

“The American Cultural Cold War, Revolutions, and Military Coups in Latin America, 1950s-1960s”

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During the 1950s and early 1960s, the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) expressed both support and opposition to different cases of revolutionary changes and military coups in Latin America. Created as part of the American cultural Cold War strategy in 1950, the CCF sought to unify intellectuals and politicians around the world for the cause of freedom—identified with Western liberal democracies and freedoms-- and against totalitarianism—identified with communist and fascists ideologies and movements. This presentation will look at the how the CCF, in reacting to abrupt changes of political regimes in Latin America, responded to both its global agenda as well as the particular interests of the members of its Latin American branches. This approach complicates traditional views of the American cultural Cold War in Latin America that interpret it as exclusively related to and derivative from US general foreign policy. It also provides a more nuanced understanding of political and ideological labels such as liberalism, right and left, and imperialism in Latin America during the Cold War that are frequently obscured by rigid historiographical frameworks.