of opportunity or reason for radical criticism had led young radicals to a failing search for a “cause” with “a deep, desperate, almost pathetic anger.”¹³⁴ The irrelevance of “old politico-economic radicalism,” such as the nationalization of industry, and the inability of politics to address the “stultifying

¹³³ Ibid., 404.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

aspects of contemporary culture,” such as television, were highlighted by Bell as key reasons for the limited viability of radical criticism. Additionally, he completed his depiction of a bleak landscape for radicalism with the assertion that the working class viewed the existing circumstances of society with more satisfaction than did the intellectuals. For Bell, “the workers have not achieved utopia, but their expectations were less than those of the intellectuals, and the gains correspondingly larger.”¹³⁵

Directly addressing the New Left in the concluding pages of the work, Bell again asserted that the “end of ideology” was not, and should not be, the “end of utopia.”¹³⁶ He claimed that while utopia is always needed to provide society with a vision of its potential, “the ladder to the City of Heaven can no longer be a ‘faith ladder,’ but [must now be] an empirical one.” In stark contrast to his prescribed “empirical ladder,” Bell rejected the “easy left formulae” for social change he viewed as the guiding principle of the emerging New Left. Owing to its abhorrence of the empirical approach of technocracy, the New Left received ardent criticism from Bell for exuberating great passion and energy but providing little in way of a definable plan for the future. Questioning those of the New Left who self-congratulated simply for “being on the move,” he sought concrete answers to what they meant by socialism, how they intended to guard against bureaucratization, and what they meant by democratic planning or worker’s control. For Bell, the hard thought required by these questions gave way to answers from the New Left comprised only of “bravura phrases.”¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 405.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

With the view that the structural questions of society had been largely settled in the West, leaving little room remaining for radicalism, Bell's concern towards the naïve and simplistic radicalism he saw in the New Left consisted primarily of the movement's attitude towards Third World revolutions. In particular he looked to the positions of those in the New Left towards Cuba and the newly independent nations of Africa as evidence for the intellectual immaturity he perceived in the movement. Completing his indictment of the New Left for simplistic rhetoric and ignoring recent historical developments, Bell wrote, "among the 'new Left,' there is an alarming readiness to create *a tabula rasa*, to accept the word 'Revolution' as an absolution for outrages, to justify the suppression of civil rights and opposition—in short, to erase the lessons of the last forty years with an emotional alacrity that is astounding."¹³⁸

Foremost among Bell's critics, American sociologist C. Wright Mills ardently challenged the notion of ideological exhaustion as a positive development in his "Letter to the New Left." Writing for the British *The New Left Review* in 1960, Mills began his letter by expressing the common values shared between himself and a New Left audience that would allow him to simply "get on with it."¹³⁹ Clearly unconvinced by Bell's arguments that the support for "end of ideology" did not represent a conservative position, Mills viewed the thesis as a passing "intellectual fashion" that was in effect an "intellectual celebration of apathy."¹⁴⁰ Mills attributed the development and popularization of the "end of ideology" theme to the Congress, *Encounter*, and the 1955 Milan conference and proceeded to assert the theme as only liberal in its rhetoric, not in its substance. In describing the "snobbish assumptions"

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ C. Wright Mills, "Letter to the New Left," *The New Left Review* 5, September-October 1960, 18.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

held by “end of ideology” practitioners, Mills contended how a liberal tone, lacking actual liberal ideas, made it appear as if “the *New Yorker* style of reportage has become politically triumphant.”¹⁴¹ Describing the “end of ideology” as making a “fetish of empiricism,” Mills wrote, “The facts are duly weighed, carefully balanced, always hedged. Their power to outrage, their power truly to enlighten in a political way, their power to aid decision, even their power to clarify some situation—all that is blunted or destroyed.”¹⁴² For Mills, the powerlessness of this form of empiricism resulted in reason collapsing into an undue compulsion for reasonableness.¹⁴³

Contending that proponents of the “end of ideology” “do of course smuggle in general ideas” despite their ostensible opposition to ideology, Mills viewed the “end of ideology” as resting ultimately on disillusionment with any recognizable form of socialism.¹⁴⁴ In his assessment of the potential for social change to be found in the “end of ideology,” Mills saw none of the room for “utopian thinking” touted by Bell, and saw instead a self-congratulatory embrace of the Western welfare state with little to no application anywhere outside of the NATO bloc. Mills depicted the narrowly focused “end of ideology” practitioners as reflecting the self-image of a small circle of intellectuals from the developed West who were, in essence, attempting to apply the “consensus of a few provincials about their own immediate and provincial position” to the broader society of the West.¹⁴⁵

Taking his view on the reactionary nature of support for “the end of ideology” further than most critiques, Mills stressed the similarities between the

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid., 18, 20.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 20.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 19.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 19.

demands of the “end of ideology” and those of socialist realism in the Soviet Union. In describing a series of interviews he conducted in Uzbekistan and Georgia with Soviet intellectuals concerning socialist realism, Mills described himself as coming away from the interviews thinking “This man talks in a style just like Arthur Schlesinger Jr.” and “Surely this fellow’s the counterpart of Daniel Bell.”¹⁴⁶ For Mills, such striking similarities stemmed from the way in which socialist realism rested on an optimistic notion of communism as a providing all encompassing solutions and the “end of ideology” embraced an optimistic view of the mixed economy and welfare state to provide such solutions. With their general support of the status quo and an optimistic view of the potential for future development provided by their respective economic and political systems, both socialist realism and the “end of ideology” were seen by Mills at their root as “postures” opposed to radical criticism of society.¹⁴⁷ While noting the obvious difference that socialist realism was an official, and enforced, government policy where as the “end of ideology” was a self-managed effort to build consensus, Mills’ connection of the “end of ideology” proponents to Soviet intellectuals working in the mold of socialist realism echoes the desire of the CIA for the CCF to act as a counter to Soviet front groups in the cultural and intellectual realm. By connecting “NATO intellectuals,” such as Schlesinger and Bell, to Soviet intellectuals, Mills’ demonstrated that while the Congress had failed in convincing a leading figure of the New Left that support for the “end of ideology” did not stem from conservative politics, it had succeeded in providing a prominent counterweight to Soviet front organizations. As the New Left came further to the fore

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

of the Western intellectual landscape, such achievements in opposing Soviet front groups would bring the Congress little praise while the inability to present a transatlantic intellectual consensus tied to the “end of ideology” as anything other than conservative further challenged the organization’s efforts in reaching out to a new generation of radical intellectuals.

Drawing heavily from the work of Mills, Tom Hayden along with representatives from colleges and universities across the US gathered in Port Huron, Michigan in June of 1962 to draft the manifesto for what would come to be Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). In this manifesto, the Port Huron Statement, the influence of Mills became evident in the image of an American people isolated from the political process and an ardent critique of American institutions.¹⁴⁸ While the Port Huron Statement highlighted many perceived failings of liberalism and the ills faced by American society, the manifesto was also intended as a call to arms that sought to provoke youth away from defeatism and apathy in an attempt to turn back the complacency of the postwar years. Providing a thoroughly different interpretation of the affluence and seemingly complete social, political and economic solutions that Bell and his colleagues viewed the postwar welfare state as providing, the Port Huron Statement authors emphasized the inadequacies of American liberalism to the face the challenges found in an affluent and seemingly successful postwar society.¹⁴⁹

While recognizing the development of an “end of ideology” in American society and politics, the authors of the Port Huron Statement clearly remained

¹⁴⁸Rebecca Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right and the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 26.

¹⁴⁹“The Port Huron Statement” in *“Takin’ it to the Streets”: A Sixties Reader*, eds. Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 51-52.

unconvinced by Bell's insistence that an embrace of such developments did not stem from a reactionary form of politics. To the authors, consensus around a technocratic "end of ideology" as the ultimate development of American politics represented a deadening "national stalemate" with ambiguous and tradition bound goals at a time when the threat of nuclear war, racial inequality, poverty and other societal issues demanded a "revolutionary leadership."¹⁵⁰ Believing that the threat of nuclear war meant that theirs may be "the last generation in the experiment with living," the authors of this manifesto rejected the notion put forward by Bell and his colleagues that the "temporary equilibriums of our society and world are eternally functioning parts."¹⁵¹ With an intense feeling of urgency in light of the potentially catastrophic dangers of the postwar world, the authors viewed Bell's belief in the "temporary equilibrium" of the mixed economy and welfare state as permanent solutions to be a primary cause of the pervasive notion in American politics that "there is no viable alternative to the present."¹⁵²

Going further than simple opposition to Bell's insistence that the "end of ideology" provided "room for utopian thinking," contributors to the Port Huron Statement contended that the political philosophy also justified an exhaustion of any new direction for social change whatsoever. For the authors, this stultifying embrace of the status quo resulted not only from the purportedly total potential for social and political solutions provided by the mixed economy and welfare state but also from the ways the increasingly technocratic nature and complex structure of society had led the

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 51.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 52.

¹⁵² Ibid.

American people to fear change itself.¹⁵³ With a strident focus on the importance of values, the Port Huron Statement condemned the technocratic approach as insufficient in explaining implicit ideals. Sitting atop a core platform of participatory democracy, the Port Huron Statement rejected the existing political system, in which many decisions of fundamental social consequence were made by a small and insular group of technocrats. Instead, the manifesto proposed a participatory democracy in which fundamental questions of social policy would be deliberated in public groupings. In defense against “end of ideology” proponents and others who viewed such broad political deliberation in a complex industrial society as utopian fantasy, the authors contended that the technocratic approach had “‘competently’ manipulated [the American people] into incompetence.”¹⁵⁴ With a strong confidence in the potential competence of the common citizen, the authors saw little reason why the American people could not “meet with increasing skill the complexities and responsibilities of their situation, if society is organized not for minority, but for majority, participation in decision-making.”¹⁵⁵

Emphasizing the theme of alienation that would come to be a characteristic theme of the New Left, the authors of the Port Huron Statement contended that by playing an active role in the decision making process, the American people could hope to find the meaning and value in the democratic process missing from the technocratic approach to governance. They additionally contended that through active political participation the American people could escape from the debilitating fear of change perpetuated by a technocratic system they played little part in and had a

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 54.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

limited understanding of.¹⁵⁶ Despite the material progress that had been achieved by a mixed economy and social welfare state in the postwar years, the Port Huron Statement presented the accompanying technocratic approach as offering no solutions to the pervasive problem of alienation in an advanced industrial society. With their strong support of participatory democracy and a desire to address problems of alienation, the authors of the Port Huron Statement came to see support for the “end of ideology” and technocracy as fundamentally opposed to their visions and could not see support for ideological exhaustion as anything other than a conservative embrace of existing political, social and economic conditions.

Adding his voice to the vigorous opposition to the “end of ideology” expressed by C. Wright Mill’s and the authors of the Port Huron Statement, German philosopher Herbet Marcuse critically viewed support for the “end of ideology” as a deadening and conservative embrace of present circumstances. In the 1960s, Marcuse rose to the unlikely role of expert on and teacher of the New Left with his critical analysis of advanced industrial society and rejection of the work of Bell, Galbraith, and other leading members of the Congress who espoused the positive contributions of the “end of ideology” and “the affluent society” to the postwar Western society. The most politicized of scholars affiliated with what later became known as “the Frankfurt School,” Marcuse introduced a youthful audience of budding radicals to his theories of how seemingly free democratic societies repressed individual’s sexual, psychological, and intellectual freedoms in his 1955 *Eros and Civilization*.¹⁵⁷ Building on these themes of subtle repression, Marcuse undertook a comprehensive

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 55.

¹⁵⁷ Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry Into Freud* (New York: Psychology Press, 1987), FIND PAGE NUMBER.

study of advanced industrial society in his 1964 *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. The work sold widely on both sides of the Atlantic and provided a generation of young intellectuals and New Left activists with the tools of dialectical thought and theory-based practice. Responding to the enthusiastic response of young radicals and many of his academic colleagues, Marcuse became not only an ardent supporter of New Left movements but also a primary intellectual inspiration that influenced the anti-war movement, the counterculture, and many other emerging oppositional social movements.¹⁵⁸

In *Eros and Civilization*, published in 1955, Marcuse provided an optimistic and vivid depiction of his vision of liberation. Expressing a far more pessimistic tone in 1964, *One-Dimensional Man* saw Marcuse shift his focus to a systematic analysis of the forces dominating society. In his exploration of how democratic society developed new forms of social control that were producing a “one-dimensional man” and a “society without opposition,” Marcuse looked to the “end of ideology” in the American political landscape as a primary factor in the move towards conformity. For Marcuse, the integration of the working class into the capitalist system described in the “end of ideology” and the pervasive influence on culture and society by a mass media that perpetuated artificial consumer needs had led to a system that encouraged conformity of thought and stifled challenges to the status quo.¹⁵⁹ While agreeing with Bell on the reality on the postwar material prosperity and subsequent de-radicalization experienced by the working class, Marcuse differed markedly in this

¹⁵⁸ Douglas Kellner, “Introduction: Radical Politics, Marcuse, and the New Left,” in *Herbert Marcuse: The New Left and the 1960s*, ed. Douglas Kellner, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1-2.

¹⁵⁹ Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), xii.

interpretation of what these developments meant. Bell saw the “end of ideology” developed by the ascendancy of the mixed economy and welfare state as a positive development in American politics resulting in a progressive and adaptable system that, with the aid of technocrats, could meet the ever changing needs of society. Marcuse viewed these developments as providing the means for repression that while far subtler than the totalitarian methods of the Soviet Union were equally as pervasive and effective. In contrast to Bell’s satisfaction with the progressive possibilities he saw the postwar American political-economy as providing, Marcuse’s writing sought to oppose this “one-dimensional society” with critical and dialectical thinking that advocated a “great refusal” of all of the subtle modes of repression and domination.¹⁶⁰

In the *One-Dimensional Man*’s provocative thesis that the prosperity and apparent freedoms of the US and other advanced industrial societies in the postwar period were in fact unfreedoms, Marcuse advanced an interpretation of the “end of ideology” that viewed Bell’s position as not only but also repressive. Marcuse viewed support for the “end of ideology” as reactionary in the way in which it created a technical process seeking to contain all social change and defeat or refute those challenges that could not be incorporated into the existing system.¹⁶¹ In addition to rejecting Bell’s insistence that the “end of ideology” represented a progressive development in American politics, Marcuse went further in contending that the “end of ideology” had contributed to an irrational and repressive society that squandered the tremendous potential offered by a developed industrial infrastructure. While noting the difference between modern subtle forms of repression and earlier overt

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 64.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, xii.

forms resting on the use of terror, Marcuse contended that as the intellectual and material capabilities of society increased so too did the scope of society's repression of the individual. Marcuse found the distinction between earlier and modern forms of repression in the way by which the postwar US saw social opposition conquered by technocracy and rising material prosperity rather than the use of terror and or violence.¹⁶²

In response to Marcuse's insistence that support for the "end of ideology" represented an embrace of not only reactionary but also repressive politics, the Congress engaged in protracted criticism of the German philosopher's work and political activity. Providing the most comprehensive of the CCF's critiques of Marcuse's work, Maurice Cranston's article in the March 1969 issue of *Encounter* sought to portray Marcuse's positions and political direction as essentially illiberal. In particular, Cranston pointed to the illiberal nature of the influential New Left figure's political philosophies by drawing attention to his promotion of violence as a viable means for minority groups to exert influence on the structure of society.¹⁶³ He emphasized, and categorically rejected, Marcuse's distinction of permissible "revolutionary violence" in opposition to an oppressive system and the existing "reactionary violence" practiced by the institutions of the state. In bringing the issue of violence to the forefront of his analysis of Marcuse's work, Cranston depicted Marcuse as decidedly outside of the transnational consensus around "vital center" liberalism embraced by *Encounter* and the Congress. Seemingly unable to view Marcuse except in the political categories of the Old Left, Cranston emphasized

¹⁶² Ibid., ix-x.

¹⁶³ Maurice Cranston, "Herbert Marcuse," *Encounter* 32, no. 3 (1969): 38.

Marcuse's desire to see to fruition his vision of a freer society by "apparently undemocratic means" as essentially a misguided imitation of Lenin's "dictatorship of the proletariat".¹⁶⁴ Unsure of which side of the totalitarian spectrum to place Marcuse in, Cranston additionally criticized the German philosopher's opposition to liberalism and described him as a practitioner of "German totalitarian fanaticism" in the mold of "Fichte, Marx, Bismarck, [and] Hitler."¹⁶⁵

Widely read by a young generation of Western intellectuals looking for alternatives to "vital center" liberalism and the seemingly complete solutions provided by Bell's "end of ideology," Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* challenged the CCF's ability to resonate with this increasingly radical generation. Marcuse's insistence on support for ideological exhaustion as both reactionary and repressive convinced many among a generation of intellectuals beginning their careers that the "end of ideology" celebrated by the Congress held little potential for significant social change and had little relevance in the context of the radicalism and turbulence taking place in the 1960s. For the CCF's part in its relationship with the New Left, the organization's inability and unwillingness to view and depict Marcuse as anything other than a fanatical revolutionary who advocated violence did little to attract the interest and support of an emerging generation of intellectuals more familiar with Marcuse than the often antiquated figures of the liberal "vital center" who comprised the Congress and wrote for its magazines.

Beyond simply alienating a new generation of radical intellectuals, the dismay of leading members of the Congress towards the perceived violence and illiberal

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 48.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 39.

positions of Marcuse and the New Left led a number of leading figures in the organization to drift towards neoconservatism in their belief that they had been at least partially responsible for the rise of postwar radicalism. For these members of the Congress, particularly those from the New York Intellectuals, the political and social reforms they had helped to develop and promote in the 1960s had failed to deliver on their lofty promises and inspired a generation of young radicals to seek alternative, often illiberal, solutions to the issues raised.¹⁶⁶ Sociologist and Kennedy administration appointee Daniel Patrick Moynihan's blunt pronouncement that quite simply "the government did not know what it was doing" resonated with those the New York Intellectuals and other members of the Congress who believed that the roots of liberalism's failures and the rise of a destructive New Left rested on the flawed or incomplete theories upon which liberal programs had been based.¹⁶⁷ Echoing Moynihan in responding to the New Left's roots in the Civil Rights Movement, Irving Kristol made the observation in 1968 that "we have discovered in these past years that it just doesn't suffice to pass a law in order to solve minorities' problems." Further distancing himself from "vital center" liberalism's orientation towards large-scale government programs to address social issues, he added that, "somehow the money never seems to reach the people for whom it is intended—or, if it does, it never has the effect it was supposed to have."¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism: Intellectual and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1994* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 36.

¹⁶⁷ Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding* (New York: The Free Press, 1969), 170.

¹⁶⁸ Irving Kristol, "The Old Politics, the New Politics, The *New*, New Politics," *New York Times Magazine*, November 24, 1968, 174.

Owing to their belief in the role they had played in the failures of “vital center” liberalism and subsequent rise of destructive radicalism, Kristol and his fellow New York Intellectuals in the Congress began to fear for the survival of traditional institutions and their own rather prominent positions in them. Viewing “vital center” liberalism as both partially responsible for and too weak to quell the tide of New Left radicalism, the New York Intellectuals saw that basis of American society as being placed under tremendous risk because, according to Kristol, the failures of liberalism and the resulting surge of radical attacks had resulted in the essential institutions of society “being inexorably drained of their legitimacy.”¹⁶⁹ When New Left radicalism came to a striking flashpoint with the student rebellion and occupation of Columbia University in April 1968, Kristol, along with Nathan Glazer, Daniel Bell, and other members of the Congress associated with the New York Intellectuals appeared increasingly reactionary in their desperate attempts to defend the institutions from which their prominent social positions emanated. Glazer, who resided in New York at the time of the Columbia occupation and had been a professor at the University of California Berkeley when protests first began there in 1964, later reflected, “Anyone who has experienced the concrete situation in American universities know that the threats to free speech, free teaching, free research, come from radical white students, from militant black students, and from their faculty defenders.”¹⁷⁰ In his preference for suppressing the free speech of student radicals in order to maintain the seemingly more important freedoms he perceived as under grave threat at the University, Glazer paradoxically moved away

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 176.

¹⁷⁰ Nathan Glazer, *Remembering the Answers* (New York: Basic Books, 1969), 275.

from liberalism and towards conservatism in a concerted effort to protect traditional liberal values he saw as greatly endangered.

With many of the initial founders and influential figures of the organization in its ranks, the New York Intellectuals represented the most prominent element of the American contingent in the Congress. When a number of the New York Intellectuals embraced conservative positions in defense of liberal values they perceived as under threat, maintenance of a transatlantic intellectual consensus around “vital center” liberalism as a necessary guardian of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition became tremendously difficult. During the course of the New York Intellectuals journey from the socially marginal years of their youth spent debating the merits of Trotskyism over Stalinism at City College cafeterias to positions of power in institutions such as Columbia University and the CCF, they ceased to be an intellectual vanguard and became instead an intellectual institution.¹⁷¹ Relinquishing traditional ideals of the free-floating intellectual as a detached critic of society and instead drawing prominence and influence from the institutions to which they had become increasingly tethered, the New York Intellectuals came to view conservative politics as necessary for protecting their cherished liberal institutions. As the New York Intellectuals moved further rightward in reaction to New Left challenges, the increasingly young radicals who already critically viewed the Congress and the “end of ideology” as conservative in nature became even more uninterested in support of or cooperation with the organization. More importantly, the rightward turn of the New York Intellectuals towards neoconservatism led to difficulties in cooperation

¹⁷¹ Hugh Wilford, *The New York Intellectuals: From Vanguard to Institution* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 6-7.

with the generally more left-leaning European members of the Congress and contributed to something of a Euro-American schism in the organization.

Proving the exception to the rule of the rightward drift of the New York Intellectuals, Dwight Macdonald's bolstered his maverick reputation when he responded to the New Left by moving to the left of the "vital center." Having had his 1958 article "America! America!" rejected by *Encounter's* editors on the grounds that it was overly anti-American and losing out on succeeding Irving Kristol as *Encounter* co-editor because Michael Josselson believed he was too "lone wolf" for the journal, Macdonald had long experienced a precarious but vital position in the Congress.¹⁷² Despite such questions as to his "political reliability", Macdonald's international prominence and well-known independent streak proved invaluable to the CCF's efforts in establishing its credentials as an authentic cultural-intellectual organization and in reaching out to Western, particularly European, intellectuals wary of uncritical endorsements of the U.S. Though Macdonald had been able to join the "middle ground" of transatlantic consensus around "vital center" liberalism with figures such as Kristol, Glazer, and Bell in the 1950s, the emergence of New Left radicalism brought to light differences that had been swept under the surface in the perceived urgency of establishing such a workable consensus during the early postwar years.

¹⁷² Michael Josselson quoted in Coleman, 76, Dwight Macdonald's 1958 article, "America! America!" represents the clearest available example of the editorial influence wielded over *Encounter* by the CCF's Paris office. Despite Irving Kristol's dislike of the article from the beginning, Stephen Spender's support and Dwight Macdonald's close association with the journal resulted in the original decision to publish the piece. After making the rounds at the Paris office, and potentially finding its way onto the tables of CIA operatives, the article was ultimately rejected for publication. When the article later appeared in *Dissent* in the U.S. and the *Twentieth Century* in the U.K., it featured a preface from Macdonald outlining his ordeal in publishing the article on the grounds that "readers have a right to know when a magazine makes an editorial decision for extraneous reasons." Though the article would later find its way into the pages of the CCF's Italian journal *Tempo Presente*, Macdonald's public airing of the organization's internal issues irreparably damaged perceptions of *Encounter's* intellectual independence and integrity.

When his fellow New York Intellectuals adopted conservative political positions and closed ranks in protection around the institutions in which they had achieved prominent positions, Macdonald, though not uncritically, sympathized with New Left activists and supported their efforts to challenge institutional authority and shake the country out of the political apathy he saw the “end of ideology” as encouraging.¹⁷³

In the political parting that splintered the transatlantic intellectual consensus of the Congress, both Macdonald and his fellow New York Intellectuals stressed their perceptions of the failures of “vital center” liberalism in addressing the urgent issues of the 1960s. While his fellow New York Intellectuals moved rightward with the conviction that “vital center” liberalism could no longer protect the liberal values they saw as threatened by New Left radicalism, Macdonald drifted leftward in opposition to “vital center” liberalism he increasingly identified with the failings of President Johnson and towards a greater enthusiasm for anarcho-pacifism.¹⁷⁴ Contrary to Glazer and other New York Intellectuals who maintained the necessity of conservative and vigorous opposition to student activists in order to protect the cherished liberal ideals of the academy, Macdonald remained critical of university administrations’ pretensions and insensitivity towards student interests.¹⁷⁵ Though he remained critical of the romanticism displayed towards Third World Revolution in the student movement, he largely endorsed their use of civil disobedience and organized resistance as a viable and laudable means to advance Civil Rights and oppose the Vietnam War. With his anarcho-pacifist positions putting him in direct opposition

¹⁷³ Michael Wreszin, *A Rebel in Defense of Tradition: The Life and Politics of Dwight Macdonald* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 370.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 434.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 373.

to the aggressive foreign policy of the “vital center” and his endorsement of the New Left earning him the contempt of fellow Congress members such as Irving Kristol and Edward Shils, Macdonald grew increasingly estranged with the organization in which he had long played a vital role.¹⁷⁶ Though he would continue to play a periphery role in the organization, Macdonald, unlike a great many of his fellow members, did not rush to defend the mission of the Congress in the wake of revelations concerning its CIA funding. His disillusionment with “vital center” liberalism and the mission of the Congress manifested itself when he wrote to Arthur Schlesinger Jr. in the aftermath of funding revelations in 1967 that “there isn’t any moral imperative I can see...that the Congress, or its off-shoots like *Encounter*, should continue to exist.”¹⁷⁷

Whether abandoned to the right by the neo-conservative turn of Bell, Glazer, Kristol and other Congress members from the New York Intellectuals or to the left by the anarcho-pacifist turn of Dwight Macdonald, the emergence of the New Left marked the beginning of the end period in which a broad consensus of Western intellectuals could be brought together under the broad umbrella of “vital center” liberalism. When most members of the New York Intellectuals felt the need to adopt conservative means to protect liberal values and Dwight Macdonald moved away from “vital center” liberalism towards increasingly anarchist and pacifist positions, general agreement and consensus on liberalism ceased to be possible. The rise of the New Left brought to light the markedly different interpretations of liberalism held by members of the Congress that had been swept under the surface in the early postwar

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 435.

¹⁷⁷ Dwight Macdonald to Arthur Schlesinger Jr., April 20, 1967, Dwight Macdonald Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

years when the urgency of opposing communism had taken precedence over such divergences. With the Congress unable to reach out to a generation of intellectuals imbued by the New Left Movement and facing defections to the right and to the left by vital members from the New York Intellectuals, the “middle ground” of transatlantic intellectual consensus around “vital center” liberalism as a necessary guardian of the Western cultural intellectual tradition that had proven successful for the Congress in the 1950s began to unravel in the 1960s. When the Civil Rights Movement moved from the liberal and reform minded activism of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to the militant demands of Black Power, the strains placed on the CCF’s transatlantic intellectual consensus by the New Left would be further exasperated.

The Radicalization of the Civil Rights Movement, the Failures of “Vital Center” Liberalism, and the Neoconservative Turn

As writers and activists of the New Left came to view support for the “end of ideology” in conservative terms and stressed limitations in the broader accompanying political philosophy of “vital center” liberalism, an increasingly radicalized Civil Rights movement leveled similar charges against the liberalism upon which the foundation of the Congress rested. Viewed by New Leftists as a conservative embrace of the status quo, “vital center” liberalism appeared to an increasing number of African Americans as woefully incapable of addressing the fundamental socio-economic issues underlying racial inequality in the US. Like the New Left, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s moved from origins rooted in liberal hope to disillusionment driven by radical politics.¹⁷⁸ However, unlike the largely white proponents of the New Left, the increasingly militant black protesters who emerged in the wake of the Civil Rights movement never doubted that they were outcasts in mainstream American society. When liberal achievements in establishing greater racial equality fell short of expectations, an embittered and dynamic minority of

¹⁷⁸ For more on the interconnected relationship of American liberalism and the Civil Rights Movement as led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. see Christopher Beem, “American Liberalism and the Christian Church: Stanley Hauerwas vs. Martin Luther King Jr.,” *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 23, no.1 (1995): 119-133. In refuting the distinguished theologian Stanley Hauerwas and others who represent King’s leadership of the Civil Rights movement as strictly or primarily Christian, Beem depicts King’s leadership as founded on a fundamental coherence between American liberalism and Christianity. In contrast to Hauerwas’ assertion that Christian ethics and the moral neutralism of an American liberalism committed only to self-interest and government by consent are inherently contradictory, Beem contends that King had always stressed the overlap between Christian values and American liberalism. He emphasizes the ways in which King appealed to the founding documents of the US and their modern manifestation in American liberalism to reach a broader audience throughout his career. Instead of Hauerwas’ insistence on liberalism as selfish and morally empty political philosophy, Beem argues that King viewed American liberalism as illuminating the moral principles that putatively unite all Americans. For Beem, the fundamental coherence between Christianity and American liberalism allowed Christians to legitimately and effectively involve themselves in the American political system. He contends that this cohesion provided King with a public and political voice that could appeal to both religious and secular audiences.

African Americans abandoned the goals of Civil Rights in favor of black nationalism. This increasing tendency towards racial separatism manifested itself by the mid-1960s in both the ideology of Black Power and, less directly, in the ghetto riots taking place in urban areas across the country.¹⁷⁹

While the Congress supported Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s approach of non-violence, racial integration, and his insistence on the potential for the liberal programs of the federal government to bring about necessary reform, the emergence of Bob Moses and Stokely Carmichael with their disdain of potential liberal allies, support of Black Power, black nationalism, and solidarity with Third World revolutionary struggles significantly challenged "vital center" liberalism as a viable platform for Civil Rights progress. Though the Congress did not categorically refrain from expressing dissatisfaction with the plight of African Americans in the US, it had always discussed failings within the context of the potential for "vital center" liberalism to solve the essential issues at hand. With the emergence of Black Power and black nationalism signaling both the dire situation of many African Americans in the US and the failures of liberal approaches to solving issues of racial equality, the Congress found the Civil Rights movement as less of an asset and more of a liability.

For Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer, Irving Kristol, and other leading members of the Congress largely associated with the New York Intellectuals, the emergence of Black Power and ghetto riots demonstrated the limitations of a Civil Rights Movement rooted in liberalism, legislative reform, and large-scale government programs. Noting the failures and heightened expectations brought about by

¹⁷⁹ Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2009), 345.

government programs they had supported in the 1950s and early 1960s, these leading figures became convinced of their responsibility and the contributions of “vital center” liberalism in leading to the radicalization of the Civil Rights movement. As they came to view liberalism of the “vital center” as a fundamental factor in the emergence of black militancy, this prominent cohort in the Congress further gravitated toward the neoconservative politics they had begun to embrace in response to New Left radicalism. When these leading figures in the American contingent of the Congress abandoned “vital center” liberalism in favor of neoconservatism, it became virtually impossible for the Congress to maintain a “middle ground” in light of the strikingly different interpretations of liberalism adhered to by its members.¹⁸⁰

While the New York Intellectuals, including the outlying Dwight Macdonald, and European democratic socialists such as Ignazio Silone and Bertrand Russell had been able to join together under the seemingly broad political umbrella of “vital center” liberalism in the perceived urgency of the 1950s, first the emergence of the New Left and then the radicalization of the Civil Rights movements made such a grouping unworkable. As the radicalization of the Civil Rights movement further cemented the New York Intellectuals’ abandonment of “vital center” liberalism, the CCF’s transatlantic intellectual consensus around this political philosophy as the foundation for the continued prosperity of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition became increasingly untenable. The Euro-American parting in the Congress that had begun with the New York Intellectuals drift to neoconservatism in response to the New Left became an irreconcilable schism in the wake of the radicalization of the Civil Rights Movement.

¹⁸⁰ White, 50-53.

In many ways, the radicalization of the Civil Rights Movement followed the narrative of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)¹⁸¹ Formed in the Spring of 1960 to coordinate the scattered efforts of leaders in the sit-in movement, SNCC's original members thoroughly espoused traditional liberal values.¹⁸² Mostly comprised of students from southern black colleges, SNCC's members embraced non-violence, racial integration, a positive view of the federal government's ability to further racial equality and a desire to gain acceptance in the American middle-class. Espousal of racial integration and non-violence as essential philosophies came under questioning after the SNCC's efforts to register black voters in Mississippi in 1961 led many members to the radical conviction that a nation which tolerated Mississippi's poverty and racism had to be fundamentally flawed. By 1964, substantial numbers of black SNCC members expressed resentment towards the growing proportion of white members in the organization and the disproportionate number of whites in positions of leadership.¹⁸³

After the foremost symbol of "vital center" liberalism, President Lyndon B. Johnson, opposed the seating of the Mississippi Freedom Democracy Party, created to thwart the system of the white-only primary, SNCC changed its goal from Civil Rights to "liberation."¹⁸⁴ Along with an abandonment of racial integration, alliance with white liberals, and non-violence, SNCC's leadership increasingly came to liken the struggle of African Americans in the US with the colonial and revolutionary

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 345.

¹⁸² For more on SNCC's roots in liberalism see Allen Matusow et. al., "SNCC and the Practice of History," in *A Circle of Trust: Remembering SNCC*, ed. Cheryl Lynn Greenberg (Rutgers University Press, 1998), 177-199.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 346-347.

¹⁸⁴ Cleveland Sellers and Robert L. Terrell, *The River of No Return: The Autobiography of a Black Militant and the Life and Death of SNCC* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1990), 111.

struggles of the Third World. At an anti-war teach-in at Berkley in 1965, SNCC field secretary Bob Moses declared himself to be “a member of the Third World” in an analysis that linked the plight of Vietnamese peasants to that of African Americans in Mississippi. By likening the struggle for racial justice to the US government’s efforts to put down “liberation movements” in the Third World, SNCC became the first civil rights organization to speak out against the war when it issued a statement in support of draft resistance in January 1966.¹⁸⁵ SNCC president Stokely Carmichael further developed the organization’s linkage of the US struggle for racial justice and the revolutionary struggles of the Third World when he embraced the work of Frantz Fanon and stressed instead of *négritude* the common struggle of the colored people of the world against white capitalist imperialism. Amid a backdrop of ghetto riots in the summer of 1967, Carmichael stressed anti-imperialism as an essential mission for SNCC when he affirmed the solidarity of African Americans with the oppressed peoples of the world and declared willingness to enlist in the global struggle against white imperialism.¹⁸⁶

A pivotal turn in the relationship of liberals to the Civil Rights movement occurred when Stokely Carmichael, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. of the Southern Christian Leadership (SCLC), and Floyd McKissick of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) flew to Mississippi to continue James Meredith’s March Against Fear. As white hostility towards the March increased and Carmichael, King, and McKissick failed to agree on how to respond to violence, marchers responded in kind

¹⁸⁵ Matusow, 352.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 359.

to the violent provocations of local whites.¹⁸⁷ In the aftermath, Carmichael became the spokesperson for the March when he issued the cry of “black power” that would bring him national attention. The *New York Times* reported that when Carmichael shouted “We want black power!,” “each time the younger members of the audience shouted back, ‘black power!’”¹⁸⁸ Expressing his disapproval of the slogan, King called on the crowds to raise their voices for “freedom now” instead of “black power.” Despite King’s efforts, by the end of rally the new cry of “black power” had drowned out the insistence on “freedom now.”¹⁸⁹

While the Congress had given greater attention to the Civil Rights Movement when it called for “freedom now” than when it demanded “black power,” the organization and its journals had long given conspicuously meager attention to the topic. When compared with the coverage devoted to the Civil Rights Movement in competing American and European cultural-intellectual journals and the broader media of the West, the limited extent of coverage found in *Encounter* and other Congress publications is made particularly evident. While the Congress did not categorically refrain from highlighting the plight of African Americans in the US, its published coverage featured both a careful selection of authors and a general emphasis on the promise for reform provided by “vital center” liberalism. From the beginning of its existence, the Congress largely steered clear of writers from the American South who Sidney Hook had complained of in 1949 as reinforcing negative stereotypes of the US with their “novels of social protest and revolt” and “American

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 354.

¹⁸⁸ *New York Times*, June 17, 1966.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 355.

degeneracy and inanity.”¹⁹⁰ The Congress did not act alone during this period in its disavowal of Southern writers, finding a similar disavowal undertaken by a variety of Cold Warriors from both the public and private spheres. Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) President Eric Johnston led the assault on Southern writers and artists, remarking, “We’ll have no more Grapes of Wrath, we’ll have no more Tobacco Roads. We’ll have no more films that show the steamy side of American life.”¹⁹¹ The position of public and private media leaders towards Southern writers influenced the reading habits of American citizens as sales of books by Erskine Caldwell, William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, and Richard Wright declined during the early 1950s.¹⁹²

In its limited attention to the plight of race relations in the South and the broader Civil Rights movement, *Encounter* and other Congress journals carefully selected the writers who were to cover the subject. More often than not, the journals published by the Congress eschewed coverage of the Civil Rights Movement in favor of coverage of and involvement in the process of de-colonization and emergence of independent states in Africa. Though the vast majority of the members of the CCF were from Western Europe or the US and the organization’s foremost interest focused on the maintenance of cultural freedom in Europe, the Congress had been from its creation, an international organization with national associations across the globe. As the disappearance of a monolithic Stalinist threat and the emergence of détente diminished the urgency of protecting cultural freedom in Europe, members of the

¹⁹⁰ Sidney Hook, “Report on the International Day Against Dictatorship and War,” *Partisan Review* 16, no. 7 (1949): 731.

¹⁹¹ Eric Johnston quoted in Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New York: Macmillan, 1997), 155.

¹⁹² Saunders, 292.

Congress, both Western and non-Western, gave greater attention to the issues of cultural freedom in the decolonizing and rapidly changing Third World. The shift of the Congress towards the Third World followed the establishment of a détente with communism in Europe that coincided with a significantly more aggressive policy in the rest of the world on the part of both the West and the Soviet Union. Historian Christopher Lasch, who associated with the New Left Movement during the period in which he wrote on the Congress, argued that while European détente had made the anti-communist rhetoric of the fifties obsolete it had not diminished the broader necessity of anti-communism. The Congress poured greater energy into its non-European activities in the late 1950s and early 1960s as the anti-communist efforts of Western governments and politicians also came to place further focus on the Third World.¹⁹³

When the Congress established national associations and initiated activities in Africa during the late 1950s, the continent became the last major region in which the organization developed a program. Prior to the 1955 “Future of Freedom Conference” in Milan the CCF’s membership and international seminars failed to feature any Africans. Held in the same year as the pivotal Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, the Milan conference featured Michael Polanyi who spoke for the Congress when he acknowledged the “proud peoples of the ancient lands who are now coming into their own” in Africa and Asia who had made him aware of “the exhilarating perspective...of this immense area of new companionship.”¹⁹⁴ Amid the 1956 World Conference of African Writers, the independence of Ghana in 1957, and

¹⁹³ Lasch, 82.

¹⁹⁴ Michael Polanyi, “Comments on 1955 Milan Conference”, Series II, Box 105, Folder 1, IACF.

French African colonies in 1958, the Congress developed a tentative African Program in the months prior to the 1960 “African Independence Year,” in which seventeen new African States gained admittance to the United Nations.

Despite the energy poured by the Congress into initiatives in Africa, the 1960s would see the organization’s African programs collapse amid rampant political repression. The Institute of Congolese Studies in Brazzaville became the first in a series of Congress casualties in Africa in which virtually all of the organization’s African operations faced elimination by the end of the 1960s.¹⁹⁵ While the CCF’s African program ended in stunning failure, the organization suffered minimal lasting consequences as such failures, unlike those associated with the New Left and black militancy, were not tied to a failure of “vital center” liberalism but rather the general absence of liberal politics. As the credibility of the Congress with Western intellectuals did not intrinsically rely on outcomes in Africa, the failure of what many in the CCF viewed as a program of secondary importance compared to issues pertaining directly to the West passed with relatively little attention from intellectuals both within and outside the organization. While the Congress had given relatively extensive attention to African issues in *Encounter*, such attention came as a result of the organization’s ability to cover glaring issues with a detachment and lack of accountability that would have been impossible in coverage of the Civil Rights Movement in the US.

Unable to approach Civil Rights issues with the detachment and free hand seen in its coverage of African issues, *Encounter*’s coverage of the Civil Rights Movement remained both highly selective and limited. Though featuring far more

¹⁹⁵ Coleman, 205.

articles on the Civil Rights Movement in its earlier years, *Encounter* failed even during this period to provide significant coverage of major milestones in the Movement such as *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or the Voting Rights Act of 1965. For a publication that so often immersed itself in U.S. issues, the relative inattention to Civil Rights belied an uneasiness of *Encounter* and the Congress with the gulf between the theory and practice of democracy and race relations that often came to the fore during the Civil Rights Movement. Such uneasiness would only be exacerbated when the limitations of a Civil Rights Movement rooted in liberalism became increasingly exposed in the latter half of the 1960s.

Providing one of the most extensive assessments on the U.S. Civil Rights Movement to be found in *Encounter*'s limited coverage, Richard Rovere's August 1963 article, "Negro Crisis: Letter from the American Kitchen," both painted a rosy picture of progress achieved and warned of future potential dangers.¹⁹⁶ Rovere's article began with a juxtaposition of quotes from Malcom X and James Baldwin, with the latter endorsed by Rovere for having been a critic of American culture who became one of its heroes and in doing so provided a vision of race relations that could be embraced by both blacks and whites. In championing a literary figure over a more overtly political figure, Rovere traversed difficult political territory by taking a more cultural route.¹⁹⁷ With his general acceptance as essentially a cultural figure, Baldwin

¹⁹⁶ Richard H. Rovere, "Negro Crisis: Letter from the American Kitchen," *Encounter* 21, no. 8 (1963): 3.

¹⁹⁷ For more on the complex relationship of James Baldwin's identity as a novelist and his identity as a political activist see the introduction to James Baldwin, *The Cross of Redemption: Uncollected Writings*, ed. Randall Kenan (New York: Random House, 2010), xi-xxiii, Randal Kenan discusses Baldwin's hands-on involvement in the Civil Rights Movement, particularly in the South, but

received support from institutions of American liberalism that would have been far less likely to endorse similarly critical views of a more overtly political critic. In his proclamation that “people of all sorts are telling one another how very right Baldwin is, how beautifully he puts things, and how thoroughly justified he is in saying what he says,” Rovere pointed to ringing endorsements from mainstream publications such as *Life*, *Newsweek*, the *New York Times*, and *Time*.¹⁹⁸

Of the various institutions of American liberalism endorsing Baldwin, Rovere considered the U.S. Attorney General’s assessment of Baldwin’s work as “terrific” to be the most significant. The Attorney General’s support for Baldwin struck Rovere as “a bit as if one of the Romanovs had said, *circa* 1915, that he got quite a kick out of reading Leon Trotsky.”¹⁹⁹ For Rovere, the Attorney General’s support for a seemingly critical and dissident figure gained further illumination when placed in stark contrast to the obvious rigidity of the Tsarist regime in Russia. With his ability to endorse and accommodate dissident views into a program of change, the U.S. Attorney General received praise from Rovere because as a significant representative of “vital center” liberalism his comments supported the notion of this political philosophy as an enduring engine of progressive change.

While Rovere did not shy from criticism of US Civil Rights progress with his support for Baldwin’s critical positions and a skeptical view of Kennedy’s actions in light of promising rhetoric, on the whole, he depicted the circumstances and promises of the Movement in a strikingly positive manner. Though he conceded the potential

ultimately stresses Baldwin’s public acceptance as a novelist as providing him with avenues of social and political criticism unavailable to more overtly political figures.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 4.

for the extremes of white supremacy and black militarism to derail progress, Rovere asserted that in his opinion “it’s going to work out in some other way.”²⁰⁰ Appearing to be on the defensive, Rovere asked his readers if it was possible to not sound “crackers” when he made the statement “that I am at this moment—mid-June 1963—quite proud of my countrymen.”²⁰¹ In his assessment of the significant progress that occurred in the lives of African Americans, he took mobs of thirty years past who “were hanging, shooting, and beating Negroes to death at the rate of one every three weeks” as his starting point.²⁰² While conceding that simply stopping the mass murder of African Americans did not amount to the greatest of success stories, he pointed out that a generation ago the entire civil rights program of a “great liberal president” had been a federal anti-lynching bill that never passed.²⁰³

From a starting point of mass lynching, Rovere celebrated the achievements gained through the mature and resourceful leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his colleagues.²⁰⁴ In his celebration of Civil Rights progress, Rovere displayed a rather selective memory of race relations in the South during the 1960s. In describing the progress achieved since the mass lynching of thirty years past, he contended that while the white South resisted the direct action of African Americans it had not confronted non-violence with violence. Failing to take into account the bombings of African American churches and the homes of Civil Rights activists as well as the decreased but nonetheless continued practice of lynching, Rovere contended that white Southerners did not refrain from violent reaction because they feared black

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 6.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid., 7.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 7.

militants. Rather, he asserted, they have “come to know something of guilt” and feared “the rest of the country and, in particular, the federal power.”²⁰⁵ For Rovere, national consensus around “vital center” liberalism, channeled through the power of the federal government, had not only secured further legal rights for African Americans but had also acted as a moral and physical deterrent to whites in the South who would have otherwise engaged in violent responses to African American efforts to gain civil rights. Sadly, such factors did not deter the Klu Klux Klan members who one month after the publication of Rovere’s article bombed the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, killing four African American girls.

For Rovere, the existing gains of the Civil Rights Movement by mid-1963 through the efforts of effective African American leadership aligned with the consensus of millions of white Americans “who have now been aroused by the shame of segregation as they have been aroused by nothing else in their lives,” trumped the potential for the Movement to take a radical and violent turn.²⁰⁶ Rovere noted the advice of James Baldwin and “a great many others” that the moderate and liberal leadership of Martin Luther King Jr. and his associates could fall out of favor with the rank and file of the Movement and become replaced by radical leaders who espoused violence. Though he acknowledged such a possibility, Rovere proceeded to boast, “we would still have a record of famous victories by Dr. King and his admirable field captains.”²⁰⁷ Even the distinct possibility of a violent direction for the Civil Rights movement, which would have presumably demonstrated the limitations of King’s moderate leadership and progress achieved through liberal politics, did not dim

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

Rovere's celebration of the "splendid hour, with many heroes" he saw as then at hand.²⁰⁸

As the moderate leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr. became increasingly displaced in media coverage of the Movement by more radical and militant elements in the mid-1960s, Marcus Cunliffe wrote the first piece for *Encounter* to specifically assess black nationalism and the emerging prominence of the Nation of Islam. Appearing in the July 1964 issue of *Encounter* Cunliffe's "Black Muslims, White Liberals" emphasized the overrepresentation of extreme elements in media coverage of the Civil Rights Movement and warned of the potential for bloodshed but ended on a cautiously optimistic note.²⁰⁹ Though acknowledging that African Americans were justified in their anger at the American legal system's slowness in executing law into practice and the various socio-economic inequalities that continued to persist, Cunliffe stridently criticized the Nation of Islam's total repudiation of white Christian culture as essentially a reversal of white supremacy. Citing a relatively long history of African American contempt for white culture, Cunliffe contended that "Muslim propaganda" became represented as a new and revolutionary rhetoric simply because it had become "the only tone possible if one seeks yet again to restate the Negro case without inducing a yawn in listeners."²¹⁰ He viewed this "dull stalemate" as encouraging the extremes of white supremacy and black militancy and maintained that only such extremes could compel someone "to finish a newspaper story."²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Marcus Cunliffe, "Black Muslims, White Liberals," *Encounter* 23, no. 3 (1964), 52.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

For Cunliffe, the media's framing of Civil Rights discussion around figures such as Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X contributed to the popular sense of a "revolutionary situation" in which moderates and liberals were made to appear "foolish" and sometimes "treacherous."²¹² He contended that in these circumstances, valuable African American leaders such as James Baldwin, Ralph Bunche, John Hope Franklin, and Carl Rowan faced difficulty in projecting their more moderate positions in between the extremes that had come to dictate the terms of debate. Noting that the nature of this debate resulted in moderate African American leaders running the risk of being regarded as "hostages held by whites," Cunliffe added that the media's polarization had also made it difficult for white liberals to ally themselves with a movement increasingly seen as being dominated by black militants who categorically rejected their support. Cunliffe asserted that the most vital and overlooked aspect of such a rejection could be found in the way that white liberals clearly wanted to be on the side of African Americans. He cited the millions of young white students, along with university faculty and other traditionally liberal elements of society, who were actively interested in the betterment of African American life as evidence of the potential for widespread support of African American efforts to gain civil rights.²¹³ The foremost culprit in thwarting further alliance between interested white Americans and African American activists, Cunliffe contended, could be found not among the relatively small number of black militants or the masses of white liberals, but rather in a media establishment guilty of polarizing the debate in order to run sensational headlines.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid., 53.

While the early militancy of the Nation of Islam, and even the liberal phase of the Civil Rights movement lead by Martin Luther King Jr., presented the Congress with difficult circumstances that often found the organization looking for scapegoats, the increasing prominence of Black Power and the pervasiveness of riots in African American ghettos across the country during the late 1960s provided an insurmountable challenge to the “vital center” liberalism espoused by the organization. Featuring limited coverage of the Civil Rights Movement throughout its history, the number of articles on the Movement and broader issues of African American life found in *Encounter* perceptibly declined in the latter half of the 1960s. With African Americans having gained extensive legal rights on paper while SNCC decidedly abandoned their commitment to non-violence, the Black Panthers touted guns in front of the cameras of the national media, and urban areas across the country stood in shambles after series of riots, the direction the Civil Rights movement had taken presented far more challenges than promise for the CCF’s efforts to showcase the social advances achieved through liberalism of the “vital center”. As the failure of the “vital center” liberalism’s ability to address such developments became increasingly apparent, Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer, Irving Kristol and other members of the Congress largely associated with the New York Intellectuals conceded such defects and fundamentally abandoned this form of liberalism in favor of neoconservatism.

Writing one the few pieces for *Encounter* to address the emergence of Black Power and the prevalence of ghetto riots, Nathan Glazer’s November 1967 article, “The Ghetto Crisis,” expressed confusion and uneasiness with the politics of “vital

center” liberalism and singled the beginning of his turn to neoconservatism. Written during a period of transition from “vital center” liberalism to neoconservatism, Glazer provided an assessment of the Civil Rights Movement comprised of equal parts willful optimism and nostalgic desire for a return to the simpler circumstances of the past.²¹⁴ Like Cunliffe, he contended that the influence of radical elements in African American communities extended beyond their relatively small size. Whatever the size of the radical element, Glazer maintained that they had decidedly seized the political initiative of the movement in no small part thanks to their increased access to television cameras. However, unlike Cunliffe, he did not single out the impact of media magnification as the primary culprit of exaggerating the presence of radical elements and instead spread the blame among the “more substantial social forces [that] have been interwoven with the vagaries of politics and the nature of the mass media to lead to the domination of the extremists.”²¹⁵ No longer resorting to a lone scapegoat in the form of the national media, Glazer directly confronted the issue of extremism as an internal development within African American communities as a response to the failures of liberal government programs.

In the development of extreme positions and radical organizations, Glazer pointed to the general position of the bulk of the African Americans who no longer accepted a distribution of political power and wealth, which provided them with less income, less job security, inferior housing, and greater police brutality. Tracing violent radicalization to an origin in violent rhetoric, he contended that the increasing prevalence of such an uncompromising position had led to a “violent language” in

²¹⁴ Nathan Glazer, “The Ghetto Crisis,” *Encounter* 29, no. 11 (1967): 15.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

which housing projects were designated “prisons,” poverty was called “slavery,” disrespectful language became “brutality,” and the demand for better living conditions came to be expressed as a cry for “liberation” or “freedom.”²¹⁶ The turn of rhetoric towards a violent direction represented a crucial development for Glazer as he believed that people were far more likely to take extreme action for “liberation” and “freedom” than they would “for higher welfare payments.”²¹⁷

Writing on the national response to ghetto riots, Glazer provided both a muted celebration of the calm and mature reaction of the Johnson Administration and a strikingly optimistic view of the future, which depended largely on his “faith” in the U.S. to adapt to change rather than any evidence provided in his article. Glazer noted that rather than the wave of repressive responses in the wake of riots in Newark and Detroit that one might have expected, the majority of actions undertaken or proposed by the Johnson Administration to increase security had been “liberal and reasonable.”²¹⁸ Not simply seeking a demand for suppression of illegal acts, Glazer described the President’s Commission on the riots as emphasizing the poor performance of inadequately trained National Guard members and a need to address the underlying socio-economic inequality faced by urban African Americans. In addition to the “liberal response” of the Johnson Administration, Glazer found encouragement from transformations in national consensus in which the majority of white Americans no longer accepted the unequal socio-economic conditions faced by African Americans and favored “massive aid for the Ghetto.”²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Ibid., 19.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

Despite his seeming satisfaction of public support for aid to ghettos, Glazer paradoxically critiqued such programs with a litany of disclaimers on their limitations and unlikelihood to gain political support while simultaneously presenting them as the only viable option to improve conditions in the ghetto. Though finding significant faults in potential programs such as a Works Progress Administration style program, public housing, “negative” income tax, and family allowances, he insisted that few other alternatives existed to address the issues faced by urban African Americans. In addition to his own misgivings toward such programs, Glazer acknowledged the “fantastically heavy expenditures” in Vietnam and opposition from Southern members of the US Congress as leaving little political possibility to amass support for significant federal investment in social programs aimed at ghettos. Contending that President Johnson had not asked for new programs because he presumably didn’t think he could get them passed, Glazer maintained that the country would have to “ride out the riots and the danger of the breakdown of security and civilized life in the cities without great new social programmes.”²²⁰

The thrust of Glazer’s various criticisms of potential social programs for ghettos coalesced around the notion that African Americans sought more than simply subsistence and jobs but rather “income with dignity.”²²¹ Noting the difficulty to be found in defining “dignity,” he acknowledged the tragic circumstances in which any position an African American can or did achieve became “to some measure defiled with the notion that, as long as it is something *he* achieves in a white man’s society, it is in some measure un-dignified.” In light of such circumstances, Glazer expressed

²²⁰ Ibid., 20.

²²¹ Ibid., 21.

his understanding of the attraction Black Power held for African Americans and the insistence that “unskilled labour in service of their own (black) institutions” represented a more dignified endeavor than filling “the highest post in the white man’s society.”²²² Still, Glazer made clear his uneasiness with the “confused cry” of Black Power, which meant “violence to the youth, looting to the drifters, revolution to theorists, and presumably to most of those who respond to it, . . . equality—in income, in jobs, [and] in respect.”²²³ Despite his paradoxical and heavily qualified endorsement of liberal social programs as the only viable means to address socio-economic inequality in ghettos, Glazer revealed his increasingly neoconservative political orientation with his resignation on the virtual impossibility of addressing such issues since even “with the best will in the world, it becomes enormously difficult to equalize the goods of society in a situation in which the bases on which those goods get distributed are themselves maldistributed.”²²⁴

Glazer’s disillusion with the potential role of government in addressing the prevalence of ghetto riots and the demands of Black Power marked the beginning of his journey on the well traveled path from youthful radicalism, to middle-aged liberalism and ultimately to neoconservatism undertaken by him and a number of his fellow New York Intellectuals. Expressing his belief that liberalism had been more effective in addressing the issues faced by earlier generations than at the time of his writing, Glazer maintained a nostalgic desire to return to the “open field of the New Deal.”²²⁵ Unlike the promising years of the New Deal, the liberal programs of the

²²² Ibid., 22.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

1960s had “discouraged many men of good will, have raised Negro expectations and hope enormously, and have left us a heritage of new problems rather than new solutions.”²²⁶ Whereas Rovere had expressed smug satisfaction in 1963 with liberal achievements in the realm of Civil Rights despite the potential for the Movement to take a radical turn, the actual development of radicalism by 1967 led Glazer to a greater uneasiness with liberal programs and to a more conservative position. As the “vital center” liberalism espoused by the Congress came to appear incapable of accommodating Black Power or addressing ghetto riots, Glazer and his fellow New York Intellectuals, sans Dwight Macdonald, further shed the liberal pretenses they had begun to abandon in response to the New Left and identified, to varying degrees, with the emerging neoconservative movement.

In concluding his assessment of what the future held for Black Power, ghetto riots, and American society, Glazer comprehensively criticized what he viewed as the only potential plans of action for the federal government but continued nonetheless to express an unshakable “faith” in the US to adapt to these challenges.²²⁷ Written as he was transitioning from a commitment to liberalism of the “vital center” to neoconservatism, the fundamentally paradoxical attitudes expressed towards liberal social programs by Glazer represented the difficulties he encountered in resolving his lingering, but increasingly disillusioned, attraction to liberalism as it had been understood in the early postwar years. Noting that not long ago white ethnics had passed through the ghettos described by many African Americans as “a jail” without considering them as such, Glazer contended that the issues faced by African

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid., 22.

Americans were not qualitatively different from those faced, and largely overcome, by European immigrants.²²⁸ Having extensively criticized potential intervention from the federal government, Glazer's continued "faith" in the US to address these issues implied that existing economic and social forces would be able meet the challenges faced by urban African Americans. Believing, perhaps, that the free market or some other non-governmental element of American society would prove effective in addressing the inequalities faced by African Americans, Glazer concluded with his faithful assertion that the US, "which has absorbed the immigrants and the working classes, will also be able to absorb the Negroes."²²⁹

Underneath this willfully optimistic view of the status quo of American society to address ghetto riots, Black Power, and other social developments, was the increasing tendency of Glazer, along with Bell, and Kristol to emphasize those aspects of the "end of ideology" that stressed social stability rather than those that encouraged social reform. Of the New York Intellectuals in the Congress that would come to find themselves labeled as neoconservatives, only Kristol self-identified with and embraced the label thrust upon them. Despite uneasiness with the neoconservative label, the bulk of the New York Intellectuals in the Congress came to the paradoxical position of stressing the necessity of vigorous and conservative politics to protect the liberal values they perceived as urgently threatened by the institutional challenges of the New Left and black militancy. That these prominent spokesmen of the liberal "vital center" felt the need to fundamentally abandon many of the values of this form of liberalism in order to protect those aspects of it they

²²⁸ Ibid., 20.

²²⁹ Ibid., 22.

perceived as gravely endangered demonstrates the gravity of the existential crisis faced by “vital center” liberalism in the 1960s.

As they embraced an increasingly illiberal interpretation of liberalism first in response to the radicalism of the New Left and then in the wake of rising black militancy, Bell, Glazer, and Kristol brought to light the fundamentally different views on politics broadly, and foreign policy and the proper relationship of government and society specifically, held by members of the Congress. While the perceived urgency of the early postwar years and seemingly progressive nature of the “end of ideology” had allowed a group of Western intellectuals with strikingly diverse political views to coalesce under the label of “vital center” liberalism, the emergence of New Left and Civil Rights radicalism illuminated the divergences that had been kept under the surface. When “vital center” liberalism ceased to provide an appealing and broadly inclusive “middle ground” for Western intellectuals, the Congress lost the means to maintain a transatlantic intellectual consensus around this political philosophy as a necessary foundation for the continued prosperity of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition. While the exodus of Western intellectuals to the right and left of a liberal “vital center” in response to the New Left and radicalization of the Civil Rights Movement greatly weakened consensus around this political philosophy, “vital center” liberalism faced its greatest challenge from the escalation of US involvement in the Vietnam War.

The Vietnam War and the Demise of “Vital Center” Liberalism

In the wake of seemingly anti-democratic US intervention in nations such as Guatemala and Iran, “The American Proposition,” or the idea that the US represented a necessary “bulwark of freedom” against threatening totalitarian forces, appeared increasingly questionable to many Western intellectuals. The massive scale and commitment required by the Vietnam War raised ever more difficult questions of the role of the US in the world. The new intellectual climate fostered by the Vietnam War was well understood by Michael Josselson, who consciously sought to conceal his growing disillusionment with America’s role as a necessary “bulwark of freedom” against totalitarian expansion. Privately he conceded that the shape “the American proposition” had assumed appalled him.²³⁰ Years later, Josselson wrote that “the experience of working with and for the ‘outfit’ [had become] truly traumatic... In the 1950s our motivation was buttressed by America’s historic promises... in the second half of the 1960s our individual values and ideas [had] been eroded by our intervention in Vietnam and other senseless US policies.”²³¹

Commentary editor Norman Podhoretz echoed Josselson when he contended that the liberal and intellectual communities had lost the faith “they momentarily had at the height of the Cold War in the possibility that the United States, the main bulwark against Communism, could act as a relative force for the good in international affairs.”²³² Inundated by the unprecedented coverage of the Vietnam

²³⁰ Michael Josselson quoted in Saunders, 361.

²³¹ Michael Josselson, “The Story Behind the Congress for Cultural Freedom”, unpublished manuscript, Michael Josselson Papers, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

²³² Norman Podhoretz in “Liberal Anti-Communism Revisited,” 31.

War, Western intellectuals absorbed the conflict's scenes of terror and atrocity on a daily basis and noted the immense cost in blood and treasure consumed by the American intervention in Southeast Asia. As scenes of terror occurred with increasing frequency amid President Johnson's infusion of some 500,000 ground troops into the conflict, Western intellectuals increasingly embraced the critical skepticism of the "American Proposition" noted by Podhoretz in *Commentary* but also found in *The New York Review of Books*, and *New Statesman and Nation* among other left-of-center cultural-intellectual journals that competed with Congress publications. More than a decade removed from the death of Stalin and the particularly tense early years of the Cold War, the morally and strategically questionable designs of US foreign policy in Guatemala, Iran, and especially Vietnam, made clear to *The New York Review of Books* editor Jason Epstein and many others in the Western intelligentsia that "the evils of Stalinism did not guarantee a corresponding virtue in one's own country."²³³ Contending that the anti-Stalinism of intellectuals had been manipulated by forces such as the CCF to justify aggression in Vietnam, Epstein described the predicament of the Congress in the 1960s, claiming that "These people get into a real bind now. They're caught with their pants down: they *have* to defend Vietnam because they've toed the anti-Communist line for so long that otherwise they stand to lose everything."²³⁴

While Epstein correctly identified the tremendous challenge presented to the Congress by massive US military intervention in Vietnam, the positions put forward by members of the Congress and articles printed in the organization's journals make

²³³ Jason Epstein, "The CIA and the Intellectuals," *The New York Review of Books*, April 20, 1967, 18.

²³⁴ Saunders, 369.

clear that opposition to the Vietnam War, while strictly controlled and limited, was permitted, and in some cases, encouraged by Josselson and the Executive Committee of the Congress. As the Vietnam War escalated, Josselson endorsed the anti-war stances of John Kenneth Galbraith, Richard Löwenthal, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. among other contributors to the CCF's journals.²³⁵ Although opposition to US policy in Vietnam War received occasional support, and proved necessary for any hope of relevance among intellectuals during the later half of the 1960s, limits to the nature and shape of this opposition were held firmly in place. While Congress members and contributors to the CCF's publications were free to oppose the specific problems and policies of Vietnam and the US decision to intervene in that country, a fundamental attack on the American prerogative to intervene militarily in distant lands remained off limits. Most importantly, the assertion put forward by many Western intellectuals that anti-communism of any form, including its liberal variety, inherently led to involvement in Vietnam was seen as an existential attack on the CCF and was not tolerated by the organization. While the specifics of the Vietnam War were opened to criticism in the latter half of the 1960s, an implication of "vital center" liberalism or the broader American political economy as responsible for the US military presence in Southeast Asia remained strictly off limits.

Whereas the emergence of New Left radicalism and black militancy led to internal fragmentation in the Congress as leading members moved to the right or left of the liberal "vital center," the escalation of the US war effort in Vietnam presented ultimately insurmountable challenges to the organization's efforts to reach out to the broader Western intelligentsia. In contrast to the limited range of coverage on the

²³⁵ Ibid.

Vietnam War found in *Encounter* and other Congress publications, *The New York Review of Books*, *New Statesman*, and other competing left-of-center cultural-intellectual journals specifically implicated the political philosophy of “vital center” liberalism in the US war effort in Vietnam. As these competing journals gained greater influence among a Western intelligentsia increasingly critical of US policy in Vietnam by drawing those connections between “vital center” liberalism and the Vietnam War categorically missing from Congress publications, they furthered a disillusionment among Western intellectuals with the liberal “vital center” that had begun with the emergence of New Left radicalism and black militancy. With consensus among members of the Congress under a broad political umbrella of “vital center” virtually untenable, the extensive discrediting of the liberal “vital center” among the broader Western intelligentsia in the context of the Vietnam War decisively crippled what remained of the organization’s transatlantic intellectual consensus around this political philosophy as the foundation for the continued prosperity of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition.

Playing no small part in the extensive discrediting of “vital center” liberalism, the emergence of new highly critical journals and the greater radicalism and militancy displayed by existing left-of-center cultural intellectual publications increasingly exposed the limitations of *Encounter* and other Congress publications as independent voices. Founded in 1963, Jason Epstein’s *The New York Review of Books* quickly found a receptive audience on both sides of the Atlantic, indicating that a significant number of Western intellectuals refused to act as Cold War legitimists within the framework of the American national security state. As consensus around “vital

center” liberalism and the “American proposition” began to fragment, the *Review* signaled the emergence of a newly critical intelligentsia, with the desire and ability to discuss those issues virtually ignored by *Encounter* and other Congress journals. Not content to act as apologists for American power, the intellectuals writing for and drawn to the *Review* were as apt to denounce American economic and military imperialism as they were to denounce communism. The emergence of the *Review* as the flagship of intellectual opposition to the Vietnam War worried the CIA, which feared losing what influence it had been able to exert over the Western European intellectual community through *Encounter*.²³⁶ CIA IOD agent Lee Williams later remarked that the CIA had specifically hoped *Encounter* could respond to and mitigate the influence of the *Review* as the Agency “had a big problem with the yin and yang of the *New York Review* crowd, especially when it got so anti-Vietnam, and so left wing.”²³⁷

Challenging the very foundation of the Congress, the escalation of the Vietnam War and large-scale commitment of ground troops by Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965 signaled to many intellectuals the disastrous direction liberal anti-communism had taken. Noam Chomsky’s seminal 1967 article for *The New York Review of Books*, “The Responsibility of Intellectuals” forcefully criticized the intellectual climate in the US and argued that in its general subservience to power, American intellectuals bore a significant degree of responsibility for fostering the climate in which the policies that led to the Vietnam War fermented. Chomsky contended that the increasing turn of the US government towards a technocratic approach to the

²³⁶ Ibid., 361.

²³⁷ Lee Williams quoted in *ibid.*

problems of domestic society and the world in the mid-twentieth century resulted in a significant number of intellectuals serving in positions of influence and in close relationship with federal or state governments.²³⁸ The shift of many in the American intelligentsia from the traditional role of “free-floating” intellectuals as critical, independent and apart from society to positions of power in close association with government contributed to Chomsky’s understanding of the reasons why so many American intellectuals served as apologists for US foreign policy in Vietnam.²³⁹ Though he refrained from identifying specific individuals, Chomsky’s description of this shift evokes the path of Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer, Irving Kristol, and other members of the Congress from youthful years as an intellectual vanguard to mature years as an intellectual institution.²⁴⁰

In examining what he viewed as the servitude of US intellectuals to the political establishment, Chomsky highlighted the apologist consensus towards US foreign policy found among American intellectuals who had already achieved power and affluence as well as those intellectuals who believed they could achieve such prominence by “accepting society as it is” and promoting the existing “values that are being honored in this society.”²⁴¹ Noting how the values of American society during the postwar era found significant inspiration from the containment of communism, with a particular focus on checking the expansion of Chinese influence seen during the 1960s, Chomsky emphasized the role of scholar-experts who viewed their endorsement of US policy in Asia as part of a “responsible stance” intended to

²³⁸ Noam Chomsky, “The Responsibility of Intellectuals,” in *The Chomsky Reader*, ed. James Peck (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), 75.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Wilford, 6-7.

²⁴¹ Chomsky, 75.

construct a “value-free technology for the solution of technical problems that arise in contemporary society.”²⁴²

Chomsky contended that in embracing their societally prominent positions and echoing the rhetoric of the political establishment, from which their social status stemmed, American intellectuals came to support State Department positions that justified the “application of American power in Asia, whatever the human cost, on the grounds that it is necessary to contain ‘the expansion of China.’”²⁴³ He added that in translating this from “State Department Newspeak,” the checking of Chinese expansion came to mean the necessity of reversing Asian nationalist revolutions or, at least, preventing them from spreading further.²⁴⁴ Chomsky cited, in particular, this mentality as explanation of “the frankness with which the United States Government and its academic apologists defended the American refusal to permit a political settlement in Vietnam,” which would have undoubtedly entailed some form of political involvement from the Vietcong in the form of its political arm, the National Liberation Front.²⁴⁵

Though describing a generally ready acceptance of American intellectuals towards US policy in Vietnam, Chomsky viewed the reaction of the American intelligentsia to the Vietnam War as drawing a clear distinction between “responsible criticism” and “sentimental, emotional, or hysterical criticism.”²⁴⁶ The “hysterical critics,” Chomsky noted, were identified by this intellectual classification by “their irrational refusal to accept one fundamental political axiom, namely that the United

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 77.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 66.

States has the right to extend its power and control without limit, insofar as is feasible.” He contrasted this classification with “responsible criticism” that refrained from challenging a broadly conceived US right to international geopolitical intervention but argued, rather, “that we probably can’t ‘get away with it’ at this particular place and time.”²⁴⁷ Chomsky’s recognition of this distinction between “responsible” and “hysterical” criticism of the Vietnam War reflected the very criteria upon which Josselson and the Congress permitted or suppressed criticism of the conflict. While articles questioning the ability of the US to “‘get away with it’ at this particular place and time” could be found in *Encounter* and other Congress-sponsored journals, systematic critique of the US right to international geopolitical intervention, in Southeast Asia or elsewhere, remained absent from the organization’s mouthpieces.

Refusing to adhere to the narrow confines of “responsible criticism” of the Vietnam War, many Western intellectuals began to further explore the contributions of the intelligentsia itself along with the ideology of liberal anti-communism to the massive engagement of the US military in Vietnam. In an extensive symposium on liberal anti-communism and the Vietnam War published in 1967, *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz and a host of prominent American and European writers assessed the role of the Congress and its apparent support of the philosophy that the ends justify the means in the wake of revelations detailing the CIA’s covert funding of the organization and the escalation of the Vietnam War. In his contribution to the symposium, *Dissent* editor Lewis Coser, described the “professional” anti-communists of the Congress as making a “flourishing racket” out of anti-communism

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

and particularly singled out the ex-Communists of the organization for their “vociferous” opposition to communism and their adherence to the official party line of US foreign policy.²⁴⁸ For Coser, the Congress represented an “unedifying spectacle of American intellectuals waxing indignant about the kept intellectuals of the Soviet Union while being subsidized by secret or not so secret American government funds.”²⁴⁹ In his view, members of the Congress helped to “poison” the intellectual atmosphere of the late 1940s and 1950s by their abandonment of a critical stance towards their own society on the basis of anti-communism.²⁵⁰

Partisan Review editor Philip Rhav confirmed Coser’s view of Congress members as eager to prioritize anti-communism over the importance of a critical stance and maintained that the very same ends justify the means logic, which allowed for covert funding of the organization, also provided the justification for intervention in Vietnam. Like many increasingly critical intellectuals of the 1960s, Rhav absorbed the daily atrocities of the Vietnam War and began to view anti-communism as inherently possessing a logic that stipulated that the means are irrelevant and only the Cold War ends should be considered.²⁵¹ The critical views expressed by Coser and Rhav represented a significant change in position from the consensus shared by many Western intellectuals of the 1950s, which accepted the necessity to compromise certain ideals or editorial independence in the face of what was viewed as the direct threat of expanding communist influence.

²⁴⁸ Coser in “Liberal Anti-Communism Revisited,” 40.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Philip Rhav in *ibid.*, 64.

In his contribution to the symposium, *New Yorker* writer Harold Rosenberg, contended that anti-communism of all varieties, whether reactionary, liberal, socialist or anarchist, contributed to the Vietnam War so long as the “axis of American foreign policy” was based on the geographic containment of communism. In Rosenberg’s view, the containment of communism led to a lesser-evil politics and a fixation on the notion that compared to communism anything could be construed as a lesser evil.²⁵² Echoing Rosenberg’s view on the implications of anti-communism, Coser also linked the development of liberal anti-communism to the eventual involvement of the US in the Vietnam War. He contended that the official anti-communist ideology of the US, originally intended primarily to justify interventions to safeguard Europe from communist influence, came to be applied obsessively on a world scale as the Cold War theatre moved into the Third World in the 1960s. For their role in bolstering official ideology, he placed significant responsibility on the intellectuals of the Congress for contributing to the policies and attitudes that made the Vietnam War possible. In his view, the American people would never have taken on the sacrifices of the Vietnam War had it not been for the ideological anti-communist propaganda forced on them for more than a decade before the war.²⁵³

Like many intellectuals who came to question the value of the “American proposition” in the 1960s, Coser viewed official anti-communism as largely a justification for American involvement on behalf of the interests of American economic imperialism in the Third World. Concluding his assessment on liberal anti-communism, Coser wrote that those committed to liberal or radical politics needed to

²⁵² Harold Rosenberg in *ibid.*, 66.

²⁵³ Coser in *ibid.*, 40.

reject communist ideology and practice while simultaneously opposing the reactionary initiatives of American foreign policy, which he believed were regularly justified by official anti-communist ideology.²⁵⁴ As well as the New Left's perception of the CCF as conservative and the rightward turn of a number of the organization's leading members, the stress placed by Coser and other prominent Westerners on the increasingly reactionary nature of anti-communism further compounded perceptions of the Congress as a fundamentally conservative institution.

Unlike the Podhoretz's symposium, coverage of the Vietnam War in *Encounter* explicitly avoided discussion of American economic imperialism as a primary factor in US foreign policy in Southeast Asia and refrained from connecting "vital center" liberalism broadly, or liberal anti-communism specifically, to the US military presence in Vietnam. When articles on the Vietnam War filled significant portions of *Commentary*, *New Statesman and Nation*, and *The New York Review of Books* among other competing magazines in the mid-1960s, the number of articles devoted to the Vietnam War found in *Encounter* during the same period could be counted on one's hands. The limited coverage of the Vietnam War found in *Encounter* centered around a series of articles that engaged in a dialogue on the role of Western policy in Vietnam between the British scholar of Southeast Asian history and languages, P.J. Honey, former co-editor Irving Kristol, and the journal's most regular contributor on international politics, Richard Löwenthal.

Written shortly after the large-scale introduction of American ground troops in 1965 but before public opinion and positions within the Congress had turned decidedly against the War, Irving Kristol's "Teaching In, Speaking Out: The

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

Controversy over Viet Nam” in the August 1965 issue of *Encounter* assessed the various forms in which dissent against US policy in Vietnam took shape.²⁵⁵ Kristol’s analysis of responses to the War identified three primary “institutions” of criticism: the immensely influential columnist, Walter Lippmann, the *New York Times*, and university faculty and students. Replicating the contours of classification later recognized by Noam Chomsky as representative of the response of American intellectuals to the War, he placed the criticism of Walter Lippmann and the *New York Times* into the category what Chomsky labeled “responsible criticism” and the dissident response of faculty and students into the “hysterical criticism” category.²⁵⁶

Assessing Walter Lippmann’s “unique place in the history of American journalism because his authority derives from nothing else than his political intelligence, his political wisdom, his political independence,” Kristol quibbled with particular aspects of Lippmann’s opposition to US policy in Vietnam but broadly endorsed the opposition to US policy rooted in the political and military infeasibility of the mission he espoused. Contrasting the “responsible criticism” of Lippmann with the “hysterical criticism” of faculty and students, Kristol contended that Lippmann, unlike university protestors, “engages in no presumptuous suppositions as to ‘what the Vietnamese people really want’-he obviously doesn’t much care- or in legalistic exegesis as to whether, or to what extent, there is ‘aggression’ or ‘revolution’ in South Viet Nam.”²⁵⁷ Kistol placed Lippmann’s “realpolitik” opposition to US foreign into the same grouping as criticism found in the *New York Times*, principally in the

²⁵⁵ Irving Kristol, “Teaching In, Speaking Out; The Controversy over Viet Nam,” *Encounter* 25, no. 2 (1965): 65.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 67.

editorials of the newspaper's leading political columnist, James Reston.²⁵⁸ By embracing the limited, and in some ways superficial, criticism of Lippmann and Reston, Kristol found the means to express his dissatisfaction with a War that was clearly not proceeding in a positive direction for the US but did so while confining his critique within limits that would allow his article to reach print in *Encounter* by avoiding a direct connection between "vital center" liberalism and US policy in Vietnam. While he had become increasingly uneasy with certain aspects of the liberal "vital center" as he responded to New Left radicalism and black militancy, the "responsible criticism" of avoiding an implication of "vital center" liberalism embraced by Kristol in this article demonstrates that in 1965 he still retained enough support for this political philosophy to remain in the Congress fold.

The form of "responsible criticism" expressed by Lippmann and the *New York Times* echoed the type of critique on US policy in Vietnam typically featured in *Encounter* and stood in stark contrast with Kristol's depiction of the positions held by university demonstrators whose particular form of dissent would not have been able to find its way into the pages of *Encounter* or other Congress journals. Kristol turned his attention on the protest at universities to the widespread emergence of teach-in demonstrations against the War. Described as "no less confused than the Viet Nam situation itself," the teach-ins were assessed by Kristol as a minority group that nonetheless exerted considerable influence and proved instrumental in shaping the public perception of campuses.²⁵⁹ In trying to understand the motivations behind the youthful anti-war protest of students and young faculty, he described them as coming

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

from a “bored” generation who found themselves in the strange predicament of being radicals looking for a radical cause.²⁶⁰ Kristol further noted the superficial dissent of these young aimless radicals who were “sporting Castro-like beards, demanding the sale of contraceptives in the college book store...saying nice things about Mao Tse-tung etc., etc....until Vietnam came into focus as a rally point.”²⁶¹

Questioning the political substance of university protestors who criticized US policy in Vietnam but offered precious few viable alternatives, he additionally criticized the easy, simplistic and naive pacifism and anti-imperialism that fueled the bulk of dissent on American campuses. Extending his efforts to discredit university protestors, Kristol emphasized that the majority of faculty involved in teach-ins were junior in rank and engaged in fields with “precious little to do with Vietnam.”²⁶² He concluded his critical assessment of the psychologists, mathematicians and philosophers involved in teach-ins with the insistence that scholars of political science, international politics, Asian history or other fields related to Vietnam had far “too great of an appreciation of the complexity of the mess we are in to adopt a simplistic ‘anti’ position.”²⁶³

In his efforts to discredit the dissent of students and faculty lacking official positions and expertise related to Vietnam, Kristol displayed his unshakable faith in the technocratic approach to issues of policy. Responding directly to Kristol’s article in “The Responsibility of Intellectuals,” Chomsky posited, “even if we assume that they [Washington experts] command the necessary knowledge and principles to

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 68.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid., 69.

²⁶³ Ibid.

make the ‘best’ decision, will they invariably do so?”²⁶⁴ For Chomsky, the false assumption that the “purity” of American motives remained “a matter beyond discussion” provided the foundation for Kristol’s position and his classification of dissent into the categories of “responsible” and ‘hysterical” criticism²⁶⁵ Expressing a substantial skepticism towards exclusively technocratic decision making, Chomsky doubted that faculty and students became militant simply out of boredom, as argued by Kristol, but instead may have been seeking to find “the truth” for themselves rather than ceding this responsibility to technocrats.²⁶⁶

In contrast to Kristol’s denigration of university protestors who lacked expertise beyond what “might be gleaned from a reading of the *New York Times*,” Chomsky insisted on any person of integrity judging the moral quality and goals of technocratic policy in Vietnam.²⁶⁷ Chomsky pointed to Kristol’s social science background and its influence on his refusal to engage in questions of morality as leading him to what Chomsky charged was an implicit disparagement of traditional intellectual values. For Chomsky, Kristol’s insistence that while anyone can concern themselves with moral and human rights issues, only experts can solve technical problems by “‘sophisticated’ methods” betrayed a belief that only the latter type of problems are “important” or “real.”²⁶⁸ Concluding his assessment of the article, Chomsky summarized Kristol’s classification of War criticism as resting on the notion that “responsible, non-ideological experts will give advice on tactical questions; irresponsible, ‘ideological types’ will ‘harangue’ about principle and

²⁶⁴ Chomsky, 67.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 69.

²⁶⁷ Kristol, 69, Chomsky, 67.

²⁶⁸ Chomsky, 70.

trouble themselves over moral issues and human rights, or over the traditional problems of man and society, concerning which ‘social and behavioral science’ has nothing to offer beyond trivialities.”²⁶⁹ By highlighting the “disparagement of traditional intellectual values” expressed in Kristol’s preference for technocrats over the average citizen probing the moral questions of Vietnam War and thinking for themselves, Chomsky demonstrated how the constrained approach to the Vietnam War necessitated by a consensus tethered to “vital center” liberalism and the technocratic “end of ideology” put the Congress at odds with the very intellectual values it was ostensibly formed to protect.²⁷⁰

Following Kristol’s critical account of university dissenters, *Encounter’s* series on Western policy in Vietnam continued with Richard Löwenthal’s “America’s Asian Commitment” in the October 1965 issue of *Encounter*, which likewise sought to explain and categorize the divergence of positions on US policy in Vietnam.²⁷¹ Leaving the extremes of the left and right wings aside, Löwenthal divided reactions to the Vietnam War into three primary positions. On one side, he examined the school most effectively represented by Walter Lippmann, which demanded that the US limit its military commitments to areas of direct significance to its own security. He placed on the other side, the late John Foster Dulles and those who sought military alliance with anti-communist governments across the globe, regardless of whether or not these governments were viable or the people felt threatened by communism. Löwenthal threw his support behind the “vital center” liberalism of Presidents Truman and Kennedy, which accepted the worldwide nature of struggle against communist

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 69.

²⁷¹ Richard Löwenthal, “America’s Asian Commitment,” *Encounter* 25, no. 4 (1965): 53.

powers but only provided military support to viable governments that requested it against a genuine communist threat. In his support for the “middle” position on Vietnam, Löwenthal expressed significant criticism of the specifics of US policy in Vietnam, with a particular focus on the untenable South Vietnamese government, but adhered to the precept found throughout *Encounter’s* coverage of the Vietnam War that the fundamental right of US intervention must remain unquestioned.

While insisting on the necessity of US military intervention to check the expansion of communist powers and maintain the status quo of international geopolitical relations, Löwenthal considered Southeast Asia to be neither an area of crucial importance to US security nor of great significance in the world balance of power. Expressing opposition to the “domino theory” and noting the immense but nonetheless finite resources of the US military, he contended that the cost of the US’s enormous commitment in Vietnam could be seen in the diminished American concern with balancing Soviet strength in Europe.²⁷² For Löwenthal, the increasing number of Western Europeans who echoed Charles de Gaulle’s doubts about American reliability in Europe provided vivid evidence of the tensions in the NATO alliance produced by US policy in South East Asia. Though opposed to a swift, complete and unilateral withdrawal on the basis of the harm it would wreak on US political and military prestige, he supported a suspension of the indiscriminate bombing of North Vietnam as part of a more sincere effort to facilitate negotiations with the North.²⁷³ By negotiating a withdrawal based on a political settlement with the North, which would likely include some form of political participation from the National Liberation

²⁷² Ibid., 57.

²⁷³ Ibid., 58.

Front in a coalition government in the South, Löwenthal believed the US could “allow the neutral Asian powers to play their natural role in balancing Chinese Communist influence, and thus to restore the world-wide freedom of action of the United States.” Though against the Vietnam War in the sense that he opposed the specific policies embraced by the Johnson administration and sought a greater effort on the part of the US to negotiate a withdrawal, Löwenthal’s opposition not only refrained from challenging the right of the US to engage in military intervention across the globe but remained firmly rooted in the notion that the greatest dangers of US policy in Vietnam were to be found in the detrimental effects they had on the ability of the US to project its military influence.

Published in the following issue of *Encounter* as a counterpoint to Kristol’s “anti-war” article, P.J. Honey’s “Viet Nam Argument,” vividly manifested the CCF’s early anti-communist consensus and largely uncritical stance on the War. The article framed Honey’s authority on the Vietnam War, describing him as “one of the very small number of foreigners who speak Vietnamese and has lived for long periods in both North and South Viet Nam.”²⁷⁴ Focusing more on the political situation in South Vietnam than the military struggle against the North, Honey provided a particularly hard line of support for US intervention and most aspects of US policy in Vietnam. Striking an exceptionally questionable and unorthodox interpretation of international law, he contended that it was a misconception based on an inaccurate reading of international law and the propaganda of Communists that created the widespread belief that the 1954 Geneva Agreements bound South Vietnam to accept national elections in 1956. In Honey’s view, Ngo Dinh Diem represented the hopes of

²⁷⁴ P.J. Honey, “Vietnam Argument,” *Encounter* 25, no. 5 (1965): 66.

virtually all non-communist Vietnamese for the possibility of establishing a liberal democracy and fully warranted the support given to him by the US. His admission that Diem failed to live up to these hopes and that the US failed to push the South Vietnamese to liberalize their system of government amounted to virtually the only criticism of US policy to be found in the article. In contrast to Löwenthal, who emphasized the endangerment of the US's commitment to Europe, Honey concluded the article by insisting that the US must not withdraw from Vietnam and that a demonstration of American fortitude to "defend a friendly country which is resisting unprovoked armed attack (whether in Asia, Africa, or anywhere else) until the aggressors [have] been repulsed" would demonstrate to Europeans the "value of an American commitment."²⁷⁵

Concluding the dialogue on Western policy in Vietnam found in *Encounter* between 1965 and 1966, Löwenthal's January, 1966 article, "The Vietnamese Agony: A Reply to Critics" evoked Ignazio Silone's philosophy of a "differentiation of energies" as a strength of the Congress in its attempts to frame the series of articles as a free and open debate on the issues of the Vietnam War. Responding directly to Honey's optimistic interpretation of Vietnamese politics and earlier challenges made by him, Löwenthal challenged his assertions that a Communist regime would be "repugnant to the overwhelming majority" of South Vietnamese and that the Vietcong lacked popular support in the South and secured cooperation only through the use or threat of force.²⁷⁶ Citing the ability of the Vietcong to assemble units and achieve success in surprise attacks despite months of heavy US bombing, he

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 69.

²⁷⁶ Richard Löwenthal, "The Vietnamese Agony: A Reply to Critics," *Encounter* 26, no. 1 (1966): 54.

contended that there could be no other explanation than legitimate popular support that would explain the guerilla force's survival and offensive capabilities.²⁷⁷

Löwenthal followed his questioning of opposing a guerilla force with legitimate popular support with a ringing endorsement of support for the containment of communism, whether politically, ideologically, economically or militarily, in support of a viable non-communist government. In his advocacy of communist containment as a potentially essential and worthy policy, he made the distinction that while US intervention in countries where Western security was not directly involved may not be a “vital Western concern” it nonetheless represented a “legitimate Western concern.”²⁷⁸ It was in distinguishing between “vital” and “legitimate” concerns that Löwenthal articulated his opposition to the specifics of the Vietnam policy while still supporting the notion of US military intervention to thwart communist expansion in principle. He contended that where Western security is not directly involved, and the foundation of the contest rests not on control of territory but on the allegiance of a people, the support of a “cohesive political force” was necessary for US intervention to make sense.²⁷⁹ Thus his opposition to US policy in Vietnam rested not on resistance to the fundamental mission of what the US was trying to achieve but rather on the view that the US was engaged in a politically, and likely militarily, unwinnable contest. Exemplifying Chomsky's designation of “responsible criticism” as resting on the notion that the “purity” of American motives

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 56.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

remain “a matter beyond discussion,” Löwenthal’s criticism explicitly embraced the intention of the US mission in Vietnam but cast serious doubts as to its feasibility.²⁸⁰

The presence of criticism towards US policy in Vietnam found in *Encounter*, however limited, represented a shift that occurred with the replacement of Irving Kristol with Melvin Lasky as co-editor in 1958. During the years of Kristol’s co-editorship of *Encounter*, his preoccupation with the pervasiveness of European anti-Americanism as a sort of psychological disease imbued the tone and content of virtually all of the political articles found in the journal.²⁸¹ While Lasky avoided the categorical rejection of anti-Americanism undertaken by Kristol, he still ensured that both simplistic and superficial as well as more nuanced and substantially structural positions of anti-Americanism featured infrequently in the pages of *Encounter*. However, unlike Kristol, he made sure to avoid exercising too heavy of hand as he recognized that “in the matter of American materials, that the USA be constantly projected ‘positively’, that all the European anti-American stereotypes be made short shrift of” would leave the journal open to charges that it was a “Trojan horse for American interests.”²⁸²

Questioning the degree to which Lasky succeeded in obscuring a pro-American bias in *Encounter*, Irish writer, Conor Cruise O’Brien, utilized his review of an anthology compiling the first decade of material from *Encounter* for *New Statesman* to write a polemic against the very basis of the journal.²⁸³ O’Brien’s article began with a forceful charge against the editors’ assertion articulated in the first issue

²⁸⁰ Chomsky, 4.

²⁸¹ Saunders, 218.

²⁸² Melvin Lasky, “Some Notes on Preuves, *Encounter* and *Der Monat*,” April 1956, Series II, Box 98, Folder 8, IACF.

²⁸³ Conor Cruise O’Brien, “*Journal de Combat*,” *New Statesman*, December 20 1964, 911.

that “*Encounter* seeks to promote no ‘line.’”²⁸⁴ He likewise challenged the additional assertion in the first issue that the Congress was brought together by “two things: a love of liberty and a respect for that part of human endeavor that goes by the name of culture.” O’Brien argued that to “promote no ‘line’” in reality meant to convey the impression that the anti-communist and pro-capitalist propaganda found in the journal was not actually propaganda but rather the “spontaneous and almost uniform reaction of the culturally free, of truly civilized people.”²⁸⁵ He portrayed *Encounter* as largely successful in conveying this deceitful impression and contended that the CCF’s “love” for liberty and “respect” for culture more often than not manifested themselves in the journal as “cleverly written material favorable to the United States and hostile to the Soviet Union.”²⁸⁶

Supporting his case for the undeniably pro-American position of *Encounter*, O’Brien highlighted the frequency with which truths that would be “uncomfortable” for the US were either ignored entirely or mitigated in significance. Citing the CCF’s supposed love of liberty, he rhetorically asked where *Encounter*’s dedication to liberty was when the Cuban people’s suffering under Batista warranted no coverage. Examination of *Encounters* coverage, or lack of coverage, on Nicaragua, Guatemala, and South Korea led O’Brien to claim that the journal generally remained silent in those cases where the oppressors were identified with the interests of the US and outraged when the oppressors adhered to communist politics of any shade. In his final

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

judgment of the journal's political positions, he boldly concluded that "*Encounter's* first loyalty is to America."²⁸⁷

O'Brien's polemical article on the Congress in 1964 marked an intensification of the rivalry between *The New Statesman* and *Encounter*. Intended by the CIA from its establishment in 1953 "to engage in a permanent polemic with *The New Statesman and Nation*," *Encounter's* competition with the neutralist weekly for the support of Western intellectuals grew in intensity as the Vietnam War escalated.²⁸⁸ As this rivalry mounted, *New Statesman* reached out to a Western intelligentsia rapidly losing patience with US policy in Vietnam by presenting a wide range of positions that accentuated the comparatively circumscribed "differentiation of energies" expressed in the series of articles on the War in *Encounter*. As it came to accommodate positions that fell into Chomsky's designation of "hysterical criticism" and readily drew connections between "vital center" liberalism and the escalation of the US military intervention in Vietnam, *New Statesman* achieved its greatest commercial success with a British circulation reaching almost 90,000 while the circulation of *Encounter* hovered around 35,000 during the same period.²⁸⁹

Writing on a massive anti-war demonstration in New York in the April 21st, 1967 issue of *New Statesman*, American journalist and regular contributor, Andrew Kopkind, drew connections between "vital center" liberalism and the Vietnam War in a manner characteristic of the journal's coverage of the War during the period.²⁹⁰

Kopkind began "The Great Vietnam March" with a rejection the *New York Time's*

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Jasper Ridley quoted in Saunders, 166.

²⁸⁹ *New Statesman* British circulation from January to June 1965: 85,197; *Encounter* British circulation from January to June 1965: 34,301; Audit Bureau of Circulations (UK).

²⁹⁰ Andrew Kopkind, "The Great Vietnam March," *New Statesman*, April 21, 1967, 531

pronouncement that the “Spring Mobilisation” in New York would have no “moral impact or political effect” and contended instead that the demonstration represented a significant turning point marking a “consolidation of all the diffuse and disparate dissent of the last two years” into “a new and bitter mood of resistance.”²⁹¹

Contending that it was now possible to speak of an anti-war movement, he noted the incorporation of African American civil rights leaders into a protest that had previously been represented by middle class white Americans and framed Martin Luther King’s embrace of the anti-war movement as “a major political event of the year.”²⁹²

In describing the “inevitable” combination of the anti-war movement and the Civil Rights Movement, Kopkind linked “vital center” liberalism to US intervention in Vietnam with the contention that the very same issues that were at stake in US foreign policy also operated in the domestic sphere. With the assertion that “even the sketchiest analysis of ‘liberal imperialism’ pointed to parallels between the liberalism deployed abroad and “the forces which keep Negroes in an inferior political economic and social status,” he strongly refuted those who viewed the development of King and other Civil Rights leaders getting “hung up on the war” as detrimental to the Civil Rights Movement.²⁹³ Embracing a broader notion of Civil Rights steeped in the notion of human rights, he contended that in the matters of the Civil Rights Movement and the anti-war movement, “nothing can be done about one without doing it about the other.”²⁹⁴ In drawing a clear connection between the Civil Rights

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

Movement and the anti-war movement, Kopkind implicitly advanced a comprehensive critique of “vital center liberalism” that would not have made its way into the pages of *Encounter* or other Congress journals. As the escalation of the Vietnam War made such critiques of “vital center” liberalism more persuasive to intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic, the conspicuous absence of these issues in *Encounter* became increasingly apparent and illustrated the emerging gulf between the circumscribed positions of the journal and a Western intelligentsia rapidly losing patience with “vital center” liberalism.

Providing another critique of “vital center” liberalism characteristic of *New Statesman*, Kopkind examined the issue of “liberal imperialism” in his September 22nd, 1967, article “The Vietcong in Europe.”²⁹⁵ In the article, Kopkind detailed a meeting in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia among National Liberation Front leaders, high ranking officials from North Vietnam, a contingent of American anti-war activists comprised of Quaker pacifists, Black Power activists, radical New Left intellectuals, and a “hippy or two” among others.²⁹⁶ While devoting the better part of the article to deliberations between the NLF, North Vietnamese and American delegates concerning the relative strength of NLF’s military and political position in the South, his assessment of the increasingly radical nature of the anti-war movement in the US further developed the structural critique of US policy in Vietnam and “vital center” liberalism expressed in his earlier article. He noted the enthusiasm displayed by the American delegates in response to the “surprisingly moderate” political program presented by the NLF as a manifestation of the changes that had occurred in the anti-

²⁹⁵ Andrew Kopkind, “The Vietcong in Europe,” *New Statesman*, September 22, 1967, 343.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

war movement in the past few months as more protestors “developed a deeper sympathy for revolution.”²⁹⁷

For Kopkind, this newfound sympathy for revolution resulted from American protestors coming to terms with the reality that “the war is only a symptom of imperialism, and its is the whole political economy, not just President Johnson or the Pentagon, that is the object of attack.”²⁹⁸ By seriously listening to the American delegates, and their view of the War as a direct consequence of liberal imperialism, Kopkind ventured into the territory of “irresponsible criticism” categorically eschewed in *Encounter*. Unencumbered by the limitations faced by contributors to *Encounter*, Kopkind found in the *New Statesman* the means to freely and seriously examine the motivations and ideas of anti-war activists and intellectuals increasingly critical of the US mission in Vietnam. By taking these newly critical intellectual currents seriously and rejecting the axiom that the “purity” of American motivations remain a “matter beyond discussion,” Kopkind advanced a critique connecting “vital center” liberalism that allowed him to engage a critical intellectual audience wholly dismissed by *Encounter* and other Congress journals.²⁹⁹

As the comprehensive critiques connecting “vital center” liberalism to US policy in Vietnam found in competing cultural-intellectual journals resonated with a greater number of Western intellectuals in the wake of large-scale US military intervention in Southeast Asia, the absence of such discussion in the journals published by the Congress became increasingly conspicuous. In the political and intellectual landscape of the 1950s, *Encounter* and the Congress could plausibly insist

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 344.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Chomsky, 67.

that the Congress had been brought together by only “two things: a love of liberty and a respect for that part of human endeavor that goes by the name of culture.”³⁰⁰

However, by the mid-1960s the inability of the Congress to critique “vital center” liberalism in the context of the Vietnam War demonstrated to many Western intellectuals that the foundation of the organization did not rest on liberty and culture alone. While the emergence of the New Left radicalism and black militancy led to fissures in the CCF’s consensus around “vital center” liberalism, the inability of the organization to question this political philosophy and still maintain consensus among its members presented ultimately insurmountable challenges to its efforts to engage the broader Western intelligentsia during the era of the Vietnam War. When “vital center” liberalism came to be more of a point of contention than source of cohesion within the organization and extensively thwarted its outreach efforts, a transatlantic intellectual consensus around this political philosophy as the foundation for the continued prosperity of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition no longer remained possible.

³⁰⁰ “After the Apocalypse.” 1.

Conclusion

By responding to the existing cultural, intellectual, and political needs of the Western intelligentsia in the tense early years of the Cold War, the Congress successfully fostered a transatlantic intellectual consensus in its first decade of existence around “vital center” liberalism as a necessary foundation for the continued prosperity of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition. With the Communists seizing power in Czechoslovakia while the Communist Party and its intellectual sympathizers wielded significant influence in Western Europe, NCL intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic viewed the Western cultural-intellectual tradition as gravely threatened by the increasing attraction or sympathy of intellectuals to communism. The Congress found success in strengthening ties between these NCL intellectuals by engaging this often-divisive group with a broadly inclusive political umbrella of “vital center” liberalism and stressing the dangers faced by the cultural-intellectual tradition shared by the US and Europe. In the urgent context of the 1950s, a transatlantic intellectual consensus around “vital center” liberalism allowed the Congress to bring together a significant cohort of European intellectuals, who both opposed Soviet communism and accepted a greater role of the US in European political, cultural and intellectual affairs.³⁰¹

The Congress established and developed this transatlantic consensus during its early years by pushing Arthur Koestler and other excessively militant anti-communists to the margins of the organization. As it settled on and further defined the contours of consensus around “vital center” liberalism shortly after its successful

³⁰¹ Scott-Smith, 154.

1950 inaugural conference in Berlin, the Congress blossomed into an extensive organization of international stature and enjoyed its most successful years. In the 1950s, an urgent sense of communist threat and the promise of the US as an attractive “bulwark of freedom,” allowed European democratic socialists such as Bertrand Russell and Ignazio Silone, traditional postwar consensus liberals such as Arthur Schlesinger Jr., budding anarchists such as Dwight Macdonald, and nascent neoconservatives such as Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer, and Irving Kristol to lay claim to the label of “vital center” liberalism. With the emergence of New Left radicalism and black militancy fracturing this transatlantic intellectual consensus within the organization and the inability of the Congress to freely criticize the Vietnam War thwarting its efforts to engage the broader Western intelligentsia, “vital center” liberalism ceased to provide a broad base for consensus and became instead a major source of contention. In the wake of such developments in the 1960s, Western intellectuals no longer showed the same predisposition to gloss over inconvenient political divergences by engaging in expedient misunderstandings of one another’s interpretations of liberalism. When the strikingly different views of the proper relationship of government to society and the appropriate role of the US in the world held by members came to light in the 1960s, the “middle ground” of “vital center” liberalism ceased to hold together the often-divisive collection of intellectuals in the Congress.³⁰²

Though the Congress met its official demise in 1967 with the decision to change its name to the International Association for Cultural Freedom after a scathing 1967 article in *Ramparts* detailing its CIA funding, the deterioration of the

³⁰² White, 50-53.

organization's transatlantic intellectual consensus during the course of the 1960s ended its existence as a meaningful organization irrespective of issues of CIA funding. Though the Congress neither needed to nor sought to express a monolithic political position, the "vital center" had provided the organization with cohesion around a broad political consensus in opposition to communism and in support of a mixed economy and welfare state. Whether challenged by a rightward turn to neoconservatism, a leftward drift to anarchism or generally discredited in the escalation of the Vietnam War, the deterioration of the liberal "vital center", both within the Congress, and the broader Western intelligentsia, brought an end to the period in which the organization could maintain a transatlantic intellectual consensus around this political philosophy as a necessary and attractive guardian of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition. When "vital center" liberalism no longer provided an effective point around which to rally Western intellectuals in opposition to communism and in defense of the Western cultural-intellectual tradition, the Congress ceased to be either a valuable potential ally for the CIA or a viable independent cultural-intellectual organization.

As it struggled to function as a cohesive organization on a foundation that provided more points of contention than bases for consensus, the Congress suffered its official demise in the wake a series of revelations detailing the nature of its covert funding. The first of these revelations came on April 27th, 1966 when *The New York Times* ran the third article in a series on the wide range of CIA operations, which specifically detailed CIA funding of the CCF and *Encounter*.³⁰³ The Congress laid

³⁰³ "CIA is Spying 100 Miles Up; Satellites Probe Secrets of the Soviet Union," *New York Times*, April 27, 1966.

low, neither attempting a libel suit against the *Times* nor acknowledging the accusations, until the San Francisco based New Left magazine, *Ramparts*, re-opened and brought significant attention to the issue of CIA funding ten months later. Sol Stern's article in the March 1967 issue of *Ramparts*, reported at length on CIA funding and use of both the Congress and the National Student Association in the anti-communist struggle.³⁰⁴ In contrast to the brief and seemingly objective reporting of the *Times* article, Stern's more antagonistic exposé of CIA meddling into cultural and student affairs brought to bear the intense hostility of the New Left towards the Congress and reflected an intellectual climate that had become increasingly critical of American institutions.³⁰⁵

In the wake of the scathing exposé on CIA funding in *Ramparts*, the critical and wide-ranging views held by members of the Congress and interested observers in the broader Western intelligentsia came to light. Though many members of the Congress continued to stress their belief in the importance of the CCF's mission despite the inherent contradiction of promoting cultural freedom while secretly receiving state funding, the negative reactions to news of CIA funding expressed by a significant collection of leading members exposed the prevalence with which the organization's *raison d'être* had come to be questioned internally. In response to those members of the Congress who defended its mission and record, founding member William Phillips portrayed the personalities of the organization as "breezy, rootless, free-wheeling, cynically anti-Communist orgmen."³⁰⁶ Demonstrating an

³⁰⁴ Sol Stern, "A Short Account of International Student Politics & the Cold War with Particular Reference to the NSA, CIA, Etc.," *Ramparts*, March 1967, 29.

³⁰⁵ Coleman, 226.

³⁰⁶ William Phillips in "Liberal anti-Communism Revisited," 57.

escalation of his earlier disillusionment with the Congress, Dwight Macdonald responded to the CCF's defenders by connecting the efforts of the Congress to the "President's genocidal crusade" in Vietnam and expressed his belief that there remained no moral imperative that the organization should continue to exist.³⁰⁷

While Macdonald, Phillips, and others challenged the value and mission of the Congress from the left, news of the organization's CIA funding led other leading figures to mount challenges from the right. Echoing views that would resonate with Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer, and Irving Kristol as they embraced increasingly neoconservative positions, James Burnham, one of the CCF's principal founders, expressed his disillusionment with liberalism of the "vital center" as an effective anti-communist force in the March 21st 1967 issue of *National Review*. The Congress had been founded in 1950 with the belief that the "vital center" liberalism of NCL intellectuals provided the most effective form of anti-communism for reaching out to Europe's left-of-center intelligentsia. For Burnham, the CIA had erred in their estimation that the NCL represented a reliably anti-communist force that would be, if not pro-Western and pro-American, at least not anti-Western and anti-American. Burnham looked to NCL responses on Cuba, the Dominican Republic and especially Vietnam in contending that the NCL intellectuals of both Europe and the US had adopted increasingly anti-American positions and could not be relied upon politically. In examining the organizational collapse of the Congress, Burnham saw the political unreliability of NCL intellectuals grouped around the "vital center" as the primary culprit. Demonstrating the distance that had emerged between him and the transatlantic consensus of the Congress, Burnham not only repudiated the doctrine

³⁰⁷ Dwight Macdonald in *ibid.*, 55, Dwight Macdonald to Arthur Schlesinger Jr., April 20, 1967

fastened on the CIA by Allen Dulles that the global struggle against communism must be based on the NCL but additionally contended that the CCF's "NCL prescription" had hampered the nation's anti-communist will and jeopardized its security.³⁰⁸

As the 1960s progressed, increasing skepticism towards "vital center" liberalism as the primary foundation of the CIA's anti-communist operations could also be found in the International Operations Divisions (IOD), which provided the Congress with the bulk of its funding. Former CIA IOD Director, Thomas Braden, voiced support for Burnham's critical view of "vital center" liberalism as a reliable anti-communist force when he wrote a revealing and vigorous defense of CIA funding of the Congress in the May 21, 1967 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*. The article, "I'm Glad the CIA is 'Immoral,'" stressed the value of CIA covert funding of anti-communist organizations such as the Congress in opposing the extensive array of front operations conducted by the Soviet Union. Defending the necessity of covert CIA funding, Braden contended that "Back in the early 1950s, when the cold war was really hot, the idea that [the US] Congress would have approved many of our projects was about as likely as the John Birch Society's approving Medicare."³⁰⁹ Striking direct attacks on any future possibility of credibility for the Congress or its publications, he detailed the placement of a CIA agent (Josselson) into the leadership of the CCF and another (Lasky) as an editor of *Encounter*. In addition to directly implicating guilty parties, Braden's article provided insight into how the CIA sought to conduct its front operations and wrote that a major guideline was to "use existing

³⁰⁸ James Burnham, "Notes on the CIA Shambles," *National Review*, March 21, 1967, 294.

³⁰⁹ Braden, "I'm Glad the CIA is 'Immoral,'" 10.

organizations; disguise the extent of American interest; protect the integrity of the organization by not requiring it to support every aspect of official American policy.”³¹⁰ The limits and toleration displayed in discourse on the Vietnam War in *Encounter* provide a compelling example of this commitment to “protect the integrity of the organization.”³¹¹

Despite leaving the CIA in 1954, Braden’s volunteering of previously confidential information would have been in violation of his secrecy agreements with the Agency had he not had its support.³¹² As such, his inflammatory revelations, intended to damage the Congress, must be seen as carrying the seal of CIA approval. In eliminating whatever remaining credibility the Congress possessed in 1967 and severely limiting its prospects for the future, Braden’s article marked the end of the CIA’s fifteen-year embrace of “vital center” liberalism and the non-communist left as the primary platform of its anti-communist operations. While CIA documents illuminating the perspective and motivations of the Agency remain unavailable, former IOD agent John Hunt later speculated on the meaning of Braden’s article. Describing Braden as an “instrument” of those in the CIA who wanted to get rid of the non-communist left, Hunt regarded the article as “an operational decision to blow the Congress and other programs out of the water.”³¹³

Unable to recover from Braden’s revelatory article, Michael Josselson prepared his resignation and called for the CCF General Assembly to meet on May 13, 1967 to determine the future of the organization. Beyond coming to an agreement

³¹⁰ Ibid., 12.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Saunders, 399.

³¹³ John Hunt quoted in Saunders, 399.

that the Congress should continue to exist in some form, little consensus concerning the future emerged from the meeting. In the months following Josselson's resignation, the Congress rebranded itself as the International Association for Cultural Freedom (IACF) and appointed the Ford Foundation President, Shepard Stone, as the organization's new executive secretary.³¹⁴ Receiving funding from only legitimately private sources, the IACF inherited the CCF's remaining family of magazines, national committees as well as its commitment to international seminars and the ideal of a transnational community of intellectuals but would never again find the sense of purpose or resonance with the intellectual community wielded by the organization in the 1950s. Issues of CIA funding aside, the IACF continued on the path to ruin first embarked on when the CCF's transatlantic intellectual consensus around "vital center" liberalism as a necessary foundation for the Western cultural-intellectual tradition disintegrated during the course of the 1960s. Lacking an alternative to the successful transatlantic intellectual consensus fostered by the Congress in the 1950s, the IACF struggled on in a largely irrelevant role for another decade. Few noticed when the Paris headquarters closed its doors in 1977 and the IACF voted to dissolve itself in January 1979.³¹⁵

³¹⁴ Coleman, 232-233.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 240.

Bibliography

Manuscript Collections:

Dwight Macdonald Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

International Association for Cultural Freedom Collection, Special Collections Research Center, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL.

Michael Josselson Papers, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, Austin, TX.

Published Sources:

Aron, Raymond. *Mémoires: 50 ans de réflexion politique*. Paris: Julliard, 1983.

Beem, Christopher. "American Liberalism and the Christian Church: Stanley Hauerwas vs. Martin Luther King Jr." *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 23, no.1 (1995): 119.

Baldwin, James. *The Cross of Redemption: Uncollected Writings*, edited by Randall Kenan. New York: Random House, 2010.

Bell, Daniel. *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties*. New York: The Free Press, 1962.

Beloff, Max. "Democracy and its Discontents III: Great Britain." *Encounter* 2, no. 6 (1954): 51.

Boorstin, Daniel J. "Democracy and its Discontents IV: The United States." *Encounter* 3, no. 1 (1954): 15.

Braden, Thomas. , "I'm Glad the CIA is 'Immoral.'" *Saturday Evening Post*, May 20 1967, 10.

Burnham, James. "Notes on the CIA Shambles," *National Review*, March 21, 1967, 294.

Chomsky, Noam. "The Responsibility of Intellectuals." In *The Chomsky Reader*, edited by James Peck. New York: Pantheon Books, 1987.

"CIA is Spying 100 Miles Up; Satellites Probe Secrets of the Soviet Union." *New York Times*, April 27, 1966.

- Coleman, Peter. *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe*. New York: The Free Press, 1989.
- Crossman, Richard, ed. *The God That Failed*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.
- Cunliffe, Marcus. "Black Muslims, White Liberals." *Encounter* 23, no. 3 (1964): 38.
- Cunliffe, Marcus. "The Intellectuals II: The United States," *Encounter* 4, no. 5 (1955): 23.
- de Vries, Tity. "Encounter: An Intellectual Concept of Atlanticism in the 1950s." In *The American Columbiad: "Discovering" America, Inventing the United States*, edited by Mario Materassi, Maria Irene Ramalho, and De Sousa Santos. Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1996.
- Dittberner, Job. *The End of Ideology in American Social Thought, 1930-1960*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Research Press, 1979.
- Ehrman, John. *The Rise of Neoconservatism: Intellectual and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1994*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Epstein, Jason. "The CIA and the Intellectuals," *The New York Review of Books*, April 20, 1967, 16-21.
- Glazer, Nathan. "The Ghetto Crisis." *Encounter* 29, no. 11 (1967): 15.
- Glazer, Nathan. *Remembering the Answers*. New York: Basic Books, 1969.
- Hixson, Walter L. *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture and the Cold War, 1945-1961*. New York: Macmillan, 1997.
- Honey, P.J. "Vietnam Argument." *Encounter* 25, no. 5 (1965): 66.
- Hook, Sidney. "Report on the International Day Against Dictatorship and War." *Partisan Review* 16, no. 7 (1949): 720.
- Kellner, Douglas. "Introduction: Radical Politics, Marcuse, and the New Left." In *Herbert Marcuse: The New Left and the 1960s*, edited by Douglas Kellner. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Klatch, Rebecca. *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right and the 1960s*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Kopkind, Andrew. "The Great Vietnam March." *New Statesman*, April 21, 1967, 531.

- Kopkind, Andrew. "The Vietcong in Europe," *New Statesman*, September 22, 1967, 343.
- Kristol, Irving. "The Old Politics, the New Politics, The New, New Politics," *New York Times Magazine*, November 24, 1968, 49-51.
- Kristol, Irving. "Teaching In, Speaking Out; The Controversy over Viet Nam." *Encounter* 25, no. 2 (1965): 65.
- Lasch, Christopher. *The Agony of the American Left*, New York: Knopf, 1968
- "Liberal Anti-Communism Revisited," ed. Norman Podhoretz *Commentary*, September 1967, 24-79.
- Lippmann, Walter. *Phantom Public*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1927.
- Lippmann, Walter. *Public Opinion*. New York: Brace and Company, 1922.
- Lipset, Seymour. *Political Man*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981.
- Löwenthal, Richard. "America's Asian Commitment." *Encounter* 25, no. 4 (1965): 53.
- Löwenthal, Richard. "Has the Revolution a Future?" *Encounter* 22, no. 1 (1965): 3.
- Löwenthal, Richard. "Has the Revolution a Future? (II)." *Encounter* 22, no. 2 (1965): 16.
- Löwenthal, Richard. "The Vietnamese Agony: A Reply to Critics." *Encounter* 26, no. 1 (1966): 54.
- Lucas, W. Scott. "Beyond Freedom, Beyond Control: Approaches to Culture and the State-Private Network in the Cold War." In *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe, 1945-1960*, edited by Giles Scott-Smith and Hans Krabbendam. Portland: Frank Cass, 2003.
- Lüthy, Hubert. "Democracy and its Discontents II: France." *Encounter* 2, no. 5 (1954): 23.
- Lüthy, Hubert. "The Intellectuals IV: France," *Encounter* 5 no. 2 (1955): 5.
- Macdonald, Dwight. "America! America!" *Dissent*. Fall 1958, 313-323.
- Mann, Golo. "The Intellectuals III: Germany." *Encounter* 4, no. 6 (1955): 42.

- Marcuse, Herbert. *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry Into Freud*. New York: Psychology Press, 1987.
- Marcuse, Herbert. *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964.
- Matusow, Allen J. et. al. "SNCC and the Practice of History." In *A Circle of Trust: Remembering SNCC*, edited by Cheryl Lynn Greenberg. Rutgers University Press, 1998.
- Matusow, Allen J. *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2009.
- Mills, C. Wright. "Letter to the New Left," *The New Left Review* 5, September-October 1960, 18.
- Moynihan, Daniel Patrick. *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding*. New York: The Free Press, 1969.
- Muhlen, Nobert. "Democracy and its Discontents I: Germany." *Encounter* 2, no. 4 (1954): 27.
- O'Brien, Conor Cruise. "Journal de Combat." *New Statesman*, December 20 1964, 911-912.
- Pells, Richard. *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture Since World War II*. New York: Basic Books, 1997.
- "The Port Huron Statement" In *"Takin' it to the Streets": A Sixties Reader*, edited by Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Rovere, Richard H. "Negro Crisis: Letter from the American Kitchen," *Encounter* 21, no. 8 (1963): 3.
- Saunders, Frances Stonor. *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*. New York: The New Press, 1999.
- Schlesinger, Arthur Jr. "Varieties of Communist Experience," *Encounter* 14, no. 1 (1960): 46.
- Schlesinger, Arthur Jr. *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom*. Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1949.
- Scott-Smith, Giles. *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural*

- Freedom, the CIA and Post-War American Hegemony*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Sellers, Cleveland, and Robert L. Terrell. *The River of No Return: The Autobiography of a Black Militant and the Life and Death of SNCC*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1990.
- Shils, Edward. "The Intellectuals I: Great Britain." *Encounter* 4, no. 4 (1955): 5.
- Shils, Edward. "Letter from Milan: The End of Ideology?" *Encounter* 5, no. 11 (1955): 52.
- Stern, Sol. "A Short Account of International Student Politics & the Cold War with Particular Reference to the NSA, CIA, Etc." *Ramparts*, March 1967, 29-39
- Suri, Jeremi. *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Tanenhaus, Sam. "History, Written in the Present Tense." *New York Times*, March 4, 2007.
- Warner, Michael. "Origins of the Congress for Cultural Freedom 1949-1950." *Studies in Intelligence* 38 (CIA in-house journal, 2007): 89.
- White, Richard. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1680-1815*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Wilford, Hugh. *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Wilford, Hugh. *The New York Intellectuals: From Vanguard to Institution*. New York: Manchester University Press, 1995.
- Wreszin, Michael. *A Rebel in Defense of Tradition: The Life and Politics of Dwight Macdonald*. New York: Basic Books, 1994.