

## The Politics of *The Courage to Be*

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### Abstract

Paul Tillich is arguably the most important exponent of the theology of culture. As a religious socialist Tillich felt compelled to leave National Socialist Germany in 1933 and to emigrate to the United States where he established himself as a major figure in American theology. Among his most influential works is the book *The Courage to Be*, which presents an existentialist Ground of Being theology as a basis upon which to address the concerns of people living in a period increasingly characterised by anxiety. The purpose of this article is to examine *The Courage to Be* against the background of the growth of conservative cultural and political trends in the United States. Originally presented as four lectures in the Autumn of 1950 at Yale University, *The Courage to Be* was expanded into a six chapter book and published in 1952. The article comparatively examines certain observations Tillich makes about Marxism and Soviet and American national life in the pre-revised lectures of 1950 and the published texts of 1952 against the background of the ascendancy of McCarthyism in the United States. We propose that in revising the original lectures Tillich becomes more critical of Marxism and the Soviet Union and, in certain respects, less critical of the United States; it is our view that such revisions represent concessions to the anti-left wing mood of the period. In undertaking such a contextualised comparative textual analysis, we seek to show that the scholar of religion and culture does not work in isolation but in creative tension with his or her context and that context is a fundamentally important factor in contributing to the shaping of ideas and texts.

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"The soul of the German people can again express itself. These flames not only illuminate the final end of an old era; they also light up the new."<sup>1</sup> These words were addressed by the Nazi minister of propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, on the evening of May 10 1933 to a crowd of students who were putting to the torch thousands of books deemed by the newly elected National Socialist government to be subversive.

Among the books burnt in the torch light parades that were taking place across Germany that night was Paul Tillich's *Die Sozialistische Entscheidung* (The Socialist Decision), a work that prescribed a new post-imperial social order based on the co-operation of the German Lutheran church and the labour movement. Tillich's belief in the need for such an alliance derived from his perception of the

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<sup>1</sup> Goebbels is quoted in William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (London: Secker & Warburg Ltd., 1951; reprint, London: Redwood Press Ltd., 1971), 241.

limitations of both sectors. According to Tillich, the Lutheran church had erred by allying itself too closely to the monarchy and by ignoring the needs and legitimate aspirations of the labour movement, with the consequence that it had alienated from itself a large swathe of German society. The socialist movement, on the other hand, was limited by the absence of a self-critical religious dimension, without which any movement risked degenerating into a condition of self-authentication and the consequent development of totalitarian tendencies.

The advocacy of religious socialism found no favour in post-Weimar Germany. Published only a few months before the Nazis came to power, *Die Sozialistische Entscheidung* was denounced by the *Frankfurter Zeitung* as pro-socialist; the work was banned by the authorities, and Tillich was suspended from his post at the University of Frankfurt. Along with nearly 1700 scholars, Tillich was removed from the German higher education system as part of the authorities' quest to unify German culture along Nazi lines.<sup>2</sup>

Fortuitously, Henry Sloane Coffin, the president of Union Theological Seminary in New York, was in Germany during the fateful summer of 1933. On learning of Tillich's situation, Coffin offered Tillich a position at Union, where he was to remain for the next twenty-two years. Here Tillich continued to be politically engaged through his involvement with the Fellowship of Socialist Christians, under the leadership of Reinhold Niebuhr, as well as through the various refugee groups which had been established to assist those who had fled Nazi Germany. Tillich's political activism continued during the Second World War when he worked for the Voice of America, making broadcasts to Germany, and also served as chairman of the Council for a Democratic Germany, an organisation of left-wing intellectuals working for the peaceful reconstruction of post-war Germany.

Such active political engagement came to an abrupt end following the end of the Second World War and the emergence of the Cold War. As the national atmosphere became increasingly inimical to left-wing politics, Tillich moved away from religious socialist prescriptions to a more privatised form of theology whose concern was to address the situation of the individual in an age when anxiety was becoming a major area of cultural concern.

Tillich's most important contribution to the contemporary intellectual engagement with anxiety was his book of 1952 *The Courage to Be*. This work drew upon the existentialist themes Tillich had brought with him from Germany to America, expressed in a liberal Protestant format, and found a ready audience in a culture exposed to the recent transmission of existentialist literature from Europe and immersed in the anxieties of deepening Cold War tensions.

The purpose of *The Courage to Be* is to address the question how it is possible to confront the ontological reality of anxiety without succumbing to the temptation to enclose oneself in an inauthentic, self-limiting but ostensibly secure belief-system. The book begins with an analysis of the nature of courage through the ideas of Plato, the Stoics, Aquinas, Spinoza and Nietzsche. What links these philosophers or traditions is the recognition of the finitude inherent in the human condition and the consequent inevitable human participation in nonbeing. Nonbeing is central to

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2 For details of the Nazi purges of German universities see Fritz R. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (London: Wesleyan University Press, 1990), 440; see also E.V. Hartshorne, *The German Universities and National Socialism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), 87, 100.

Tillich's view of the world: nonbeing is not merely the hypostatisation of the word "nothingness"; it is an ontological reality that perpetually threatens to undermine the order of things. In human terms to live under the threat of nonbeing is to live in a condition of finitude with the constant possibility of failure, disintegration and death.

The recognition of the fact of finitude and nonbeing creates anxiety. In *The Courage to Be* Tillich identifies three types of existential anxiety. The first of these is the anxiety of fate and death. We live with the awareness that one day we will be extinguished by death and are constantly reminded of our vulnerability through encountering factors affecting our lives over which we have no control. Secondly, humanity lives with the threat of meaninglessness. To live meaningfully is to have a source of ultimate concern which gives purpose and value to existence. Ultimate concern is the source of our spiritual centre - that is, our capacity for self-affirmation - and without it we incur the risk of self-disintegration. Thirdly, there is the anxiety of guilt. To live is to live with the responsibility to affirm or to realise oneself: to fail to do so creates a sense of guilt that our essential nature has been neglected.

These forms of anxiety are termed "existential," and are so called because they are integral and inescapable dimensions of human existence. They do not, however, represent anxiety in its totality. A distinct category of anxiety, which is not existentially ubiquitous, is pathological anxiety. Pathological anxiety derives from unresolved conflicts between different elements of the personality as, for example, the conflict between the drives of the unconscious and the need to repress these drives for the sake of social integration. The outcome of the failure to deal effectively with the source of pathological anxiety is neurosis or psychosis. Neurotics are in conflict with the situation in which they find themselves and affirm only a limited part of their being in order to preserve their entire being.

Courage is the principle which enables people to recognise the fact of nonbeing and to affirm and develop their own being in the face of nonbeing. Such an ontology of the self provides the means to define the identity of the individual as a social being interacting with the group and as an isolated individual. Self-affirmation through the group is called the courage to be as a part and such courage provides the means to diminish the anxiety of death, meaninglessness and guilt. By identifying with the group one becomes part of something that will outlive one's own existence and which, therefore, confers to some extent the power to overcome the anxiety of death. Similarly, the society, the community, or the collective can provide a sense of meaningful engagement and, therefore, reduce the possibility of spiritual disintegration. Finally, as a source of collectively held values, the community provides its members with the opportunity to live relatively free from the anxiety of guilt, so long as one adheres to the collective's values.

The courage to be as oneself is more relevant to the character of the modern period. This form of courage entails the affirmation of the individual as a being significantly distinct from the group or society to which the individual belongs. Individualism was given impetus by the Enlightenment through the proclamation of the universality of reason. Tillich identifies romanticism, naturalism, pragmatism and existentialism as examples of movements which promote individualism. Existentialism represents the most developed form of the courage to be as oneself since

existentialism, in Tillich's understanding, is a revolt against all forces that seek to deny the fullness and autonomy of the individual. Thus, there are existentialist motifs in Pascal's denunciation of Descartes' conception of humanity as essentially rational, in the Romantics' attack on Enlightenment rationality, in Kierkegaard's attack on the Hegelian equation of the real and the rational, in Marx's struggle against the dehumanising effects of unregulated capitalism, and in Nietzsche's concept of the will to power which is understood by Tillich as "the self affirmation of life as life."<sup>3</sup>

These existentialist motifs have developed into a philosophy in its own right in 20<sup>th</sup> century existentialism, whose principal concern is to address the question how the individual can live in a world which has lost its traditional values and beliefs. Where do we go now that God is dead? For Tillich this loss of the sense of the transcendent and divinely legitimated values leads initially to despair, a phenomenon that Tillich calls the courage of despair. Despair is a necessary concomitant to radical individualism because it entails the loss of those things that tie us to other people. This despair is expressed in literary works such as Kafka's *The Trial*, Camus' *The Outsider*, or Auden's *The Age of Anxiety* since they depict characters whose experience of the loss of a sense of belonging to the world leads to the total loss of a sense of meaning. The courage of despair, however, is not where we should end up. Having encountered despair we should seek to participate in the power of being. What should be sought is a form of mystical union with the ground of being or as Tillich terms it "the God above God."<sup>4</sup> The God above God is the God beyond theism, the God who appears "when God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt."<sup>5</sup>

As we can see from this brief exposition, *The Courage to Be* is principally a work of contextual theology. It addresses the concerns of a period characterised by anxiety through offering a ground of being theology as an alternative to mainstream Christianity. It is our view that *The Courage to Be* should be read not only as a theological work but as one which has a political dimension: in presenting an ontology of the self in relation to culture *The Courage to Be* engages with themes whose analysis is informed by the political character and concerns of the period. Our examination of the politics of *The Courage to Be* is based on a comparative analysis of certain texts from the original lectures on which the book is based with texts taken from the book itself. *The Courage to Be* originally consisted of four lectures (The Terry Lectures) presented in the Autumn of 1950 at Yale University. By 1952 the four lectures had been expanded into a book of six chapters. Thus, what we have are two texts serving somewhat different purposes: a series of lectures aimed at an elite academic audience and a book intended for a comparatively wide readership. The question I wish to address is: what impact, if any, did the context of post-1945 America have on the way in which Tillich reshaped and re-presented his work in order to make it more accessible to a wider audience. This question specifically concerns the way in which Tillich depicts contemporary politico-cultural trends in the Soviet Union and the United States in the light of the growing anti-left outlook that defined post-1945 American national life. In order to address this question, I propose to examine the following four areas: 1) Tillich's conception of the courage to be a part as applied to the Soviet Union, 2) Tillich's analysis of the state of contemporary Marxism, 3) Tillich's critique of

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3 Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 26.

4 *Ibid.*, 186.

5 *Ibid.*, 190.

current intellectual trends in the United States, and 4) Tillich's perception of growing conformist tendencies in American public life.

In his analysis of the courage to be a part Tillich identifies Soviet collectivism as an important example of a social system that enables the individual to cope with the anxiety of nonbeing through submerging the identity of the individual into the collective. In both the texts of 1950 and 1952 Tillich engages with the question why communism has proven to be such a powerful force in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The answer lies in communism's provision of a sense of collective protection in the face of the break down of traditional ways of life: it is the possibility of meaningful self-affirmation within the collective that makes communism attractive. The communist's willingness to endure personal sacrifice results from the communist's principal sense of identity with the movement rather than the self, and the West must be prepared to understand communism's power to inspire self-sacrificial loyalty if it is to grasp the factors that have led to the rapid spread of communism. As Tillich writes in the 1950 lectures:

It seems to me that the most striking phenomena in the communist way of life can be understood only in the light of an ontology of courage. Whatever the methods of political propaganda are, philosophy and theology must understand before they reject.<sup>6</sup>

Interestingly, the prescription that theology and philosophy must try to understand communism's capacity to inspire an ontology of courage before rejecting communism is not to be found in the book of 1952.

In both texts Tillich draws comparisons between communism and other forms of totalitarian politics. In the 1950 lectures Tillich describes both communism and fascism as "re-established collectivism." By this he means that totalitarian systems constitute attempts to re-establish tendencies towards collectivism that are always latent in history. At the same time, however, he endeavours to distinguish fascism and communism by ascribing to fascism a regressive, tribal identity and to communism a progressive, rational identity.

But it is not in the primitive, it is the re-established collectivism with which we must deal in the light of the ontology of courage. And here again it is not the fascist relapse to tribal collectivism, but it is the [progressivistic/technically rational] neo-collectivist form as it appears in the communism of present day Russia.<sup>7</sup>

Here Tillich is making a distinction between a form of reactionary, backward looking collectivism, a return to a form of primitivism, which he considers to be characteristic of fascism, and a future oriented form of collectivism which characterises communism through its belief in technology and progress. This distinction is not made in the text of 1952. In fact in 1952 Tillich appears to equate totalitarian systems of the left and the right by extending the term "neocollectivist" (which in the 1950 lectures was used to designate communism alone) to all forms of totalitarian politics. "In reaction to the predominance of the courage to be as oneself in modern western history, movements of a neocollectivist character have arisen: fascism, nazism and communism."<sup>8</sup> The sense that

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6 Paul Tillich, manuscript of the Terry Lectures, Paul Tillich Archives, Andover-Harvard library, Box No. 502:002.

7 *Ibid.*

8 Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 96.

communism, fascism and National Socialism are all part of the same political culture is reinforced through Tillich's claim that they use technology to foster the establishment of an anti-modernist and anti-individualist society. Thus, whereas in 1950 Tillich differentiated communism from fascism and National Socialism through defining communism in terms of its commitment to technological progress, in 1952 all three systems are identified by their use of technology as an instrument of enforced collectivism.

This tendency to alter the text is also evident in Tillich's analysis of the failure of Marxism in the Soviet Union. In the 1950 lectures Tillich writes:

If we remember that Marxism had been conceived as the fight for the humanity of everybody it is one of the greatest tragedies of all history that the struggle for the salvation of self and freedom in original Marxism has become a complete self-loss in the most oppressive of all social systems. The immensity of this tragedy in terms of psychological destruction can hardly be imagined. A whole generation of intelligentsia has either been deprived of itself or it has been turned into a fanatical attack against the system of oppression. But fanaticism is neurotic. It suppresses parts of its being in order to save the rest. An ontology of courage makes the disrupted state of the western intelligentsia understandable. It largely oscillates between no courage and neurotic courage.<sup>9</sup>

The revised passage in *The Courage to Be* reads as follows:

It is the great tragedy of our time that Marxism, which had been conceived as a movement for the liberation of everyone, has been transformed into a system of enslavement of everyone, even of those who enslave the others. It is hard to imagine the immensity of this tragedy in terms of psychological destruction, especially within the intelligentsia. The courage to be was undermined in innumerable people because it was the courage to be in the sense of the revolutionary movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. When it broke down, these people turned either to the neocollectivist system, in a fanatic neurotic reaction against the cause of their tragic disappointment, or to a cynical neurotic indifference to all systems and every content.<sup>10</sup>

There are obvious thematic similarities between the two texts: namely, the catastrophic demise of Marxism in the Soviet Union from a philosophy that promised the liberation of people into a system which oppresses people, and the devastating effect of this transition on intellectuals who had placed their faith in Marxism. However, there are also noticeable differences. In revising his original text, Tillich has introduced changes which alter his depiction of Marxism and strengthen the anti-Soviet tone. Thus whereas in 1950 the demise of Marxism is described as "one of the greatest tragedies of all history," in 1952 it is "the great tragedy of our time." Such a revision downplays the importance of Marxism as a significant historical force by toning down the language of tragedy, by removing the reference to history and by placing Marxism's tragic demise squarely in the present.

In 1950 the Soviet Union is described as the "most oppressive of all social systems"; in 1952 it is "a system of enslavement of everyone, even of those who enslave the others." Here the depiction of the

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9 Paul Tillich, manuscript of the Terry Lectures.

10 Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 153.

Soviet Union has undergone a transition from being an oppressive system to being a slave state.

We also note that in the 1952 text Tillich has deleted the word "western" and has interpolated the expression "cynical-neurotic indifference to all systems and every content." This interpolation has two consequences. Firstly, it politicises the word "neurotic". Elsewhere in *The Courage to Be* the term "neurotic" is used to describe people who when confronted with the reality of existential anxiety only affirm a limited part of themselves in the form of a narrow belief system. In this particular context Tillich is referring to Marxists who accepted Soviet collectivism in spite of its clear limitations or disillusioned Marxists who lost their faith in Marxism and, with this loss, abandoned faith in everything. Secondly, it removes any obvious reference to Western intellectuals. It would seem that Tillich is referring only to Russian Marxists in 1952; it is only when we read the published text in conjunction its original that it is clear he is referring to Western intellectuals as well as Russians.

Moving onto Tillich's observations about contemporary American society, we also find a number of interesting revisions that have been made to the original lectures. In both the lectures of 1950 and the book of 1952 Tillich addresses the problem of philosophical relativism and indifference to questions relating to absolute truth that he perceives to have entered national academic life. In the lectures of 1950 Tillich denounces those academics who are indifferent to questions relating to philosophical absolutes. He talks about two types: the indifferent and the cynic. The indifferent, who is personified by Meursault, the central character of Camus' novel, *L'Étranger*, is one who has no concern for values, truth and meaning. The cynic is one who is not only without a concern for philosophical absolutes but who seeks to destroy all values or philosophical norms. Tillich comments somewhat ominously on this state of affairs:

A country in which the intelligentsia is without passion and despair, in which it shows neither the courage to be a part, nor the courage to be oneself, nor something above both of them is lost.<sup>11</sup>

This description of American intellectual life is reminiscent of a comment made in a series of lectures given by Tillich in Berlin in 1951 entitled "The Political Meaning of Utopia". Here Tillich writes:

I can assure you, however, that in America's academic institutions a wave of what Americans call "cynicism" is rising today, a kind of bored, supercilious indifference to all questions of content and all norms.<sup>12</sup>

Such a perspective conflicts with Tillich's own philosophical position based in the belief in absolutes and the rejection of all forms of relativism. In Tillich's view the rejection of absolutes was not merely philosophically unsound but politically dangerous: without philosophical norms a cultural vacuum is created which can lead to the undermining of society and the emergence of an anti-democratic mentality. This possibly explains why Tillich went so far in his 1950 lectures as to describe a country whose intelligentsia lacked the passion for truth as "lost."

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11 Paul Tillich, manuscript of the Terry Lectures.

12 Paul Tillich, "The Political Meaning of Utopia," in *Political Expectations*, ed. James Luther Adams (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971), 140.

Tillich's approach to the theme of cynicism and indifference in 1952 is less bluntly anti-American than in his lectures of 1950 and 1951. Nowhere in the book *The Courage to Be* does he describe the United States as a country which is "lost." Moreover, he discusses the idea of cynicism in such a way that there is no suggestion he is attacking a specific group, profession or nation. In 1952 Tillich simply refers to modern cynics.

Modern cynics are not ready to follow anybody. They have no belief in reason, no criterion of truth, no set of values, no answer to the question of meaning. They try to undermine every norm put before them.<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, when Tillich discusses the theme of indifference in 1952 he makes no open criticism of the American academy; he achieves this by omitting in the published text the passage in which Meursault is presented as a personified image of the outlook of the academy.

Although Tillich is more guarded in his criticisms of American academic life in 1952 than in 1950, in 1952 he is generally more critical of what he considers to be growing conformist tendencies in American culture at large. In the 1952 text we do find criticisms of contemporary American culture which are not found in the original lectures. On a number of occasions Tillich expresses concern over the increasing pressure in the United States to adopt a conformist outlook, a phenomenon described by Tillich as "democratic conformism". Tillich observes that in spite of the transmission of existentialism from Europe to America "participation in given structures of life are rapidly increasing. Conformity is growing, but it has not yet become collectivism."<sup>14</sup>

Two factors have contributed to this increase in conformity: technology and the cold war. Technology has facilitated the growth of society into fixed patterns: the more uniform the methods of production are, the more the productive process has demanded conformity. The Cold War has accelerated conformist pressures within American society, producing a form of cultural collectivism.

World political thinking, the struggle with collectivism, forced collectivist features on those who fought against them. This process is still going on and may lead to a strengthening of the conformist elements in the type of the courage to be as a part which is represented by America.<sup>15</sup>

The forces behind this type of conformism are those groups which are hostile to heterodox forms of cultural expression, an attitude which makes their conduct akin to that of neocollectivism.

The violent reaction against modern art in collectivist (Nazi, Communist) as well as conformist (American democratic) groups shows that they feel seriously threatened by it.<sup>16</sup>

Ironically, it is the very groups who presume to be protecting American culture from the influence of allegedly alien and disruptive forms of artistic and philosophical expression who are displaying a mentality akin to that of the enemy they oppose. In the light of this, Tillich suggests that the role of existentialism and modern art is to maintain the courage to be oneself in a period of growing

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13 Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 150-1.

14 *Ibid.*, 104.

15 *Ibid.*, 112

16 *Ibid.*, 141.



cultural consensus.

Why has Tillich made these various changes to his original text? Is there any relationship between the context within which he was writing and his decision to revise his text in the way he did? Let us say a little about the context. Tillich wrote *The Courage to Be* at a time when civil liberties in the United States were increasingly and alarmingly curtailed for the sake of perceived national security interests. On the international front, the wartime co-operation between the United States and the Soviet Union quickly deteriorated into open hostility. Disputes over the sharing of atomic technology, the establishment of pro-Soviet governments in Eastern Europe, the Berlin blockade of 1948, the Soviet detonation of its own atomic device in 1949, the Communist victory in China in the same year, and the outbreak of war in Korea in 1950 all added to the growing tensions on the international front.

This had a fundamental impact on national politics. The spread of communism throughout the globe raised concerns that communist fifth columnists were active in the United States. In February 1950 J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, declared before the Senate that there 540,000 dedicated communists in America. In the same month Senator Joseph McCarthy claimed to have a list of 205 communists working in the State Department. Claims such as these encouraged investigative committees, such as the House Committee on UnAmerican Activities or the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, to root out alleged communist influence in public life, a process from which the academy was by no means immune.<sup>17</sup>

What impact did such trends have on Tillich's public political expression? Commenting on the McCarthy phenomenon in the 1960s Tillich gives the impression that McCarthyism did not constitute a source of concern to him.

During the McCarthy period my refugee friends from Europe - Germany and other countries - kept saying "Fascism is coming here. Hitler's name is now McCarthy." But I always insisted, "You do not know the Americans; you do not know the Middle West. You do not know all the strong forces in the grass roots that would never accept this." And I was right of course.<sup>18</sup>

While we need not doubt the truth of Tillich's claim that he did not regard McCarthy as the bearer of a form of revived fascism, there are grounds for suggesting that Tillich is retrospectively understating the sense of threat he felt in the face of the ascendancy of McCarthyism. We suggest that there are three reasons why Tillich should have reacted with concern to the politics of the times. Firstly, Tillich had communist or perceived communist associations dating back to the 1930s and 1940s. In the 1930s Tillich had sought to establish a dialogue between communists and on a number of occasions drawn parallels between Christianity and communism. Tillich had also served on the editorial board of a theological journal, *The Protestant Digest*, which was regarded in some quarters as pro-communist. Secondly, Tillich himself had been blacklisted by the US army because of his chairmanship of the Council for a Democratic Germany. Thirdly, a number of Tillich's associates

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17 For an excellent study of the impact of McCarthyism on the universities see Ellen W. Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

18 Paul Tillich, interview with D. Mackenzie Brown, *Ultimate Concern: Tillich in Dialogue* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1965), 68-9.

had experienced difficulties because of their politics. Berthold Brecht, for example, who had served on the Council for a Democratic Germany had appeared before the House Committee on UnAmerican Activities in the context of the 1947 investigations into communism in the movie industry.

Tillich's anxieties about the mood of the period were explained to me by his friend and editor, James Luther Adams:

He [Tillich] felt himself to be a foreigner. In the face of these agitations he should be quiet. . . . He said in conversation with me that the United States was far behind in these matters, so that at this late date Americans could be shocked at anyone who showed affiliation with Marx.<sup>19</sup>

In the light of Adams' comments and Tillich's engagement and sympathy with Marxism, I think it is quite plausible that the revisions made to the original *Courage to Be* lectures reflect to some extent the political environment within which he was working. The exclusion of the prescription that theology should try to understand communism before rejecting it, the affirmation of a closer affiliation between communism and National Socialism, and the description of the Soviet Union as a "system of enslavement" in the book of 1952 represent, in my view, concessions to the wider audience for whom the book is intended. Similarly, the toning down of some of the anti-American statements made in the original lectures suggests that Tillich was concerned not to offend the cultural sensibilities of his readership. This is not to deny that Tillich was prepared to introduce criticisms of reactionary-conformist trends in contemporary America. It is in his analysis of the cultural impact of technology that Tillich's criticisms of both totalitarian political systems and reactionary tendencies in the United States converge. Technology is used in totalitarian systems to enforce collectivism but has also produced the kind of international tensions which inspire conformist tendencies in reactionary groups. Part of the role of heterodox cultural forms is to challenge the very conformist tendencies that inhibit the courage to be as oneself. Thus, the politics of *The Courage to Be* can be understood to have two dimensions. On one level, Tillich is criticising collectivist or conformist tendencies that he perceives to be strengthening in the context of Cold War politics and is offering heterodox cultural forms as a means for the preservation of the individual. On another level he is involved in a process in which he modifies his own political views in order to avoid the difficulties a number of left-wing scholars encountered at that time.

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<sup>19</sup> James Luther Adams, interview with the author. Adams himself experienced difficulties during the McCarthy period since he himself was investigated by the Seditious Activities Committee of the State Legislature of Illinois on the grounds of his alleged communist sympathies.