

very often suggested a pro-Derrida line, but one could hardly call it a case of unqualified support. It was a fascinating experience to observe him wrestling with deconstructionism in his conference-ending lecture, as it is too in his recent book on Samuel Richardson, *The Rape of Clarissa* (Oxford, 1982). Eagleton clearly feels there are major problems involved in reconciling Marxist and deconstructionist principles, and he can be scathing on the subject of Derrida's apparent reluctance to effect the accommodation between the two he promised several years ago. Yet as in the case of the critique on Richardson, Eagleton is perfectly capable of turning deconstructionist strategies to account - perhaps against his better Marxist judgement? - and he can do so in an ingenious and creative way.

This particular debate appears set to run for a while yet, and it could well be argued that the state of literary theory *tomorrow* will depend in large part on what kind of accommodation (if any) is eventually reached between Marxism and deconstructionism. Eagleton has certainly made some moves in that direction, but a less inhibited approach than his might pay more dividends. Deconstructionism has a great deal of potential as a means of confronting authoritarian elements in Western culture, and without wishing to sound too millenarian about the subject it would probably repay the not inconsiderable effort required to synthesise it with Marxist theory.

Probably the two most successful papers of the weekend came from Eagleton and Belsey, who delivered characteristically well-organised and thought-provoking pieces of work (although even here, in typically English fashion one might say, the bias was towards literature rather than philosophy). In many ways, however, the deconstruction workshop provoked the liveliest debate, since most of the underlying issues of the conference seemed to surface here, with Derrida's influence looming particularly large. If any current theory seems likely to bridge the gap between literature and philosophy it is deconstruction.

One of the participants in this workshop, Julia McCannell (University of California, Irvine) treated Bakhtin's work in some detail, and the latter also figured (in a more oblique manner, involving his brother's friendship with Wittgenstein!) in Eagleton's lecture. Bakhtin's star has risen of late, and his acceptance as a major Marxist aesthetic theorist was another notable feature of the conference, his name being bandied around almost as frequently in discussion as Derrida's. It seemed satisfyingly logical for the weekend to conclude with Eagleton's assessment of the use-value of these two figures to the modern literary theorist, since their influence had extended over so much of the proceedings.

In informal discussions before the final break-up the possibility of another conference next summer was considered, with feminism emerging as the likeliest candidate for an overall theme (this remains to be finalised however). A scheme to publish the conference papers in an inexpensively printed volume was put forward by the organisers. For details of availability contact Marianne Korn, Faculty of Humanities, Middlesex Polytechnic, All Saints, White Hart Lane, London N17 8HR.

Stuart Sim

# CORRESPONDENCE

## Heidegger Against Nazism

Dear Radical Philosophy,

Mark Tebbit's recent article on *Lukacs, Heidegger and Fascism* (RP, Summer 1982) makes certain erroneous statements about Heidegger which call for correction.

Tebbit's misleading equation of Heidegger's philosophy and fascism is summed up in his initial assertion that Heidegger 'remained an unrepentant adherent to the extreme right' and that his thought remained 'intrinsically ... bound up with European fascism' (p.14). Such a charge does serious damage to both Heidegger's personal and philosophical integrity. Since Tebbit offers no concrete evidence to support his accusation, but simply rehearses an unfounded rumour as established fact, I wish to set the record straight with regard to Heidegger's alleged fascism.

In a series of rigorously researched and documented articles published in *Critique* (Paris, 1966-67), the French philosopher François Fedier definitively exonerated Heidegger from the charge of unrepentant adherence to fascism levelled against him in three German publications: Guido Schneeberger's *Nachlese Zu Heidegger* (Berne, 1962), Theodor Adorno's *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1964) and Paul Hühnerfeld's *In Sachen Heidegger* (Munich, 1961). Fedier's studies had a considerable impact on the Continent and particularly in France and Germany where several of the journalists and authors responsible for propagating false accusations against Heidegger went so far as to publicly retract or apologize for their statements. And the German newspaper *Der Spiegel* permitted Heidegger to reply personally to his critics.

Since Fedier's studies have not been translated into English - a regrettable fact which has undoubtedly facilitated the continuation of inaccurate charges against Heidegger by such authors as George Steiner, A.J. Ayer and Tebbitt - I would like to take this opportunity to bring the English readers' attention to the true facts of the case.

In 1933, Heidegger replaced Professor Von Möllendorf, a radical Social Democrat, as Rector of Freiburg University. The Nazi authorities had called for Von Möllendorf's resignation because of his refusal to allow anti-semitic propaganda on the campus. Von Möllendorf and other liberal members of the university approached Heidegger, the *eminence grise* of Freiburg academia at that time and unaffiliated to any political party, begging him to take over the vacant post in order to keep the university free from the Nazis' campaign of anti-semitism. Heidegger was extremely reluctant to accept their offer, not only because it involved the compromise of mandatory membership of the party, but also because he remained sceptical of his chances of being able to resist the growing tide of Nazi fanaticism. However, the unanimous support of the predominantly anti-Nazi faculty finally persuaded him to accept the Rectorship.

Just two days after Heidegger's nomination, he was approached by the leaders of the Nazi Student Movement who demanded the resumption of the anti-Jewish campaign forbidden by Von Möllendorf. Heidegger flatly refused, despite unequivocal threats from the Nazi leaders. Several days after his refusal, Heidegger was summoned to the local Higher Education

Authorities and was again ordered to proceed with the implementation of the anti-Jewish measures. They warned that if Heidegger did not accede to their demands he would be expelled and the university closed. Despite these threats, Heidegger once again refused. Heidegger also refused to allow the auto-da-fé book-burnings (a widespread practice in the other German universities), to attend party meetings, to wear party uniform or to give the Nazi salute (all obligatory for Rectors at that time). It is true that Heidegger did pay ritual lip-service to the party in his inaugural speech (when he was obliged to repeat a formula of party jargon which had been written into his address by the student movement); but it is essential to point out that he did so in the belief that by becoming Rector he would be in a position to protect his Jewish students and colleagues - in particular his Jewish mentor Edmund Husserl to whom he had dedicated his major work *Being and Time*. Husserl's own daughter has publicly and emphatically denied rumours that Heidegger barred Husserl's access to the Freiburg library, pointing out that the opposite was in fact the case. Throughout his brief term as Rector Heidegger courageously insisted on keeping Jewish members of staff (e.g. Von Hevesy and Thannhauser) and students (e.g. the noted case of Helen Weiss); he repeatedly refused to censor Jewish authors and took the exceptional measure of nominating two radically anti-Nazi professors as Deans of Medicine and Law in February 1934. The party was, predictably, infuriated and immediately demanded that he rescind these appointments. Heidegger stood by his decision and resigned forthwith - just ten months after summing the Rectorship. The Nazis wasted no time in denouncing Heidegger and his publications. It is significant that Heidegger's pro-Nazi successor was hailed by the party newspaper, *Der Alemanne*, as 'the first Nazi Rector of the university'.

Far from being an 'unrepentant adherent' to Nazism, Heidegger realized after only ten months that he had committed a naive error in supposing that a university Rector could counter in any way the incorrigible tide of Nazi barbarism. Far from producing a philosophy intrinsically 'bound up with European fascism', as Tebbit suggests, Heidegger's subsequent lectures in Freiburg on Nietzsche (1936-37) represent an outspoken attack on Nazism. For this reason, his philosophy seminars became a rallying point for anti-Nazi staff members and students and were soon infiltrated by the notorious Dr. Hanke and other party spies. In this respect, I wish to quote from one of the many testaments documented by Fedier relating to Heidegger's attitude to Nazism as expressed during his Freiburg lectures from 1934 to 1944. It is written by Siegfried Bröse (a prominent official removed from his post by the Nazis) and addressed to the post-war Rector of Freiburg University, dated 14 January 1946:

'The reason I speak out now on the Heidegger issue is that from spring 1934 to the end of his courses in autumn 1944 ... I participated in almost all of Heidegger's seminars. To my knowledge there is no-one more qualified to provide a complete account of Professor Heidegger's attitude as expressed in his courses and seminars.... Heidegger never failed to seize on an opportunity, during his lectures, to articulate his views on the speeches of Goebbels, Minister for propaganda and other stooges of National Socialism, often with such critical acuteness and candid dissent that his own students feared political repercussions. I was able to observe - many other students also - that Heidegger's lectures were followed by large numbers who wished to hear Nazism portrayed in all its falsity and sought in

Heidegger a guide for their own behaviour.... Heidegger's courses were frequented not only by students but also by people with a profession or who were retired. Any time I had occasion to speak with these people they invariably expressed their admiration for Heidegger's courage to attack Nazism with the philosophical rigour of his prestigious position as a thinker. I am equally aware of the fact that Heidegger's lectures were politically monitored by spies precisely because his open dissidence had not gone unnoticed by the party.'

The result of Heidegger's academic dissidence (admittedly he never joined an armed struggle against Hitlerism) was that he was refused permission to travel, was defined in a party report as the 'most dispensable member of the university staff', was savagely attacked in the Nazi publication *Wille und Macht*; some of his works were censored and withdrawn from the shelves and he was the only Freiburg academic to be consigned to compulsory labour (with Karl Barth and other 'undesirables') on the banks of the Rhine.

But quite apart from the factual, historical evidence cited above, it is also difficult to square Tebbit's claim that Heidegger's philosophy is intrinsically bound up with European fascism, with the conspicuous fact that many of Heidegger's most influential disciples were either Jewish (Arendt, Marcuse, Weiss, Levinas, Derrida) or left-wing socialists (Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Ricoeur, Breton etc.). It is also worth recalling here that Heidegger's two closest friends and colleagues in France after the war were Jean Beaufret (the recipient of the Heidegger's celebrated *Letter on Humanism*) who met Heidegger while still an officer in the Allied Army which liberated Germany from the Nazis; and René Char, the French poet who served as a leader of the French Resistance Movement during the war.

While it is undeniable that Heidegger committed a grave error of judgment when he accepted the Rectorship in 1933, it is simply false to accuse him of being an unrepentant adherent to fascism or to uncritically equate him with fascism as Tebbit does when he writes: 'Lukacs and Heidegger (Marxism and fascism)...' (p.17). It would appear that Tebbit is basing his uncritical assumption largely on Lukacs' argument - equally uncritical - that Heidegger's philosophy 'objectively represented the most reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie in the 1920s', i.e. that he was a proponent of decadent irrationalism and nihilism. (Lukacs was clearly unaware of Heidegger's rigorous critique of nihilism, particularly in his Nietzsche lectures.) We may recall that Lukacs also attacked Joyce and Kafka as representatives of bourgeois nihilism and irrationalism. Yet few would feel justified in placing the term 'fascism' in parenthesis after those names.

Tebbit's cursory remarks on Heidegger's attitude to 'subjectivity' and 'theology' are equally superficial and misguided - in marked contrast to his analysis of Lukacs' own philosophy which is at all times penetrating and perspicacious. It is regrettable that the author did not remain on firm ground and confine his study to Lukacs alone.

To be fair to Tebbit, he does acknowledge in his conclusion that 'it would require more detailed evidence to substantiate the theses which I have put forward in this article, in particular the claim that Heidegger's philosophy is intrinsically connected with fascism' (p.22). More is the pity that Tebbit did not make this admission before he chose the misleading title and theme of his article.

Richard Kearney