

taking a highly visible part in beating up commie goons in the docks of Marseilles to also be interested in the Congress for Cultural Freedom.²⁰

"The American Federation of Labor had real experience of Communism, and that was the obvious place to stage the fight from," Diana Josselson explained. "Brown loved all the strong-arm business, strike-breaking in Marseilles and so forth. Michael and I were amused by the whole thing of going to a nightclub and meeting a union tough whom Irving would be giving money to, and I'm sure Irving was equally amused by the intellectuals. I suppose the attraction of the Congress crowd for Irving—who didn't know his Picassos or his Baudelaires—was that it was glamorous, and the contacts were good."²¹

At weekends, Michael and Diana relaxed by trawling the antique shops and galleries of the Left Bank. They lunched on open sandwiches and aquavit, followed by tea at the Café de Flore (Sartre's favorite) or the Deux Magots. On Sundays, they would picnic at Fontainebleau or take a boat out on the Seine. Sometimes they would meet up with de Neufville forming a congenial trio, bound both by genuine friendship and by the secret they shared. De Neufville returned from one shopping excursion with Josselson the proud owner of two paintings by Braque. Years later, when the Josselsons' daughter, Jennifer, had become an expert in modern art, she reluctantly declared them to be fakes.

With Josselson's imprimatur stamped on the Paris office, the Congress was acquiring a reputation as a well-organized center of intellectual resistance to Communism. Through *Preuves*, it projected a sophisticated political voice which also spoke to the major artistic and cultural issues of the period. Although the German affiliate of the Congress wobbled from one crisis to the next, Josselson could rely on Melvin Lasky (and soon *Der Monat*, which the Congress took over from the Ford Foundation in 1954) to carry the Congress's interests there. Affiliates in other countries experienced a variety of teething problems, all of which testified to the near impossibility of getting intellectuals to work together without falling prey to faction fights and wounded sensibilities. But their problems seemed like so many storms in a teapot compared to the hurricanes which raged in the American Committee.

The New Consensus

An artist must be a reactionary. He has to stand out against the tenor of his age, and not go flopping along; he must offer some little opposition.

Evelyn Vaughn

I choose the West.

Dwight Macdonald, 1952

The American Committee for Cultural Freedom was founded in New York in January 1951, and the principal force behind it was Sidney Hook, who became its first chairman and who was, according to Lawrence de Neufville, a "contract consultant" for the CIA. Irving Kristol, another graduate of New York City College, served as executive director, for which he was paid an annual salary of \$6,500. This rose to \$8,500 in 1954, when Kristol was replaced by Sol Stein, who arrived straight from the U.S. Information Service, where he had worked in a unit dedicated to ideological analysis. The committee, as the official American affiliate of the Congress, was intended to reflect the broad coalition of liberal and left-of-center constituencies which made up the host organization. But where the Congress had been able to marginalize its hard-line activists like Koestler, it had no such power over the American Committee, which soon divided down the middle between the moderates and the militants. "In those days you were either 'hard' or 'soft' on Communism," explained Jason Epstein, who remembered Diana Trilling, in carnal mood, "standing behind Lionell's [Trilling] chair at a dinner party once and saying, 'None of you men are HARD enough for me!' They were ridiculous people, really, who lived in a teacup."¹

Living in the teacup with the Trillings was a powerful combination

of conservative intellectuals from what was jokingly referred to as the Upper West Side kibbutz." They included James Burnham, Arnold Beichmann, Peter Viereck (whose father had been a notorious Fascist sympathizer), the art critic Clement Greenberg, and Elliot Cohen, editor of *Commentary* and an unofficial adviser on Communism to executives at the Luce publications. In style as well as content, theirs was haute art Communism. "Some people like Beichmann and the Trillings (most Diana) were violently pro-American, and they thought we were falling down on the job. Diana in particular was quite vitriolic," recalled Irving Kristol.² Another insider remembered "a kind of feverish sense of superiority amongst many Americans: we've won the war, now we're going to reorganize Europe our way. These people were mostly gunslingers from New York, and they favored a moral high road of intransigence and considered ours to be a lower road of appeasement. Some even thought that the Congress had been penetrated by Communists."³

Representing the moderate element of the American Committee were Arthur Schlesinger, the Cold War theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, James F. Farrell, Richard Rovere of the *New Yorker*, former Socialist Party chairman and six-time candidate for U.S. president Norman Thomas, and *Partisan Review* editor Philip Rahv. Swinging between the two factions were Irving Kristol (who later became an ardent Reaganite); the other *Partisan Review* editor, William Phillips; and Sidney Hook. Hook in particular had an interest in maintaining peace between the two groups: he was at this time promoting the committee's interests with CIA director Walter Bedell Smith (whom Allen Dulles replaced in 1953), and Gordon Gray, first director of the Psychological Strategy Board (these meetings failed to merit a mention in Hook's autobiography).⁴ These contacts with high-level intelligence operatives testify to a much more knowing engagement with clandestine cultural warfare than Hook was ever ready to admit. His article in the *New York Times Magazine* of March 1951—"To Counter the Big Lie—A Basic Strategy"—was clipped and filed by the PSB, C.D. Jackson, and the CIA. In it, Hook described the threat to democracy posed by international Communism and called for "the [exhaustion] of every possibility of effective political warfare in defense of democratic survival. . . . The democracies must take the offensive in political warfare against the totalitarian regime of the Soviet Union and keep the offensive. . . . How successful this political warfare would be cannot be foretold in advance. But it is surely worth the cost of a half dozen bombers to launch it."⁵ For Hook, the American Committee was a bazooka in America's political arsenal, and he worked with his customary zeal to consolidate its position.

It was to the moderates that Josselson turned in an effort to keep the American Committee politically attuned to the Congress. But Schlesinger and his allies were unable to contain the unruly clique of hardliners, and disagreements between the committee and the Paris office surfaced almost immediately. The Americans scorned Nabokov's massive festival in Paris, accusing the Congress of frivolity. Elliot Cohen, who in his politics was only slightly less extreme than James Burnham, asked whether, "With this kind of hoopla, we are losing sight of our function and goals, and if we lose sight, who else is there around?"⁶ Another critic mocked it as "appealing to snobs and esthetes" and destroying the Congress's reputation as "a serious intellectual power."⁷

The fascination with power was much evident in the American Committee, and culminated in 1952 with a *Partisan Review* symposium which confirmed a new and positive relationship between intellectuals and the nation-state. Running in issue after issue, the symposium was called "Our Country and Our Culture." Its purpose, wrote the editors, was "to examine the apparent fact that American intellectuals now regard America and its institutions in a new way. Until little more than a decade ago, America was commonly thought to be hostile to art and culture. Since then, the tide has begun to turn, and many writers and intellectuals now feel closer to their country and its culture. . . . Politically, there is recognition that the kind of democracy which exists in America has an intrinsic and positive value: it is not merely a capitalist myth but a reality which must be defended against Russian totalitarianism. . . . Europe is no longer regarded as a sanctuary; it no longer assures that rich experience of culture which inspired and justified a criticism of American life. The wheel has come full circle, and now America has become the protector of western civilization."⁸

Intellectual life in New York during the 1930s had been gauged almost exclusively in relation to Moscow, and there to articulate its concerns was *Partisan Review*, created by a group of Trotskyites from City College. Starting its life as a house organ of the Communist-dominated John Reed Club, *Partisan Review* created a sophisticated language to articulate Marxist ideas. But the events of 1939–40 destroyed its moorings. With the signing of the German–Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, many intellectuals began to veer away from the orthodoxies of Leninist Communism towards the dissident radicalism of Trotsky. Some simply abandoned the left altogether, moving towards the political center and even the right. *Partisan Review* now found itself creating a counter-language to articulate anti-Stalinism and redefine radicalism in a non-Communist context.

Returning to the *idea* of America like so many repentant prodigals,

intellectuals and artists emerged from the "dark period" of the 1930s to discover "an exhilaration at the sudden and overwhelming appearance of new possibilities, in life as in consciousness. There was a world out there which no-one, it seemed, had bothered to look at before, and everyone happily shedding his Marxist blinkers, went rushing off to look."⁹ These born-again intellectuals, in their search for something to replace the historical absolutes which had failed them so absolutely, found the answer in "America" or, more glibly, "Americanism." The literary equivalent of Aaron Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man," *Partisan Review's* symposium signaled this act of discovery of America as if for the first time. "American artists and intellectuals have acquired a new sense of belonging to their native land," wrote William Phillips, "and have generally come to feel that their own fate is tied to the fate of their country."¹⁰ As intellectuals developed a congenial connection to America, so America came to see them in a new light. "Intellect has associated itself with power, perhaps as never before in history, and is now conceived to be in itself a kind of power," Lionel Trilling observed.¹¹

"It was perhaps the first time since the French Revolution when the significant components of an intellectual community decided that it was no longer de rigueur to be adversarial; that you could support your country without cheapening intellectual and artistic integrity," noted the historian Carol Brightman.¹² This new perception of intellectuals was confirmed when *Time* magazine ran a cover story called "Parnassus Coast to Coast," which concluded that "The Man of Protest has . . . given way to the Man of Affirmation—and that happens to be the very role that the intellectuals played when the nation was new."¹³ This was the moment at which deviationist Marxists began to transform themselves from refusniks into "all-rightniks"; when City College ideologues, together with their more waspish *compagnons de guerre*, like Dwight Macdonald, lost their taste for the class struggle and were being improbably asked for letters of recommendation by aspiring students. "The speed with which I evolved from a liberal into a radical and from a tepid Communist sympathizer into an ardent anti-Stalinist still amazes me," Dwight Macdonald later wrote.¹⁴ Describing this political transformation, his biographer concluded: "Dwight's independence, his self-proclaimed negativism, his refusal to accept any kind of nationalist loyalty had marked his political vision and sustained his political life. It was not a matter of betrayal of commitment: he had simply arrived through his own painful analysis to a point where he had no viable political position other than the 'lesser evil.' For him it was a discouraging dilemma. Even as he continued to identify with a radical, or at least dissenting, tradition,

and still felt himself to be a member of an alienated elite in opposition to American nationalism, imperialism and mass culture, he was, even if inadvertently, coming to support the maintenance of American power abroad and established institutions at home."¹⁵ Philip Rahv observed such developments with growing alarm, and warned: "Anti-Stalinism has become almost a professional stance. It has come to mean so much that it excludes nearly all other concerns and ideas, with the result that they are trying to turn anti-Stalinism into something which it can never be: a total outlook on life, no less, or even a philosophy of history."¹⁶

The headquarters of "professional" anti-Stalinism was the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, and the magazines whose editors sat on its board, namely *Commentary*, the *New Leader*, and *Partisan Review*. But now, just as the center was beginning to hold, *Partisan Review* was on the brink of folding, in part because the U.S. Treasury was threatening to strip it of its tax-exempt status. Sidney Hook wrote a dramatic plea to Howland Sargeant, assistant secretary of state, on October 10, 1952, defending *Partisan Review's* record as an effective vehicle for "combating communist ideology abroad, particularly among intellectuals," and begging for its tax exemption to be preserved. Daniel Bell also took the initiative, acting as an "intermediary" in discussions with Henry Luce, who saved the magazine with a grant of \$10,000 (at the same time, Luce donated seventy-one shares of Time Inc. stock to the American Committee). "To the best of my knowledge, that grant was never publicly disclosed, not even to the contributors and some of *Partisan Review's* associate editors," Daniel Bell later wrote.¹⁷ Quite what Luce expected in return for his investment is not clear. Jason Epstein later claimed that "what was printed in *Partisan Review* soon became amplified in *Time* and *Life*."¹⁸ Certainly, Luce's generous financial support of what had once been an authorized voice of the American Communist Party lends new meaning to the much discussed "de-radicalization" of American intellectuals during the Cold War.

The CIA had first been alerted to the financial difficulties of *Partisan Review* through Irving Brown. A year before the Luce grant was made, Sidney Hook had written to Brown asking for help in the fight to keep *Partisan Review* and the *New Leader* alive. "Our advices are from many of our European friends that anti-American and especially *neutralist* sentiment is rising in Western Europe. This at the same time as that splendidly anti-neutralist democratic organ the *New Leader* really faces extinction because of rising costs. Its disappearance," wrote Hook, "would be a cultural calamity."¹⁹ He made the same case for *Partisan Review*, and asked Brown to help secure a guaranteed foreign circulation of

four to five thousand for both magazines. Brown passed the problem on to Braden at the International Organizations Division. Shortly afterwards the *New Leader's* editor, Sol Levitas, found himself in Tom Braden's office. "God, I can remember that guy sitting across the table, pleading with me for money," Braden recalled.²⁰

Levitas, a Russian émigré who had worked with Trotsky and Bukharin, had powerful supporters in America's intelligence community. C.D. Jackson praised him for doing "an excellent job in providing virtually the only objective, unslanted, pro-American, high-quality, left-wing literature that exists on either side of the Atlantic," and said he was "definitely on the side of the angels."²¹ Certainly, Allen Dulles thought so. In 1949, Levitas had run a piece by Dulles advocating a "commission of internal security" to examine subversive influences in the United States and to "use the institutions of democracy to destroy them." With Allen Dulles helping the White House reorganize America's intelligence service, this "was rather like the head of MI5 writing for the *New Statesman*."²² At this time too, although the *New Leader* was issuing frantic appeals for funds to pay off its \$40,000 debts, it started appearing in April 1950 as a new *New Leader* with an expensive *Time*-like magazine format. Siting opposite Braden a couple of years later, Levitas had found another angel who could save his magazine. Braden agreed to subsidize the *New Leader*, arranging to hand over cash sums to Levitas at his, Braden's, office, on at least three occasions. "It wasn't a huge sum," Braden said, "probably in the region of \$10,000 a time. But that was enough to keep the magazine from going under."²³

Meanwhile, Braden's deputy Cord Meyer had taken up *Parisian Review's* cause. Further to the Luce grant of \$10,000, the magazine received a subsidy of \$2,500 in early 1953 from the American Committee's "festival account," which still contained some residual funds left over from Nabokov's extravaganza of the previous year. The festival account, it will be remembered, was the pipeline for CIA dollars, which were "piggy-backed" through the phony Farfield Foundation. When this grant was made to *Parisian Review*, its co-editor William Phillips was cultural secretary of the American Committee. Phillips later said he did not recall this grant and was always adamant that his magazine had never been the recipient of CIA support.

By subsidizing American journals, the CIA was acting in breach of its own legislative charter, which prohibited support of domestic organizations. In the case of *Parisian Review* and the *New Leader*, there were two very persuasive reasons for ignoring this legal nicety: first, the journals provided an ideological bridgehead for American and European

intellectuals whose common ground was anti-Communism, but who were separated by geopolitical and cultural differences; secondly, financial support provided what Josselson described as a "shield" against the anticipated "anger" of *Parisian Review* and the *New Leader* when they discovered—as they soon would—that their position in the marketplace of ideas was about to be seriously challenged.