

The New Criterion

Notes & Comments October 2002

William Phillips 1907-2002

On the achievement and life of Partisan Review's co-editor.

It is with admiration and sadness that we note the passing of William Phillips, the founding co-editor of *Partisan Review*, who died last month at the age of ninety-four. In its heyday in the Forties and Fifties, *Partisan Review* was more than just a lively intellectual magazine: it was the cultural epicenter for a generation of writers and critics who helped preserve a rigorous standard of intellectual debate and openness to the fructifying currents of high modernism. The roster of writers who contributed to *Partisan Review* forms a veritable who's who of the period—it ranges from Delmore Schwartz to T. S. Eliot, from Wallace Stevens to Clement Greenberg, from Lionel Trilling and Mary McCarthy to Irving Howe and Dwight Macdonald, from Bernard Malamud and Isaac Bashevis Singer to Susan Sontag. But perhaps *Partisan Review's* greatest achievement occurred early on when it broke from the patronage of the John Reed Club (an organ of Communist party) and evolved into a stalwart voice of liberal anti-Communism. William Phillips did as much as anyone to steer *Partisan Review* out of the grip of Stalinist mendacity, and for that, as much as for his gentleness and wit, he will be fondly remembered by many friends.

This article originally appeared in The New Criterion, Volume 21 Number 2 , on page 4

Copyright © 2024 The New Criterion | www.newcriterion.com

<https://newcriterion.com/issues/2002/10/william-phillips-1907-2002>