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SHANGHAI (20), CHINA

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August 23, 1950

Dr. Georg Lukacs  
c/o A. Francke Ag. Verlag  
Bern, Switzerland

Dear Dr. Lukacs:

I am taking the liberty to write this letter to tell you how I have read your "Goethe und seine Zeit" with great pleasure and admiration. I believe the sort of reinterpretation you gave in this book is precisely what the world needs today for its future intellectual and cultural regeneration. The conclusions you reached in this book will open up a new vista for a general incorporation of the intellectual and literary heritage of the German "Aufklärung" into the cultural horizon of the progressive world.

I am undertaking to translate this booklet of yours into Chinese, hoping thus to introduce you and your views to the reading public of this country. I wonder if it were possible that you give me a curriculum vitae of yourself, particularly a list of your major writings. I know this is a great imposition. But I lack any other means of getting this necessary information in this part of the world. Is it at all possible if you were to write a few sentences, whether in the form of a preface or a letter to me, expressing your views on the appearance of your book in Chinese version and its possible significance to the Chinese at this historic moment of their destiny? It would give such a personal and vivid touch in addition to the effect of the book itself.

I am a professor of political thought at the National Fudan University in Shanghai. At the same time, I am directing the Haikwang Library of Western Thought which I myself have founded together with Mr. K. P. Chen of a local bank here. The purpose of this Library is to collect works of great thinkers of the West since Plato and special treatises on the thought and the persons of these thinkers, so that eventually we may have a center here in Shanghai for the research of Western culture in terms of its great creative artists and philosophers. I hope in <sup>own</sup> bibliographical list of your <sup>own</sup> works, you will give the details of their dates and publishers so that this Library may manage to buy them. Please indicate the details especially if any of your writings have been translated into English and French. Most of the people in this country can read English and French better than German.

With your permission, I should like to say a few words about Nietzsche on whom you have made some casual references in your book. It has seemed to me that Nietzsche, while he has undoubtedly been made use of by the Nazis, should not be summarily condemned as the intellectual god-father of Fascism. I take him as a petty-bourgeois thinker in revolt against the reigning culture of the late capitalism - with its state worship and vulgarized Christianity. Nietzsche's aim, I feel, is to free man from the cramping bondage of the bourgeois conventions; he aims to fight for a freer development of personality against the limitations and complacencies of the bourgeois society. His "Superman" represents nothing more than a battle-cry for a freer individuality. The desperate language in which he expresses his thought is misleading in

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2

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many ways, but it serves only to reflect the more faithfully the contradictions and the impasse of his age and society, entering as it does on the last phase of capitalism. Nietzsche carries the "individual" and the "dießseitig" tradition of the Renaissance to a consummation possible within the limits of the bourgeois society. He is a petty-bourgeois rebel totally blind to the historic meaning of the rising proletariat. He founders in the mental domain of a petty-bourgeois, in which the individual still counts for everything, and it is in behalf of the individual that he fights his losing battle against the encroachments of the monopolistic capitalism then crystalizing in the cult of the State. But he fights against an enemy, whose nature and identity he entirely fails to see: he fights therefore à la Don Quixote. Here lies his tragedy. He is anti-state, he may not be taken as a proto-Fascist. Appraised as a whole, his line of thought speaks against "the regimented collosity" of Fascism instead of sustaining it.

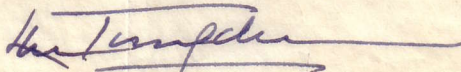
I am probably wrong in my judgment. But I feel there is a need of more refined re-interpretation of Nietzsche, just as that of Dostoevsky who I understand is being condemned as a writer in Soviet Russia. Perhaps neither of the two may be reclaimed as in any ~~basic~~ sense progressive thinkers -- not in a positive sense. But perhaps they are so in a negative sense: they expose and undermine the bourgeois morality. They do not aid and sustain it.

I shall be grateful if you will give your comment on this.

I believe there are quite a few writers in Europe who are critics of Western cultural history like yourself. I shall be obliged if you will give me a few names.

With high compliments and solicitude,

Sincerely yours,



LIN Tung-chi

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