

II Januar 1950

Lieber Genosse Lukacs,

Ihr Brief war mir sehr willkommen, da ich Ihre Schriften schon so lange kenne und von ihnen tiefe und mannigfaltige Anregung zur Mitarbeit gewonnen habe. Den Vorschlag von Abramsky, Ihr Buch zu übersetzen, habe ich gern unterstützt, und freue mich dass Sie mein kleines Vorwort richtig finden, besonders dass Sie es für gut halten, dass ich Ihre alten Anschauungen erwähnte. Ich tat es mit Absicht, denn es ist glaube ich wichtig, zu zeigen, dass man nicht Marzist geboren wird, sondern sich (oft, jedenfalls) zum Marxismus durchkämpfen muss. In England heute ist es notwendig zu zeigen, nicht nur dass unsere Theorie und Praxis die einzige fruchtbare ist, sondern auch wie und warum man sich aus dem herrschenden Subjektivismus der Intelligenz arbeiten kann und muss.

An den Herausgeber Ihres Buches schrieb ich mit der Bitte, die kleine Aenderung am Vorwort zu machen; aber es ist glaube ich leider zu spät dazu, da das Buch bald erscheint. Es tut mir leid dass ich mich geirrt habe.

Die anderen Nummern, des Modern Quarterly, worin ich und andere auf Ihre Arbeiten gewiesen haben, sollen zu Ihnen kommen, wenn die Nummern noch da sind. Ich habe Dr John Lewis gebeten, sie Ihnen zu schicken. Inzwischen schicke ich Ihnen einige von meinen kleineren Arbeiten, die Sie vielleicht interessieren werden. Die Broschüre über Marx ist die Zweite, leider ist die erste aus dem Buchhandel verschwunden, und ich besitze nur eine Copie. Der Aufsatz über die schottischen Geschichtsschreiber enthält etwas über Ferguson, den Sie im Buch Essays über Realismus erwähnen. Ich weiss nicht, ob es richtig ist, dass Ferguson "denunziert" die Arbeitsteilung (Seite 8-9 Ihres Buchs). Bei ihm, wie bei Adam Smith und Millar, findet man eine ehrliche Darstellung der Degradierung des Menschen durch die Arbeitsteilung, aber sie alle nehmen diesen Prozess als unumgänglich notwendigen Teil des Fortschritts; d.h. sie stehen diesem Prozess nicht pessimistisch gegenüber.

Diese letzten Bücher von Ihnen finde ich wieder höchst anregend, und möchte dass sie weiteren Kreisen hier bekannt wären. Ich musste lachen, wie Sie im Briefwechsel mit Anna Seghers, Seite 212, gegen ihre "literaturgeschichtlichen Anekdoten" protestieren mussten. Ich arbeite jetzt an einem grösseren Buch über den Sturm und Drang, und da ist es schon eine Arbeit, sich durch die literaturgeschichtlichen Wolken zu arbeiten! "Nicht hier ist der Ort, darüber zu sprechen". Also, Mit herzlichen Grüßen,

Ihr

Ray Pascal

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Lieber Georg Lukács,

Mit einer Bitte belästigen könnten Sie mich nicht; ich habe mich sehr gefreut, von Ihnen zu hören, und teile Ihnen gern mit, was ich von der Merlin Press weiss.

Ich musste an den Verlag schreiben, da er klein und erst vielleicht ~~drei~~ Jahre alt ist. Der Verleger, entdeckte ich erst ~~aus~~ seinem Brief, ist mir bekannt. Er hat bisher ungefähr II Bücher ~~xxx~~ gedruckt, plant dann vielleicht vier Bücher für das kommende Jahr. Alles steht auf einem guten Niveau - Geschichte, Lebensberichte und Biographie vorwiegend. Dabei auch Uebersetzungen - Stendhal (Brulard), Gogol, Dostoeievský, auch eine Sammlung von Aufsätzen aus dem heutigen Polen, über Kunst und Gesellschaft. Der Verlag scheint auf ein gebildetes Publikum zu zielen; die politische Einstellung ist nicht stark geprägt, ist wohl fortschrittlich und offen. Ich glaube, er würde für Sie einwandfrei sein, so weit ich Ihre Lage beurteilen kann.

Durch gemeinsame Bekannte höre ich immer wieder etwas über Sie und Ihre ~~jetzige~~ jetzige Arbeit. Wie gern hätte ich die Gelegenheit, mit Ihnen über manches zu sprechen, nicht zuletzt weil Sie ohne Zweifel vieles an meinen Arbeiten wie auch an meiner Einstellung auszusetzen hätten. Aber gerade das beschäftigt mich am meisten, dass vieles offen liegt, Prinzipielles wie auch ~~xxxx~~ Anderes. In Briefen lassen sich diese Fragen nicht diskutieren. Sie sollen aber wissen, dass alles, was Sie veröffentlichen, zu lebhafter Diskussion führt, und dass viele Menschen in enger Berührung zu Ihnen stehen.

Von mir benachrichtige ich nur, dass ich in der nächsten Zeit ein Buch über die abendländische Selbstbiographie abschliesse; wenn es gedruckt wird, werde ich ein Exemplar schicken.

Mit herzlichen Grüßen,

Roy Pascal

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FOREWORD

GEORG LUKACS

This is, I believe, the first book of Georg Lukacs, the Hungarian Marxist, to be translated into English. Some of his studies have appeared in International Literature, and I have drawn attention to his work in three articles in the Modern Quarterly (for 1946, 1948 and 1949). It is much to be welcomed that we now have a volume of collected essays which allows closer acquaintance with the man whom the Times has called the Gamaliel of Central European communism, and whom Thomas Mann, more sincerely, described as "the most important literary critic of to-day".

Lukacs, born in Budapest in 1885, was educated in and into the new German pan-tragic irrationalism of the first decade of this century, and his earliest works, The Soul and its Forms, and The Theory of the Novel, are part of what he calls the ideology of the age of imperialism. He shows in them a mind of great range, supple and subtle, but dissolving real men and real history into spiritual abstractions. In The Theory of the Novel, for instance, he defines the modern novel as the search for the expression of the irrational, the soul, in and through an alien and hostile reality; the principle of its form is, in his view at that time, derived from the consciousness that "inwardness" has its own, independent value.

The First World War, the submergence of spiritual values in the struggles of predatory imperialism, taught Lukacs that the way to true humanism lay in and through the struggle for the

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 classless society. He joined the Hungarian Communist Party in 1918 and was a member of Bela Kun's revolutionary government. Reaction forced him into exile, which he spent mainly in Berlin until the advent of Hitler to power. He spent the next twelve years in Moscow, working in the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Science, returning to Hungary on its liberation by the Red Army. He is at present Professor of Aesthetics at the University of Budapest. His social and political experience taught him that the subjectivism and irrationalism of the intellectual bourgeoisie, to which he had belonged, are hallucinations which obscure reality and the insistent demands of true humanism. He discovered that his own early work hid the true sources and character of literature, reflecting only the situation of a privileged ideological class; and that, in interpreting literature and thought in terms of irrational forces, in treating the phases of spiritual experience as absolutes, he was not only distorting reality and pandering to the interests of the dominant class, but also preventing himself from formulating a method of overcoming the social and spiritual tensions of which he was aware. Since 1922, when his book "History and Class-Consciousness" appeared, his critical work has been directed towards a double objective: to analyse the real constituents of the ideological world, that is, to show the process of literary and ideological production as part of the general social process; and thereby to point out the practical task of our own time, the rejection of an oppressive society and culture grown sterile, and the building of a class-less society and a new humanity in which the tensions between man and nature,

nature/

art and science, subjective "freedom" and social necessity, theory and practice become fruitful relations, stimulating men to productive communal labour and in which art and poetry focus and intensify men's powers and joy.

*The change in method and purpose is startlingly clear if one compares Lukacs' analysis of Balzac, a Tolstoy, in The Theory of the Novel - a work he has himself condemned as "reactionary and false" - and the present volume. The complexity of Balzac's imaginative world appears, in the earlier volume, as a symbol of "chaotic daemonic irrationality"; in the present essays it appears as the expression of the real social process of his times, the reality which gave shape and significance to Balzac's ideas. In the earlier book he defined the unity of Balzac's work abstractly, as arising from "the obscure surmise of the coherence of life"; in this volume he discovers its real and specific coherence, the coherence of a social situation and process, the impact of capitalism upon the activities, relations, ideas, beliefs and feelings of men. His Marxism has enabled Lukacs to come to true literary criticism, that is, the analysis of literary forms and their development in terms of the reality and content of particular times, of the change in society and the subjective experience of the writer.

[~~Three important~~ books of Lukacs have recently been published in German, in which his method and insight may be studied - German Literature in the Age of Imperialism, 1946, Goethe and his Time 1947, and The Young Hegel, 1948.] The present volume of studies shows the same blending of literary criticism, philosophical

philosophical/

and psychological analysis, and sociological grasp. Its unity is characteristic, ~~not~~ a unity given by Marxist method; they are studies in the theory of the novel as, in its highest artistic manifestations, it sums up the crisis of the last hundred years, the violent distortion of human life through the impact of capitalism. In them Lukacs seeks, not only to lay bare the social tensions which gave rise to the work of Balzac, Stendhal, and the great Russian critics and novelists, not only to show the unity of this great humanistic tradition of protest against capitalism, but also to formulate, on the basis of their relationship to reality, principles of objective aesthetic judgment. The work of art is not considered as mere historical evidence, but its peculiar character and function in the dialectics of life are sought.

The commonest charge against Marxism is that it degrades the life of the spirit. These studies show how unfounded is this charge. Spiritual values and aspiration, art and literature are in fact rescued from the unreal, abstract, ineffectual world to which idealists would ban them, and appear here in their full significance as functions of the total man in his total relations with living reality, with society. Marxist criticism shows how great literature crystallises attitudes, intensifies our consciousness of the world in which we live, and rallies us to participate more fully in this world. Just as it will tolerate no iron curtain between spirit and matter, between individual and society, so it sees the past living in the present, and formulates the principles of a new literature which, free of the specific conditions of the past, will reflect and fructify new forms of living in the class-less society

society/

now being built.) This is the significance of Caudwell's work in England; and no greater tribute to the reality and might of man's cultural expressions could be paid than the recent discussions in the Soviet Union on the responsibilities of Soviet writers and musicians, to their society.

Lukacs rightly emphasises his pre-occupation, in this volume, with aesthetic problems. Marxism ~~xxx~~ does not dissolve aesthetics into sociology, but gives a key to the understanding of aesthetic problems which have been the despair of idealists. We find here, not a completed system, but a most stimulating approach to such problems as the relation of form and content, the nature of realism and its relationship to naturalism and romanticism, the relationship of the particular and the type, of the conscious intentions of the ^{writer} creative and his actual achievement; the problem of objective aesthetic judgments. Here too is a new conception of the critic. The Marxist critic is not a mere teacher, like a Boileau or Lessing; he is not a mere subjective interpreter, as in the last hundred years. He is a man concerned with the artist in working out the destiny of man, the interpreter of the total insight and implications of the artist's work.

Lukacs' criticism of the work of Thomas Mann, the greatest living German novelist, gives an excellent example of the function of the Marxist critic - we do not go too far in asserting that Lukacs' warm appreciation and sharp criticism of Mann's achievement has contributed largely to the latter's development from the troubled aestheticism of his early years, as in Death in Venice,

to the profound exposition of the corruption of modern bourgeois

bourgeois/

culture in Dr Faustus. This is what Mann writes on receiving an article by Lukacs on his work, entitled In Search of the Bourgeois (1945). "This communist, who is so concerned for the "inheritance of bourgeois culture"... had already made shrewd and honouring references to me in his series of essays on German literature in the age of imperialism; he had shown the capacity, indispensable to a critic, of distinguishing between opinion and being (or activity, the result of being), and of accepting only the latter as true coin. My own non-political opinions at the age of forty do not prevent him from associating me most decidedly with my (politically minded) brother and from saying: 'One can consider Heinrich Mann's The Subject of the King and Thomas Mann's Death in Venice as great precursors of that tendency which ~~signals~~ signalled the danger of a barbarous underworld within modern German civilisation, as its inevitable complementary product'. In this sentence he even indicates the connexions between the Venice story and Faustus. And the remark is so good because the concept of the "signal" is of first importance in all literature and its interpretation. The poet (and the philosopher too) as a recording instrument, a seismograph, a sensory organ, without clear knowledge of this his organic function, and therefore ~~perfectly~~ perfectly capable of making false judgments- it seems to me the only correct perspective. And so this essay, In Search of the Bourgeois, was a psychologico-sociological exposition of my being and work such as I had never experienced in so grand a style, and therefore made me feel seriously grateful- and not least because the investigator did not see my work merely 'historically).

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but brought it into relation with the German future. "(Entstehung
des Faustus, 1949, 126-7.)

These words of the great novelist are a tribute not only to Lukacs, but to the spirit of Marxist criticism which, in analysing the relationships between living social forces and ideological productions seeks not only to contribute to the understanding of the past, but to shape a ~~firm~~ future worthy of human beings.

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