

August 9, 1967

Dear Eugene:

I decided to expand what I told you about trying to gather my writings in outside publication into a formal communication and will therefore send copies to Olga and Bessie.

You were surprised when you began to look at the birth of the state-capitalist tendency in 1941 that the first document I wrote, "Russia Is A State-Capitalist Society", (which happened to have the same title accidentally as that of JRJ whom at that time I barely knew and definitely did not know was writing such a document) was nowhere around and probably the only existing copy is in Shachtman's files or what was the "X". But at least then we had two excuses for not keeping copies: (1) I didn't keep any copies because I had very little regard for what I wrote, and (2) I always deferred then to "J" once we did get together.

But it is absolutely criminal that that condition still continues. It is true that at least those which I have written since 1955 are, in the main, in our publications, and that, off and on, (most off) Olga kept a good record but that became impossible when too much work piled up on one person, and I again deferred, this time to the organization, rather than to my own library, with the result that we do not have many, many of the letters I have written to one or another "EB" member on theoretical, organizational, political topics, (2) we do not have the articles--at least not in one place and hardly know any one knows of all of them, -- I wrote for other publications--Africa Today, Presence Africaine, Arguments, Activist, Socialist Leader, letters in such journals as N.Y. REVIEW OF BOOKS, and I'm sure I have forgotten others, especially if it happened to have been published by ourselves, or a reprint, and that even includes those in Japanese. (3) My own files are in a disreputable condition -- as, first, Inez and much later Olga gave up on them, and before either of them, so did John who used to act as my librarian, in the early, early days. It is criminal, politically and philosophically speaking, and the most criminal part of it is the "consensus" that I do not "cooperate"; the duty of a Marxist-Humanist librarian with an appreciation of theory and responsibility to history is to use his ingenuity and not wait on my "cooperation."

This is why I decided to make this a formal letter from me as National Chairman to you as Youth on RSB. It is good, perhaps, (or it is a good rationalization) that now that I cannot find what I want on Africa, I have made this decision, but the proof, the only proof will be for you to execute it and not to ask me whether that is more important than 65 other assignments that you will be given. Just make your own decision that, no matter what, so much and so much time, weekly, is never to be diverted to any other purpose but to get the records straight and filing in my desk instead of piling that responsibility too on me, which is what has been done; I have even stopped asking, and getting mad doesn't help either.

So, beginning while I am away, gather 1st what has been collected & see where it stopped. 2ndly, find out what else I have written--Olga will know or it will have been announced to locals where things were published--and begin a supplementary on those I mentioned above in outside publications. 3rdly, come down to my desk and, no matter how disorganized you think those drawers are, take a look and decide for yourself what you think is their order. THIS CANNOT BE DONE AS A TECHNICAL JOB AND BECAUSE IT WAS DONE WITH THAT IN MIND IT WAS NEVER DONE. IT HAS TO BE DONE AS A MINE OF INFORMATION YOU WANT TO KNOW AND CREATE TIME TO KNOW IT IN. 4thly, by end of plenum or soon thereafter see that my bulletins are brought up to date in book form; John began that one & didn't complete. Which reminds me, 5thly my Pol.-Phil. Letters, now that they are so irregular, have likewise not been kept up to date. Then, by Oct., let us get together and have a full evening or full 2 days to discuss what you have done, and how to proceed from there.

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