

India is Our Last Hope for Free World in Asia: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and Cultural Cold War in India

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The Cold War rivalry between the US and USSR was not only limited to the economic and military domain. The ideological dimension to the superpower contestation after World War II provided two different ways of arranging the society. The 'Free World' camp offered democracy and capitalism with 'freedom' being the operative word. The Socialist camp promoted planned economy and single-party rule, with equality and peace being the keyword (Iber, 2019). The contest for supremacy was global in scope, with middle powers (India, China) and even small actors (establishments like the Holy See, organizations like the Amnesty International, and individuals like Ronald Reagan, Lech Walesa, Mikhail Gorbachev, etc.) playing an oversized role. The ideological element of Cold War was operationalized with the bid to win the heart and minds of people around the globe and to garner support for own camps. This Cultural Cold War took both the overt and covert forms of influence-peddling soft power exercises.

India as a pivotal nation in Asia with its non-aligned foreign policy formed a crucial battleground in the Cultural Cold War. The dominant public sentiment in India during those years was clearly anti-American as the ruling elites espoused anti-imperial, socialist vision in which the US figured as a part of the oppressor camp. Despite this challenging environment, the American Cold Warriors figured India was too important to be left to the Soviets. This paper investigates the operation of pro-American Cold Warriors in India during the 1950s-60s. The actors

involved included both Indian and western intellectuals and politicians. Beginning with a section tracing the institutional sinews of cultural Cold War as represented by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, the paper's core focus lies in investigating the Indian operation of the Congress. As such, it makes sense first to look at the organizational framework and notable actors in this anti-communist crusade in India. Given the prevalence of anti-American sentiment in India, the paper also deals with the question of challenges faced by the anti-communist advocacy group. This is followed by an assessment of the influence wielded by the anti-communist Cold warriors in Indian public discourse. The issue of the US' secret financial support to anti-communist activities in India brings with it the question of the extent of top-down influence of the US government on the Indian anti-communist civil society groups receiving the funding. This paper, as such, argues that the Indian participants in the Cultural Cold War exercised a lot of agency in their operation, despite receiving covert funds from abroad. However, the revelation of the sources of secret funding tarnished the image of anti-communist actors in India only highlighting the pitfalls of pro-American advocacy in the Cold War-era India.

CCF as the CIA's Anti-communist Front :

The Cultural Cold War involved both the covert soft power operations and overt propaganda operation by both the US and USSR. Given the global scope of the

operation, both superpowers had to set up a slew of agencies to finance and coordinate these activities. In the case of the United States, the overt cultural diplomacy was handled by the USIS (United States Information Service) which published books and magazines, established libraries, distributed magazines, subsidized favorable newspapers, and premiered movie shows, all geared in service of foreign policy goals. The covert operation to influence and shape public opinion in foreign countries in favor of the United States was undertaken by the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF). The CCF, as it was revealed in 1967 by *Ramparts* and *New York Times*, was a front organization covertly funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. Founded in 1950, the Congress for Cultural Freedom purportedly sought to promote and expand cultural freedom in the face of totalitarian communist threat. In reality, though, it was a CIA operation to influence prominent intellectuals and artists in western Europe and Third World in the service of American foreign policy goals. In that sense, critical historians have seen the Congress as a nothing more than a Cold War-era covert propaganda operation (Saunders, 1999). However, the success of CCF operation was predicated on the pro-American approach of local intellectuals and artists outside the US. As it turned out, public figures of letter and arts in Western Europe and Third World more often used the CCF resources and platforms to their own purposes in fostering a different vision of freedom and nation-building (Pullin, 2013). Besides, the covert nature of the operation meant there was a limit to the extent CIA could assert its control over intellectuals associated with CCF.

In western Europe and US, the CIA predominantly sought to use the CCF to attract non-communist Left (NCLs) to its platform. The arsenal of CCF's cultural offensive comprised of conferences, magazines, art exhibitions, musicals, books and pamphlets, seminars, travel grants to intellectuals, etc. The leading figures in the formational years of the CCF included the likes of Michael Josselson, Melvin Lasky, Nicholas Nabokov, Sidney Hook, Arthur Koestler, Edward Shils, Ignazio Silone, Denis de Rougemont, Raymond Aron, Daniel Bell, Minoo Masani, Jayaprakash Narayan, Asoka Mehta. In the narrative of the US involvement in the Cultural Cold War, the origin story of CCF is often set in the context of disgruntled former communists responding to Soviet propaganda initiatives in the West as the Cold War divisions solidified under Stalin and the Iron Curtain

descended on Eastern Europe. The sense of the US being left behind in soft power competition for influence propelled both liberals and former-communists-turned-Cultural Cold warriors to step up with cultural initiatives. A *New York Times* article had criticized America's foolish disregard of the importance of the "cultural offensive" as Soviet annual propaganda budget for a single country exceeded US' spending in the entire world (Saunders, 1999: 115).

The ball was set rolling at the March 1949 peace conference organized by communists at the Waldorf Astoria hotel in New York which saw protests and counter response led by the philosopher and former communist Sidney Hook. After a mellowed counter demonstration at another communist peace conference in Paris in April 1949, the next major US offensive in the battle for culture came in Berlin in 1950. The first conference of what was to be the Congress for Cultural Freedom was aptly organized in the city at the heart of Cold War division. Even more aptly, the opening of the Congress coincided with the ominous news of North Korea's invasion of South Korea. For the intellectuals gathered in Berlin to defend free world, the news of invasion only added to the sense of being under siege and the urgency of their project. At the Congress, the debate played out between the militant anti-communism of Arthur Koestler and the moderate tone of Ignazio Silone. The high-profile conference ended with a fiery speech by Koestler which involved reading the 14-points Freedom Manifesto and shouting the memorable line: 'Friends, freedom has seized the offensive!' (Saunders, 1999: 82).

The success of the Berlin conference was followed by the effort to give this anti-communist initiative a permanent footing. A steering committee meeting in November 1950 in Brussels saw Melvin Lasky proposing his plan for the organizational structure in an apparent mirror image of Cominform, the organization in charge of communist propaganda operation abroad (Saunders, 1999: 88). The resultant administrative structure for the Congress for Cultural Freedom involved five nominated honorary chairmen, a twenty-five-members international committee, a five-members executive committee, and the General Secretary. The Executive Committee comprised of executive director, editorial director, research director, Paris bureau director, and Berlin bureau director (Saunders, 1999: 89). The post of CCF's honorary president brought the involvement of towering intellectuals figures of the Western non-communist left and liberals in

the Cultural Cold War. The five nominated honorary presidents included Bertrand Russell, Benedetto Croce, John Dewey, Karl Jaspers, and Jacques Maritain. The expansion of the Congress branches in Western Europe and elsewhere was enabled by the network of like-minded anti-communist figures willing to join the intellectual and cultural fight. Soon, national committees affiliated to the CCF headquarter were formed in western Europe, Latin America, and Asia. Earlier decided to be housed in Berlin at the heart of the Cold War division, eventually the CCF headquarter was shifted to Paris where the defining sentiment about Cold War was that of neutrality.

Perhaps the most pivotal figure in this global operation waged for securing cultural freedom against communist onslaught was Michael Josselson, the coordinator handling discreet CIA funding on one hand and various national committees on the other. By mid-1950s, however, Josselson had come to see the CIA funding of the Congress as a liability and had unsuccessfully tried to steer away the financing sources (Saunders, 1999). The reluctance of CIA to relinquish control over the Congress notwithstanding, it was no easy task streamlining the content generated under the Congress' auspices. Two notable examples demonstrating the difficulty of top-down control over a diverse cohort of intellectuals who were mostly unaware of CIA linkage would include the Paris headquarters' tense relation with the American Committee for Cultural Freedom and Josselson's consternating correspondence with Irving Kristol, the co-editor of *Encounter* magazine, over enforcing a particular editorial line in the premier British magazine (Saunders, 1999: 308-9). Similarly, Hugh Wilford's research has shown the difficulty that CIA had in setting the agenda for intellectuals, artists, and musicians that it was secretly funding (Pullin, 2013: 58). Wilford's research on the British Left's involvement in the Cultural Cold War is at odds with Saunders' book showing the CIA as the piper wielding damaging control over the Congress (Pullin, 2013: 57-58).

ICCF and the Cold War in Indian Public Discourse:

As a newly independent influential Asian nation professing non-aligned approach to the Cold War bloc politics under the charismatic leadership of PM Jawaharlal Nehru, India certainly was on the mind of the CCF leadership. Nicolas Nabokov saw India as 'our last chance... If India fails... free institutions will disappear in India' (Coleman, 1989: 149). The importance accorded

to India was such that the Congress chose it as the venue for its second conference in 1951. Even the 1950 Berlin Conference had at least one Indian participant, one Keshav Malik (Coleman, 1989: 21). Given the strong fellow-travelling sentiment in India, the Congress was soon to discover the difficulty of operating in India. It was a dedicated group of anti-communist liberals and socialists who kept the Indian operation going under the tutelage of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF). To be clear, the Indian branch of the Congress was embedded in the domestic network of a host of anti-communist and liberal initiatives, knit together by personal ties, operating in a rather hostile atmosphere, and involved in a coalition with both conservatives and socialists. Their task was made even more difficult in the wake of the CIA funding revelation.

Much of the initial scholarship on the Congress focused on its American and West European operations (Coleman 1989; Wilford 2003; Saunders 1999). However, in recent times, there has been a slew of research papers and books dealing with the global dimension of the CCF operation, including India (Iber, 2015; Scott-Smith and Lerg, 2017). Margery Sabin's study of Indian writings in English has a chapter on literary writings emanating from the ICCF stable (Sabin, 2002). Based on literary analysis of articles in *Quest*, a magazine run by ICCF, Sabin highlights the autonomy of Indian intellectuals in the Cold War and their desire to fashion alternatives from what the two blocs had to offer. Further, by looking at the coverage of *Bhoodan* movement in *Encounter* and *Quest* magazines, she highlights the difference between the western, Congress-affiliated intellectuals who prioritized anti-communism in supporting *Bhoodan* and Indian intellectuals writing in *Quest* who opposed *Bhoodan* for the irrational and superstitious element of the movement on liberal rationalist grounds (Sabin, 2002: 148-51).

Historian Eric Pullin, who did his Ph.D. research on the American and Soviet Cold War propaganda in India, focuses on the ICCF and DRS' anti-communist work in India, the largely unfavorable reception they received, Nehru's annoyance at what he saw as the unwarranted foreign intervention, and the noticeable impact of the Indian Committee during the Hungarian crisis of 1956 (Pullin, 2011). Like Sabin, Pullin also takes care to highlight the autonomy of Indian intellectuals who have had their differences with the Paris headquarter. Based on the CCF conferences organized in Rangoon, Ibadan, and Rhodes,

Roland Burke's work on the CCF in Third World not only does show the different vision of CCF affiliates in Third World from their western counterparts, but also uses it to paint an alternative picture of the very idea of Third World. This alternative vision of Third World remarkably was more comfortable with liberalism and also took western liberalism to task for its limitations (Burke, 2016). In a recently published paper, Thomas William Shillam uses the *Freedom First* archive till the year 1954 and the Rangoon conference proceedings to demonstrate the non-liberal elements in the vision of the Indian affiliates of the Congress. According to Shillam, the socialist progressive cohort of Indian Congress members were much more concerned with the postcolonial vision of national development than the East-West competition (Shillam, 2020).

The Congress' engagement with India began with the 1951 conference. Initially, the conference was to be hosted under the auspices of liberal magazine *Thought* and the capital city of Delhi was chosen as the venue. The person in-charge was Sachchidananda Hirananda Vatsyayan *Agyeya*, a leading Hindi writer and the literary editor of *Thought*. However, with a week left for the inauguration of the conference, Nehru withdrew the permission for the event. The opportunity fell in hands of Minoo Masani who brought the international conference to Bombay to be organized under the auspices of Democratic Research Service. Later, Masani's work at the Indian branch of Congress would blur the boundary with DRS whose mandate was to produce anti-communist literature for Indian audience. The DRS was established in November 1950 with the help of Sardar Patel (Raju, 2001: 12-13). While the conference was not an unadulterated success, the imperative for establishing an Indian branch of CCF was crystal clear. Hence, in the aftermath of the conference, the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom was set up.

According to Peter Coleman, the ICCF headquarter was shifted from *Thought* office in Delhi to the DRS office in Bombay (Coleman, 1989: 151). Akshaya Mukul, on the other hand, has argued that in the wake of the fund embezzlement by *Agyeya*, the decision was made to shift the ICCF office to Bangalore with Philip Spratt in charge (Mukul, 2021). In any case, soon there were ICCF offices in Bangalore, Bombay, and Delhi. The leading lights of the Indian Committee included veteran freedom fighter Jayaprakash Narayan, socialist-turned-liberal Minoo Masani, former communist and trade

unionist Prabhakar Padhye, socialist leader Asoka Mehta, Jewish poet Nissim Ezekiel, former communist turned anti-communist Philip Spratt, and A B Shah.

The Indian Committee came up with the idea of a magazine in English to be managed by Minoo Masani. In June 1952, *Freedom First* was thus launched as an organ of the ICCF. However, the strident anti-Nehru tone and explicitly political engagement of the magazine under Masani would cause consternation in the Paris headquarter. For Josselson and Nabokov at the Paris headquarter of the Congress, Nehru despite his neutrality and socialist leanings was the liberal hope for Asia as a counter to communist China. Yet, *Freedom First*'s staunch criticism of Nehru hardly endeared ICCF to Nehru. In order to not further antagonize Nehru, the Congress decided in 1954 to launch a new magazine focused more on culture. As a result, *Quest* officially began its publication in 1955 under Ezekiel and the base for the political *Freedom First* was shifted to Masani's Democratic Research Service. The first annual General Meeting of ICCF in Bombay on 27th April 1952 laid out the strategy of the national committee. As per a report published in *Freedom First*, the plan for defending cultural freedom included establishment of regional groups across India, publication of a monthly bulletin, forging relations with vernacular intellectuals, conducting conferences and symposiums, and establishing student associations (Freedom First 1952b: 5). The Executive Committee for the year 1952-53 comprised of Masani, Mehta, Spratt, Sampurnanand, Jaipal Singh, Raja Rao, and P Konda Rao.

The Indian Committee's stance on the core agenda of cultural freedom more or less reflected the Paris secretariat's orientation and Berlin conference's manifesto. The Declaration on Cultural Freedom asserted the need for a free society in order for culture to flourish. The criteria for determining the prevalence of freedom in any society apparently was the liberal smell test of individual dignity. While acknowledging the lack of perfect cultural freedom, the ICCF declaration nonetheless regarded liberal individualist society to be on the advanced path towards cultural freedom. In a clear denunciation of non-alignment or neutrality against the totalitarian threat, the Declaration ended with the assertion that 'Indifference or neutrality towards [the] totalitarian tyranny amounts to renunciation of the Indian tradition and our human heritage, and a betrayal of all spiritual values' (Freedom First 1952a: 8). The ICCF, though, would soon find out the daunting nature of the task of

promoting anti-totalitarian message in a country dominated by fellow-traveler sentiment.

The Difficulty of Being Anti-Communist in India:

As the reception to ICCF in India was unfavorable, its achievements were unremarkable as well. The Committee was widely seen as an American front group and as such did not enjoy much legitimacy to intervene in public debate effectively. As Margery Sabin notes: 'The origin of American money was less shrouded in secrecy in India than in America' (Sabin, 2002: 143). The premier British magazine *Encounter*, a feather in the Congress' cap, was also regarded as a propaganda vehicle for the US by Indian leftists (Spender, 2017: ix). It did not help the cause of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom that PM Nehru had intense dislike for both the ICCF and DRS, even though he was wary of communist threat inside India and in Asia (Pullin, 2011: 385; Luthi, 2020). There seems to be two imperatives behind Nehru's approach. One, he was wary of foreign interference in India's public debates on foreign policy matters which he saw as an infringement on India's new found sovereignty in a repetition of colonial practice. The general anti-American streak of Nehru further made him ill-disposed to propaganda efforts by US which he regarded as too simplistic (Pullin, 2011: 377-78). Nehru's suspicion of American funding of DRS and ICCF was not backed by solid proof but he was to be proved correct with the 1967 revelation (Pullin, 2011: 383). The second cause related to Nehru's irritation at Masani's strident criticism of Nehru's policy in pages of *Freedom First*. For all his democratic credentials, Nehru time and again turned less charitable towards his political opponents. Later when Masani would form the conservative Swatantra Party to oppose Nehruvian socialism and one-party democracy, he would again attack the newfound party as one belonging to 'the middle ages of lords, castles and zamindars' and likely to be 'fascist in outlook' (Gandhi, 1997: 382).

In addition to Nehru's criticism, what made the functioning of ICCF difficult was the general public opinion in India. A review report by ICCF highlighted the problem as it complained in 1954 about the weak roots of democratic tradition in the country and the wariness of people about totalitarian threats (Coleman, 1989: 151-52). The 1951 conference at Bombay which saw active participation of Agyeya received almost unanimous denouncement from the major figures of Hindi literary

establishment which was mostly pro-Soviet. Rahul Sankrityayan was surprised at Indian socialists' association with a pro-America conference. Sumitranandan Pant, who had earlier agreed to attend the conference at Agyeya's request, was disillusioned that the Congress 'had become a forum of anti-Soviet hate-propaganda' (Rai, 1951: 22). Similarly, Mahadevi Verma and Harivansh Rai Bachchan denounced the Bombay conference. Bachchan went to the extent of calling it a '*American-inspired and American-financed*' affair. It was not only the domestic hostile atmosphere that made the task difficult for ICCF. The discontent of western CCF intellectuals about the Indian branch was also palpable. Sidney Hook complained about the limitless credulity of Indians about the USSR and China in 1958 and complain did James Farrell in 1956 about the unfairness of American workers' tax money subsidizing relentless anti-Americanism of Third World intellectuals involved with ICCF (Coleman, 1989: 153; Sabin, 2002: 145). In his report on the 1951 Bombay Conference for the *NYT*, Robert Trumbull sarcastically remarked on the neutrality of Indian speakers: 'From their involuted utterances, one would conclude that they should be called anti-totalitarian fellow travelers' (Trumbull, 1951).

The success of pro-American and anti-communist propaganda efforts undertaken by ICCF was minimal in India. Given the lack of support forthcoming from the Asian members of the Congress in condemning the brutal suppression of the Poznan labor riots in 1956, Nabokov considered closing down the Asia Bureau which was established in Delhi under Prabhakar Padhye to deal with the Asian affairs of the Congress (Coleman, 1999: 152). *Quest* magazine's circulation figures showed it hardly had an influence on Indian public discourse. In 1956, for instance, it merely had 800 subscribers, 200 short of its target for the year. Eric Pullin's sarcastic observation that '*Quest* appeared to have more popularity among writers than among readers.' is not off the mark (Pullin, 2017: 290). Prabhakar Padhye had complained at the Rangoon Conference of the weak roots of democratic tradition in India which made it difficult for people like him to promote their ideas (Burke, 2016: 65). Masani and Ezekiel took resort to Indian communists' attack on their organizations and journals to point out the efficacy of their work which presumably irritated those communists. Other achievements included a successful letter campaign to dissuade Raj Kapoor from participating in a communist-managed conference in Bombay and

preventing Owen Lattimore from speaking at Delhi University in 1952 (Pullin, 2011: 389). The high tide of ICCF's influence was the Hungarian uprising in 1956. JP's passionate denouncement of Nehru's hesitant approach with regard to the Soviet brutality and public demonstrations organized by the ICCF local branches forced Nehru to amend his stance. Even so, the CCF headquarter was not happy with the outcome as it only antagonized Nehru.

Indian Cold Warriors and the Issue of Agency:

The issue of secret CIA funding has raised the question of agency for historians working on the CCF affiliates' involvement with anti-communism. The recent historiographical trend undoubtedly has brought nuance to the issue by showing the limitations of the CIA influence and the clever use by local participants of CCF resources to pursue own agendas which sometimes even involved criticism of the US. In case of India, the same holds true as demonstrated by Pullin, Sabin, Shillam, and Burke. Examples abound of the differences between the western CCF affiliates and their Indian counterparts as well as of the Indian criticism of the limitations of western, Cold War liberalism. The difference between the coverage of *Bhoodan* movement in *Quest* and *Encounter* magazines is a case in point (Sabin, 2002: 148-51). Another example would be the CCF's Bombay conference which saw some speakers railing against western racism as well along with the totalitarian threat to freedom (Pullin, 2011: 387-88; Burke, 2016: 60-61). Along with other Third World participants, A B Shah's remarks at the Milan Conference in 1955 made Edward Shils take notice of the diversity of liberal fold and the criticism of western liberalism. The embezzlement of Congress funds by Agyeya and the strident anti-Nehru pronouncements of Minoo Masani caused consternation in the CCF circles and demonstrated the limitations of top-down control (Pullin, 2011: 394; Pullin, 2011: 390; Coleman, 1989: 152). During the Hungarian crisis of 1956 as well, the Paris secretariat saw the successful campaign of Indian committee to pressurize Nehru as a tactical victory but a strategic loss (Pullin, 2011: 393). On the other hand, Indian members of the Congress were baffled by the muted response of Paris to the Anglo-French action in Egypt in the same year. On the Congress' stand that the Suez crisis in 1956 was not as much consequential as the Hungarian crisis, Masani wrote to Nabokov that 'you will find it hard to locate a second person here [in

India] who will sympathize with the distinction you [in Paris] make!' (Pullin, 2017: 291) For CCF, it was anti-communism and Cold War competition that served as the *raison d'être* of the intellectual promotion of cultural freedom. Shillam's work, however, traces the distinct pursuit of a democratic and egalitarian postcolonial future by Indian intellectuals which was not so much grounded in liberalism and anti-communism (Shillam, 2020).

Conclusion :

The already struggling and inconsequential anti-communist activism of ICCF was dealt a body blow in 1967. Predictably, the revelation of covert CIA funding of the Congress in *NYT* and *Ramparts* spurred a backlash in India. The Indian Parliament debated the matter with a vigorous anti-CIA line being evident therein, while ICCF-affiliated politicians Asoka Mehta and Minoo Masani remained silent (McGarr, 2014: 1059; Pullin, 2017: 296). India's then foreign minister M C Chagla announced an official inquiry into the CIA interference in Indian politics. The inquiry report that came later implicated both the CIA and the KGB for propaganda and influence-building campaign in India (McGarr, 2014: 1063). Given the stoic silence of Mehta and Masani, argues Eric Pullin, it fell upon the *Quest's* editor Abu Sayeed Ayyub to defend the organization. He announced in 1967 that the journal would continue and that he had no prior knowledge of the CIA funding connection (Pullin, 2017: 295). He also refused to make an apology because *Quest's* editorial policy had always been independent of the Congress' control. JP, though, denounced the Congress in the aftermath of the *Ramparts* and *NYT* revelation. K K Sinha quit the India office in protest: 'Had I any idea...that there was a time bomb concealed in the Paris headquarters, I would not have touched the Congress.' (Saunders, 1999) Masani chaired the meeting of the international committee of the Congress which was convened to decide the fate of the CCF in the wake of the controversy. En route to the meeting, Masani told journalists that the Congress had been the victim of a trick. He also denied the group being influenced by the CIA and felt 'annoyed that this trick should have been played on us.' (Central Intelligence Agency, 1967) Michael Josselson, the leading light behind the initiative, ultimately had to take the blame and he resigned from the Congress. The Congress for Cultural Freedom was remodeled as the International Association for Cultural Freedom, now ostensibly funded by private philanthropists. However,

with its reputation in tatters due to the earlier association with the CIA, it never managed to gain the kind of influence wielded by the CCF in 1950s. Dianna Josselson, Michael's wife, later recalled his anguish at the CIA connection's lasting damage to the career of Congress-affiliated intellectuals who had put their faith in him (Saunders, 1999). Based on the private correspondence between Minoo Masani and Michael Josselson that this author found in a private archive, it seems that Masani remained on friendly terms with the Josselson family.

It can plausibly be argued that the aftermath of CIA connection revelation only bolstered the already visible trend of the limited influence of CCF operation in India. However, the operation of the Indian branch of the Congress reveals several insights about the Cold War. The global network of ostensibly private anti-communist organizations shows that the Cold War captured public imagination and was not just limited to state-level conflict. The difficulty of top-down control approach in Paris' dealing with the Indian branch highlights the autonomy of smaller actors who exploited the bloc superpowers for their own purposes. The ICCF intellectuals also came together on the platform to articulate a liberal universalist vision, which was not always anti-communist or pro-West, to foster postcolonial future. This alternative vision of a liberal, democratic Third World has been hitherto neglected in the historiography of Third world as an intellectual idea. The liberal elements in the ICCF, noticeably Minoo Masani and A B Shah, went on to expose the limitations of western liberals and in doing so, enriched the liberal tradition by adding to the diversity. The ICCF operations, despite its limited success, also holds importance for scholars of Indian foreign policy as a niche case of pro-US advocacy by a civil society group at a time when anti-Americanism was the default position in the Indian public discourse. An excessive moralist focus on the ICCF connection with the CIA would only obscure these important dimensions to the Cultural Cold War in India.

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