



## BOOK REVIEW

**Giles Scott-Smith and Charlotte Lerg (eds.).** *Campaigning Culture and the Global Cold War: The Journals of the Congress for Cultural Freedom*. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017. ISBN 978-1-137-59866-0. Hardbound \$119.99. ISBN 978-1-137-59867-7. E-book \$89.00.

This book is a collection of sixteen essays discussing the history of the different journals from across the world that were supported by the Congress for Cultural Freedom (hereafter CCF) during the Cold War. The CCF was surreptitiously subsidized by the CIA and used this funding to support its set of journals promoting Western culture and political ideas and policies. Essays are written by scholars who have studied each particular journal in its local political and cultural context. The helpful, concise general introduction to the book provides basic information about the CCF, from its 1950 origins in a Berlin conference through its transformation into an international organization cultivating intellectuals across the world to its final demise after its CIA funding became public. There are brief comments about major players, including Michael Josselson, Polanyi's friend and a primary administrative figure in the CCF (and a link to the CIA) who worked with Polanyi on many CCF projects after 1953. The editors Scott-Smith and Lerg make clear their point of view: this collection aims to avoid the way much earlier scholarship on the CCF slips into a preoccupation with either condemnation or praise of the CCF. Here the effort is to focus attention on the CCF's "most influential cultural products scattered across the globe, operating in their own particular local settings" (2) and to understand each of these

sixteen journals in terms of its place in the CCF network and history.

Michael Polanyi was deeply involved in the CCF from 1953 until October 1967, when he resigned during the controversy about secret CIA funding of CCF programs and whether to accept the resignation of Josselson. Many articles by Polanyi were published in CCF-subsidized journals, and Polanyi and a son and daughter-in-law seem to have been primarily responsible for producing one journal, *Science and Freedom*, from 1954–1961. Here I can briefly comment on only a few of the essays, treating these CCF journals shaped to court intellectuals in many different cultural contexts. The three essays that I treat are those likely to be of interest to students of Michael Polanyi's thought.

Audra Wolfe's "Science and Freedom: The Forgotten Bulletin" (27–44) is an account of a CCF-subsidized publication edited by George Polanyi, Michael Polanyi's oldest son who was a liberal economist and may have influenced his father's liberal views. Before the formation of the CCF, Michael Polanyi was a leader opposing "planned" science and articulating the relationship between science, freedom, and liberalism. Because of his status, Polanyi was talked into co-chairing a large CCF conference in Hamburg in 1953 on science and freedom. Out of this grew a CCF Science and Freedom standing committee that Michael Polanyi chaired for several years, a committee for which he recruited several prominent scientists. The cover of *Science and Freedom* suggests that the journal was a bulletin of the committee, but just what role the committee played is ambiguous; Wolfe pronounces the committee a "paper committee" (30). She points out that some administrators in the CCF came to

regard *Science and Freedom* as “the house organ for the Polanyis” (28). Also, there are many questions about George Polanyi’s role as editor (as well as secretary to the committee). How George (as well as his helpful wife Priscilla) came to have responsibility for publishing *Science and Freedom*, operating out of their home in Manchester, is unclear, as is the degree of Michael Polanyi’s involvement in promoting this arrangement and, more generally, in shaping the journal.

Wolfe portrays an ongoing power struggle between the Paris CCF headquarters and the Manchester-based bulletin. Paris wanted more focus on criticism of communist infringements of scientists’ freedom, but articles took a broader interest in academic freedom. Michael Polanyi (as his publications reflect) and apparently George also viewed matters not simply as a struggle against communism per se: “the crisis in science was different only in degree, not kind, from the broader crisis of political authority afflicting intellectuals more generally” (32). The bulletin also seemed to promote an unmistakable “embrace of economic liberalism” (35), and this seems to have raised questions for readers.

The CCF, comparatively speaking, invested little money in this journal, but the irregularly published journal’s success in enlisting subscribers was dismal. George Polanyi apparently did not seek approval from the CCF Paris Secretariat for material published, and his handlers were often frustrated and unhappy with the editorial process and what was published. Paris did not seem to know what was going on in Manchester; George Polanyi seems to have been an independent actor. The Paris Secretariat eventually in 1961 shut down *Science and Freedom* (taking pains not to alienate Michael Polanyi) and began to subsidize a new journal, *Minerva*, edited by Michael Polanyi’s close friend Edward Shils who had long been a member of the CCF Science and Freedom Committee. Wolfe does not seem to know much about the scope of the collaboration between Michael Polanyi and Edward Shils that began in the

late forties, and this perhaps carried over to matters concerned with *Science and Freedom* if not also early issues of *Minerva*. Wolfe treats the case of *Science and Freedom* as an interesting exploration of the “limits of ‘editorial freedom’ within the CCF’s larger operations” (28). But her general conclusion about the journal is pellucid: *Science and Freedom*, when compared to other CCF-subsidized publications, was “amateurish” (27). The story she tells is a fascinating one, but to this reader the story could have been enriched if Wolfe had read more of Michael Polanyi’s writings from the forties and fifties in addition to the CCF literature that she has carefully studied.

Ray MacLeod, who became the *Minerva* editor in 2000, is the author of “Consensus, Civility, Community: *Minerva* and the Vision of Edward Shils” (45–68), an essay in this collection that in some ways continues the story after the demise of *Science and Freedom*. Michael Polanyi had an article in the first issue of *Minerva* (and at least one later article), just as Shils had an article in the first issue of *Science and Freedom*. But *Minerva* is clearly a special Shils project to which he was tenaciously committed—he was editor for thirty-three years. This essay recalls the changing, bumpy road that Shils and the journal followed for its long history that extended beyond the life of the CCF. *Minerva* focused on “science, learning and policy,” and, as MacLeod notes, Shils “gave definition to the changing landscape of research policy” (45). He and the journal espoused, from its founding, the “Enlightenment values of consensus, civility and community” (45). This essay not only provides a history of *Minerva* but is also an interesting, concise source of biographical information about Edward Shils, who clearly was one of a handful of intellectuals who worked closely with, influenced, and was influenced by Michael Polanyi.

Jason Harding’s “Our Greatest Asset: *Encounter Magazine* and the Congress for Cultural Freedom” (107–25) is an examination of “the brightest star in

the constellation of magazines that were lavishly, and secretly, funded by the CIA during the Cold War” (107). Michael Josselson, the executive director of the CCF and the figure ultimately responsible for the more than twenty subsidized magazines, called *Encounter* “our greatest asset” (107). *Encounter* was a journal in which several important Michael Polanyi essays appeared, and it was the funding of this journal that led to exposure of the CIA link to the CCF. But Harding argues that, from its earliest days until the exposure of CIA funding, *Encounter* was not ever a crude programmatic mouthpiece for anti-communism. Otherwise, it never would have acquired a sophisticated and large readership in London. Harding points out that Editor Stephen Spender “quickly built up *Encounter* as a leading venue in London for literature and the arts,” and the journal “was respectful to the legacy of European modernism, in spite of the hostility to liberal democracy that was displayed in many of these works” (113). Harding makes his interesting case by paying close attention to what was published in *Encounter* rather than relying primarily on archival materials about *Encounter* and its various internal discussions.

Phil Mullins

[mullins@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:mullins@missouriwestern.edu)