

28 January 1961

Professor Karl R. Popper

Dear Karl:

Marta and I feel very bad about your illness and hope that no traces of it will be left in June, when we shall pay you a visit.

On the other hand, I am very glad that you went over archaic but understandable scruples and have decided to let me go ahead with the planned Festschrift. It is only just that such a thing be done, and I feel honored by your confidence, although I realize that - as you say - quite a few people will not like me any better for it. I only hope that I will be able to solve most of the problems it will give rise to.

Let me make it clear from the start that I will make some demands on your time during the next few weeks. I will ask your advice and help in order to prevent making blunders. Some tasks - especially the selection of persons to be invited to contribute to the volume - are very delicate, and I would hate to put you in a difficult position just because of a mistake or an oversight on my part. Such matters will have to be handled delicately and confidentially if grunts and gossips are to be avoided. Let us consequently agree to be even more frank than customarily, if that is possible.

Let us begin right away.

1. Title and contents. Please, read and revise the enclosed prospectus. I am sorry to threaten to add to your burden by asking you to write your Autobiography when you are not yet old. But I am sure readers will be curious about that (at least I am), and after all it is an occasion for discussing ideas, and for dealing with subjects (such as art and politics) about which you would not write regularly.

2. List of invited contributors. I enclose a tentative list. Please, (a) delete the names of foes and of people who you feel have neither an appreciation for your work nor the possibility of making an interesting contribution; (b) add the names (and if possible the addresses) of people who have shown regard for your work and/or are in a position to offer a valuable paper. You will notice (a) that the list should be supplemented with some scientists and historians of ideas; (b) that the list includes a couple of men from behind the so-called iron curtain, owing to my conviction that we must seek contact with them and stimulate them to discuss our ideas; (c) that the list is quite long - which should be favorable, since many of the candidates will already be "booked" for the present year.

3. Publisher. A University Press would give the book distinction but would almost certainly bury it. Some active commercial enterprise should be secured instead. I am thinking of Alfred Knopf and Prentice-Hall, both active and prestigious. But

I would like to know your view. In any case, I think the contact should be made after receiving some answers from the invited contributors.

Please, gather your patience and answer all my points; and, after going over them with your wife, add all your and her suggestions. I am sure that in a few weeks from now I will have ceased bothering you with these material details.

Let us discuss my paper on induction later on; there is not much left to argue over after your Stanford paper, which I read the other day, and with most of which I completely agree.

Marta sends you her best wishes for a prompt recovery. She is eager to see you and your wife.

Yours ever

Dear Mrs. Popper:

I did receive the offprints, not however the snapshot. I am very grateful for the offprints and ashamed to realize that I did not acknowledge receipt of them. Yesterday I sent you back "The trivialization of math. logic". You must have sent the snapshot to some other admirers.

Sincerely,