

Frankfurt 19 Nov. 77 Rick

Dear Rick,

Once again, apologies for delay of this letter. That my previous letter, via Mr. R. was not delivered was, I think, my own fault; since then I've tried to make alternate arrangements - I'm still hoping to get letters and material to you via the diplomatic bag (or a different route into it, if that is what Mr. R. is about) - but haven't yet heard from Bonn about this. Accompanying this letter will be another one, to Mr. R., in case the other route doesn't materialise - to ask whether he is able to convey tapes etc. to you: I've been accumulating, over the months, quite a hefty pile of material for you, and to it I'll add copies of the stuff that went astray with my first consignment: I'm afraid it considerably exceeds the 100 Gm. limit you mentioned. If neither route works out I'll send it to Mnica, if that is not too inconvenient? Not all the material is directly related to sociology or philosophy: I've added the odd Feuilleton, a bibliography on SA, a Konkret issue on Walraff, and a few news items. (I did wonder about the wisdom of sending this. Since those paranoid gents are capable of misconstruing most things, its inconvenience to you might outweigh its casual interest value, it seemed to me. Perhaps you could let me know whether to continue sending such miscellanea?)

Thank you for your paper. I've read about a third of it and look forward to getting down to a serious study of it quite soon. (You will know of course that Sartre, for me, is still mostly terra incognita: the only basis on which I could possibly respond would have to be what I've learnt from Habermas. If you would like an exchange at that level, then yes, I would enjoy that very much.) I've been working hard, for the last few months now, on a paper I'm to deliver in January, at a research colloquium here, under Oevermann. (if you have been reading Logic of the social sciences, of Habermas, then you may have encountered Oevermann's name in the footnotes: he was one of Habermas' assistants in the late sixties). It seemed to me high time that I spelt out and discussed the general framework of problems, in sociology, as I saw them, within which I would like to situate my study of Habermas. I wanted to clarify, not least to myself, ~~xxxx~~ why it was that I've found his work so thoroughly stimulating, as well as try to relate it to my own point of departure, in Darwinism and biology. That there is such a connection to be traced between materialism and idealism, and that it may be possible to arrive at historical materialism without retracing the classical route through German idealism, this I still find one of the most exciting promises of the Frankfurt school. (and not only, I'd like to think, because that happens to coincide with the way things have happened in my own education: if it is technology which defines the contemporary Zeitgeist, then Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind would have to be rewritten perhaps, with the average world view of a technician - or a dentist, I suppose - as its point of departure?) At any rate, I'm orienting my own work to what I understand as Habermas' program, namely to start in the objectivating sciences and then see how far it is possible to force addicts of the latter into a series of reflections about their methodological assumptions. I'm uncomfortably aware though that I'm doing it this way because I'm still, in spite of everything, much more comfortable in the natural sciences, so perhaps I have't done much more than retrace my own steps, these last few years. If I understand the general theme of your essay to be the question of the transition from an idealist dialectic to a materialist one, and if I have't deceived myself too much about my own intentions, then perhaps you will allow me to say that I see a degree of symmetry between our two enterprises, though that is no more than a speculation.

(Lisa is sleeping, so now no more typewriter) I've

managed to get together an informal group to study Habermas' texts: we've been meeting regularly since July. We've worked through the following texts:

Erkenntnis und Interesse "Wahrheitstheorien" & "Was heißt Universalpragmatik?", & are about to start on Zur Rekonstruktion des Historischen Materialismus.

The two papers I've copied, & will send on to you with the other material. They seem to document a quite considerable change in Habermas' position since the writing of Knowledge & Human Interests, & one of the tasks we've set ourselves is to try to come to grips with this change of focus. I certainly see my own paper in that light. (It's nowhere near completion, but will send it on to you when it is).

Kindest regards, also to Forzià.

Fred.

Bockenheimer Landstr. 97

6 Frankfurt/M.

23/11/77

Sehr geehrte Herrn Reinhardt,

Ich bin südafrikanischer Student
hier an der Frankfurt Universität.

Ich habe von Dr. Turner (aus Durban,
32 Dalton Ave, Bellair) gehört daß Sie Briefen
an ihn übermitteln könnte.

Ich habe auch noch anderen für Dr. Turner
bestimmten Materialien, und möchte gerne
wissen ob Sie auch das noch akzeptieren
könnte: es sind Tonbänder und Photo-
kopien, in einem Päckchen von ungefähr
1 Kilo.

Ich würde sehr dankbar sein wenn
Sie auch das an ihn übermitteln könnte.

Hochachtungsvoll,

F. van Geler.

Telephon 752210