

May 17, 1963.

Dear Professor Lukacs,

you can imagine that I was deeply troubled by your letter. Let me say first of all that while the statement that the article in question appeared 'unter meiner Redaktion' is partly true, the statement that it appeared 'mit meiner Billigung' is very far from true. The facts of the matter are these: three months before I joined the staff of Encounter the editors commissioned an article from Mr George Lichtheim to be based on the Historical Novel and The Meaning of Contemporary Realism. The article that he actually wrote had very little to do with either of these books, but was an all-out polemic against your views and political-literary career. That I wholly disagree with what Mr Lichtheim says hardly needs to be enlarged upon. It was because I admired both you and your writings that I was delighted to have the opportunity of translating the book. I think this is well known to you.

You will see from this that I had no hand in commissioning the article from Mr Lichtheim at all. It was therefore a great embarrassment to me when the first appearance of my name as an associate editor of the paper coincided with a murderous attack on a book I had translated, and with which it was obvious that I was in considerable sympathy. However, the responsibility for this was that of a respected colleague, who had commissioned the article as an expression of Mr Lichtheim's view, and certainly not as the editorial view of the magazine. I did not feel able to interfere with its publication, partly because I did not wish to expose myself to a charge of interfering with another writer's opinions in my own interest, and partly because the contents of that number of the magazine had already been decided upon before my arrival.

However, much as I regret the tone and argument of Mr Lichtheim's essay, I do not think that it has by any means had the effect

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Mr Lichtheim intended. There is little doubt that it has worked out to your advantage. I think it is fair to say that the English tend to support the victim of an attack like this, particularly when it is so personal. Perhaps that is too lokalpatriotisch. But it is certainly what has happened. The reactions I have met in conversation was extremely hostile to Mr Lichtheim. The article was specifically attacked in The Spectator - Mr Martin Eve will be sending you the cutting. As soon as the editor of Encounter saw Mr Lichtheim's article, he asked Mr George Steiner (who will be visiting you in July), and will be able to confirm all I have said) to reply to Mr Lichtheim's allegations. I entirely endorse his views, and enclose the number of Encounter in which it appears. In the next issue, I have asked various people to comment on both Lichtheim and Steiner, and I have in hand letters from Dr. Alastair MacIntyre and Professor Roy Pascal and others, vigorously supporting you against Lichtheim's charges. I had thought of replying myself - and may still do so - but I would much rather that others should defend your cause than somebody who is so obviously parti pris. However, if there is such doubt about my motives in the matter of Mr Lichtheim's article - and your letter suggests that there is - then it would perhaps be as well for me to set this down in writing.

I hope this will make plain to you where I stand, and clear my name of the imputations you suggest. I repeat, the whole business of the Lichtheim article can only work out to your advantage in the long run. I am sorry indeed that it had to appear in Encounter; but that was, in the circumstances, an unavoidable evil. (As far as the personal polemic against you is concerned, Mr Lichtheim bases himself entirely on the articles of Mr Morris Watnik in Survey - which you doubtless know.) I trust that you will accept my explanation, and that you will not consider our personal relations at an end. As you know, Mrs Hay has been in this country and Mr Dery will be here early in June. I shall ask both of them to intercede for me.

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Yours sincerely

John Mander



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P.S.: There have been difficulties about my expedition to Hungary, both about the visa and about the date to be set for it. It seemed to me that I was unlikely to be able to come before the autumn, and since I knew Mr George Steiner was to visit you in July, the BBC had suggested that he might be willing to do the interview, At the time of writing, I am not quite sure whether he will be able to do this or not. If not, I hope to be able to do it myself - if you are still willing - at a later date.