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z.Zt. Königstein/Taunus  
Wiesbadenerstr. 23  
Bundesrepublik  
Deutschland  
Am 19. Juni 1962

Herrn  
Professor Dr. Georg Lukacs

Budapest V.  
Belgrad Rkp. 2. V. Em. 5.

Ungarn

Sehr geehrter Herr Professor Doktor Lukacs!

Ich schreibe Ihnen auf Anregung von Herrn Dr. Frank Benseler. Während der nächsten zwei Monate habe ich die Absicht, eine Reise durch Österreich, Jugoslawien und Ungarn zu machen, und ich würde es außerordentlich schätzen, wenn ich bei dieser Gelegenheit Ihre werte Bekanntschaft machen könnte.

Ich habe meine Habilitationsschrift über Adam Ferguson und die Beziehungen der bürgerlichen "moral philosophy" zu einer wissenschaftlichen Deutung der Gesellschaft geschrieben, und ich arbeite jetzt an einem größeren Werk über die Krise dieser Verhältnisse, wie sie z.B. in den Arbeiten von Karl Mannheim zum Ausdruck kommt. Ich bin besonders interessiert an Ihren jüngsten Arbeiten über die Integration von Ethik und Sozialwissenschaft, und hätte sehr gern mich mit Ihnen über einige damit zusammenhängende Fragenkomplexe unterhalten.

Meine Reisepläne sind im Moment noch ungewiß genug, daß ich mich nach Ihren Dispositionen für die kommenden Wochen richten kann. Ich würde mich wirklich freuen, wenn wir uns kennenlernen könnten.

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Mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung

  
David Kettler



Königstein/Taunus  
Wiesbadenerstraße 23  
July 23, 1962

Dear Dr. Lukacs,

As you see, I am taking advantage of your kind invitation to write in English. It does go much more easily for me; and it eliminates one possible source of misunderstanding. My major regret is, however, that I cannot then address Mme. Lukacs at the same time. Please extend to her my sincere apologies and my very warmest regards. The afternoon I spent in your apartment I count among the very important times of my life; and I shall never forget the cordial courtesy and helpfulness with which you both received the strange American.

I have prepared a brief memorandum, in which I have attempted to state in summary form the main themes of our discussion. Naturally, I should be extremely grateful if you would read it over, to see whether I understood you correctly. Any commentary (or even expansion of the argument) would be inordinately welcome. In sending you these notes, I have fulfilled one-half of my promise to you; fulfillment of the other half, however, will have to wait a while. I mean by this, the statement of my own thesis, the considerations underlying my study of Mannheim. Within the next few months, I hope to prepare a careful statement of that sort -- and at that time I shall submit it to you, hoping that the matter will interest you enough to elicit your criticism.

Speaking of matters calculated to stimulate criticism reminds me that I did not clearly understand your response to my suggestion that I might send you a copy of a three-part essay (perhaps you will consider it an "eight-legged" one) dealing with your own work, and written by my acquaintance, Morris Watnick, presently Professor of Politics at Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts. Mr. Watnick, you will find, is not a Marxist and studies your work from a critical standpoint; but I assure you that he is both a completely honest and erudite scholar, and that his criticisms are not dictated by any consideration other than his own search for truth. Please let me know if you would like to see these materials.

My conversations with Mr. Zoltan Horvath -- for which I am particularly indebted to your wife -- proved very enlightening and pleasant. In all, I cannot recall two days more filled with intellectual stimulation and human warmth.

I hope that your work progresses well, and that you enjoy your forthcoming holidays. Incidentally, I have mailed the Mills book, and hope that it reaches you soon. My wife and I shall remain here in Königstein, West Germany, until August 14th. After that, mail should be addressed to: Professor David Kettler, Department of Political Science, 216 North Oval Drive, The Ohio State University, Columbus 10, Ohio, USA. I do hope that you will find the time to remain in contact.

Very truly yours,

*David Kettler*  
David Kettler.

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MEMORANDUM ON CONVERSATION WITH  
PROFESSOR AND MRS. GEORG LUKACS.

1962 VII. 23

Budapest. July 17, 1962.

David Kettler

After a preliminary attempt on my part to sketch the general characteristics of my present research, the discussion turned to its major theme: the range and scope of Professor Lukacs' present work on ethics. (Questions relating primarily to the aesthetics were only mentioned in passing; a distinct, historical topic was touched on at the very conclusion of the conversation, as will be noted; recent or current political issues were not under discussion.)

Professor Lukacs' basic demand is that Marxism be considered as method, and not as dogma, and that accordingly the contemporary situation in society desperately requires a new analysis, applying Marxist method, and not be discussed in terms of the old categories. In 1916, L. pointed out, Lenin considered it necessary to prepare an interpretation of the then-prevailing situation which departed considerably (in content, if not in mode of analysis) from that which Engels had developed only 22 years before, in 1894; now, according to L., no similarly creative application of Marxist method has been undertaken since Lenin's work -- for 47 years!

How does this need to develop a new analysis of contemporary society relate to problems of ethics? In that "ethics" must be understood as a pattern of criteria suitable for guiding men towards a truly human solution of the problems which are actually set for them by the concrete society in which they live. This means that "ethics" cannot consist of a set of universal principles, valid at all times and places; but rather of principles suited to truly human conduct in some historically defined time and place. According to L., this characteristic of ethics is already described in Aristotle's works; and Aristotle can -- it turns out -- provide other valuable guide lines to a contemporary philosopher concerned with ethics.

This applicability derives from certain crucial aspects of the new society which L. believes to be emerging in our time. Just as Aristotle could culminate his discussion of ethics with a discussion of the proper utilization of leisure, the realm in which men are most thoroughly free to be fully human, so the contemporary ethical philosopher -- L. believes -- must focus his attention on the problem of the human ~~XXXX~~ use of leisure time. This parallel between Aristotle's problem and the contemporary one must not be permitted to obscure numerous crucial distinctions, of course. The first of these is that Aristotle concerned himself with the leisure of a small privileged class whose position rested on the exploitation of slave labor, but that the present discussion applies to the emerging society everywhere in the world where work will be reduced to its place as a "first necessity" in the life of every man without devouring his time and his manness. This new period is being ushered in by the practical men of action, who do not as a rule understand (or even concern themselves with) the significance of what they do. The task of the philosopher is simply, first, to attempt to discern the meaningful pattern, and, second, to provide some guide lines which can at least initially shape the practice when the development has gone so far that the demands of the new situation are actually felt. L. raised the possible objection that a catastrophic war might disrupt the development; but dismissed the objection, contending that -- even if the political leaders do not yet see it altogether clearly -- war has in fact been made altogether impossible by the developments of technology. We are living, in short, at a time when the ground is being cleared and the basis being erected for an altogether new era. That our thinking should limp behind the developments, cannot be surprising; in a sense, we find ourselves in a position analogous to any philosophically-minded who might have been present in the ranks of the Vandals in Rome.

And the distinction between our tasks, as L. sees them, and those of



Aristotle derives not only from the crucial difference between his situation and ours, but also from the vitally important differences between ~~DK~~ his philosophical standpoint and our own. In the course of a brief conversation, L. pointed out, he could not develop this matter to any length. What he did want to point out, however, is that Aristotle's metaphysics -- with their teleological natures, etc. -- have been displaced by a "historical ontology", first suggested by Hegel and then developed by Marx. The new ethics, then, has nothing "unwordly" or "otherworldly" about it; it deals with the world of human practice on the ground of practicing humanity. It can never move far from the concrete analysis of man's ~~SIXXXXXXXXXX~~ condition in a given ~~KXXXXX~~ historical situation.

In this connection, then, Lukacs finds highly interesting -- among recent American work -- the studies of C. Wright Mills (specifically White Collar and Power Elite -- L. not having read Sociological Imagination or Marxism yet), as well as William Whyte's The Organization Man, which he was just reading & admiringly, while noting that the analysis fails to probe sufficiently deeply.

Ultimately, then, the ethical problem becomes -- most clearly in the era where the struggle for necessities has been won -- that of giving a genuine meaning to life. Sharing with Epicurus and Lucretius the view that "where life is, death is not; where death is, life is not," L. argues that there can be no such thing as a meaningful death, as such. What is usually discussed under that topic should really be seen as the problem of meaningful life. And in this connection, it is necessary to give men a genuine sense of purpose in their work and to enable them to guide purposefully the ever-increasing time-span during which they are liberated from work. Ethical speculations and teachings -- and the pedagogical dimension is very important here -- must operate within this sphere, in L.'s view. The major opponents to such an ethical view, L. sees in those thinkers (and he mentioned specifically American social scientists) who see man as an object to be manipulated, and who value the new leisure as a new opportunity to subject men to manipulation.

There was no time to pursue the many questions raised by this line of analysis: the most persistent problem raised by DK being that of distinguishing clearly between the approach being sketched by L. and much that has been common property of moral philosophers avowing many different ~~XXXXXXXX~~ philosophical starting points and political conclusions -- the problem, in other words, of ~~XX~~ identifying the distinctly Marxist components of this method. Perhaps a related issue was that of developing a philosophical definition of and a philosophical justification for that concept of the "human" which appears to provide the direction for the "historical ontology." But this phase of the discussion had to be simply broken off. All three (and it should be noted that Mme. L. played an active part throughout in advancing the argument) agreed that the discussion is one which could reach no end, even if there were two weeks rather than a few hours available. L. placed particular emphasis on the impossibility of providing a final answer to questions (jokingly accusing DK of wanting L. to provide him with solutions for all problems), and on the extent to which the work needing to be done at present must assist in the clearing away of existing sources of confusion and on its preparatory character (derived ~~perhaps~~ from the transitional character of our time).

Some short time was then devoted to questions generated by DK's interest in certain historical questions, particularly questions about the intellectual life in Budapest at the end of the first World War and during the



revolutions of that time. ~~XXXX~~ Of particular importance to DK were matters relating to Karl Mannheim. L. pointed out that Mannheim was a member of a younger generation, whose relationship to L. was primarily that of a student to a teacher. Yet they were together in the group which, in 1918, joined together to form the Freie Schule für Geisteswissenschaft. Among members of the group were Fogorasi, Revai, and others -- almost all of whom became active Communists and participants in the Bela Kun Soviet ~~XXXX~~ regime. This school arose out of the Jaszi-led "Sozialwissenschaftliche Gesellschaft" and distinguished itself from the main body, according to L., through its hostility to positivism. At this point in the discussion, both Professor and Mme. Lukacs called to mind the fact that this development is discussed at some length in the recent work of their friend, Zoltan Horvath, and arranged for me to meet with him in order to pursue further historical questions. ~~XXXX~~ In reply to a question about Mannheim's political activities during the exciting revolutionary time, L. noted that Mannheim -- unlike the others in the group -- showed no active involvement in politics. The explanation for this, L. suggested, lies probably in the realm of the purely accidental: it is true that M. was afflicted with a sickly heart, but Revai was equally sick and yet played a vigorous political role til his death in 1959. L. did not recall more than a casual acquaintance with M. during the time when both were in Germany -- L. as politically active controversialist and theoretician, and M. as ~~X~~ entrant on the normal German academic Laufbahn.

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 Lukács Arch.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
216 NORTH OVAL DRIVE  
COLUMBUS 10, OHIO

October 1, 1962

Dear Dr. Lukács,

Thank you for your friendly and helpful letter of the 4th August. I apologize for the fact that this reply was so long delayed; but I am sure that you can imagine how complicated a matter it is to return after a year's absence. In addition to the purely physical arrangements that have to be made and the readjustment of returning to work with students, there is the jolt of returning from the social role of spectator (which one invariably assumes when visiting a foreign country -- isn't that one of the forbidden charms, after all?) to that of participant sharing in responsibility -- if not in control -- for happenings. And so I have been occupied with the reestablishment of political contacts here, and matters of that sort.

But I must not presume on our short acquaintance to intrude these personal matters. You note in your letter that it would be premature for you to comment with any precision on my attempt to recall the tenor of our conversation. I certainly recognize this and, in my own mind, consider that memorandum as nothing more than the vaguest sketch, serving to remind me of the things which appeared to be on your mind. Perhaps I may draw from your reply the conclusion that I have not grossly misrepresented your views. I am particularly grateful for your clarification and correction of items appearing in the memorandum of my conversation with Zoltán Horváth. Yet before speaking more of this, I do want to convey to him through you my distress at his illness, my relief at the progress he appears to be making, and my best wishes for a speedy and complete recovery. I shall also address a note to him, but I fear that it will not reach him until his return from the sanatorium. It is difficult to express, without becoming sentimental, the profound impression which my conversations in Budapest -- both those with you and your wife and those with Horváth -- have made on me. In any case, I should be grateful if you would convey my respects.

With regard to the substance of the remarks, let me say that those which interest me most deeply are those relating to the "Freie Schule für Geisteswissenschaften." As you may recall, I explained to you that my study of Mannheim is intended to serve, above all, as a type-study of a certain kind of middle-class intellectual: Mannheim's intellectual career appears to me paradigmatic of a generation, and an understanding of this generation can, I believe, go far towards making those of my generation

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more critically self-conscious. In this context, then, it is particularly fascinating to gain as much understanding as possible of the behavior of these intellectuals in a situation of acute political crisis -- and to understand the difference between those who sought to break out of the limitations of that role and those who could and would not do so. Naturally it is extremely difficult to secure such information after so long a time; but I do think that it is essential to make the attempt. If I could know a good deal about the inner life of the "Freie Schule..." I could know an awful lot about the differentiating principles which come into play -- to what extent psychological and idiosyncratic, to what extent expressions of more fundamental social tendencies. For this reason, Horváth's comments about Mannheim's pamphlet, Lélek es Kultura, excited me so much, and it would be so important to find out all I could about the circumstances of that work and the reception accorded it (if it was noticed at all) within the group and out. Incidentally, I have not been able to secure a copy of the work as yet; it seems to be altogether unknown and unavailable here. Luckily I did meet in Washington Dr. J. Szigeti while he was attending the International Sociological Congress, and he did say that he would try to send me a photostatic copy of the document, which he believed he had in his possession. He also said that the only other copy extant in Budapest belonged to that very Louis Fülep whose name you mention in your letter. I do intend to address myself to him in any case, and I shall make free to use your name as an introduction, if I may, because I seem to recall that both you and your wife (as well as Mr. Horváth) suggested that I might try to contact him if I had the time. All these matters cannot possibly interest you very much, and I apologize for taking your time. I guess that my broad objective is to solicit whatever information and help you might be inclined to give to the general project sketched out in our talk and above.

I am glad that the Mills book reached you in good condition. I shall have my bookstore send you a copy of his other recent work, on the Sociological Imagination. Please feel free to ask my help in securing anything else you might need. If the number of items becomes so large that the financial aspect assumes some weight, then I am sure that we can work out some reciprocal arrangement, whereby you have sent to me some German or English works relevant to my interests and available there.

Once again, then, accept my thanks for your cooperation, and my friendly greetings to both you and to your wife. Many of us are eagerly awaiting the appearance of your recent work, and I am particularly anxious to see your ethical speculations. I hope that we shall remain in touch.

MTA FIL. INT.  
Kubacki, Anshel

Cordially yours,  
*David Kettler*  
David Kettler



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
216 NORTH OVAL DRIVE  
COLUMBUS 10, OHIO

January 16, 1963

Professor Georg Lukács  
Budapest V  
Belgrád Rkp. 2 v.cm. 5  
Hungary

Dear Professor Lukacs:

I trust that this letter finds both you and your wife in good health, and that your important work is progressing well. Like many of my colleagues, I am eagerly awaiting the opportunity to read the results of your current investigations.

My own study of the dilemmas of Western intellectuals, as exemplified particularly by Karl Mannheim, is making some headway; although it continues to be difficult to combine productive research with the heavy demands made upon my time by the responsibilities of university teaching. This summer, however, I expect to be able to devote myself to work. In this connection, I plan a return to Europe during the months of July and August. The bulk of the time shall be spent in England, where there are materials I wish to consult. But I do hope to pay another visit to Budapest either during the last week of June or the first week of July. It is my sincere wish that I might, at that time, have the privilege of another conversation with you. Could you, some time at your convenience, notify me whether such an arrangement would be agreeable to you?

I hope also to meet Mr. Fülep in the course of my stay, and to renew my acquaintance with Mr. Horvath. Since I have had no word from the latter since a friendly note he sent just before his departure for the sanitorium, I am somewhat concerned about the state of his health; but I earnestly hope that his convalescence has proceeded satisfactorily.

Please accept friendly wishes to yourself and your wife for a happy and fruitful year.

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Lukács Ar.

Cordially yours,

David Kettler

David Kettler, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor

DK:ec



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
216 NORTH OVAL DRIVE  
COLUMBUS 10, OHIO

May 15, 1963

Dear Professor Lukács,

I hesitate to intrude upon you at this time, but I should like to express my deepest condolences upon the death of your wife, news of which has just reached me through the courtesy of Mr. Horváth. I cannot recall a single person who has made such a profound impact on me on the basis of a brief encounter, a person who expressed such a deep and warm sense of humanity. I shall not easily forget how she welcomed me, the alien stranger, into your home and how she put her vitality to the task of assisting me. The news saddened me greatly; please accept this expression of my regrets.

My wife and I shall arrive in Budapest on the afternoon of June 30th and shall remain until the morning of July 5th. I shall telephone you some time after my arrival in the hope that I may have the honor of calling on you in the course of my visit.

Cordially yours,

*David Kettler*  
David Kettler.

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Lukács Arch