

The CC decided on 1st February 1986 that the redraft of the article on Eurocentrism which had been planned to appear as the next issue of October, should not be published in the journal. Instead, it should be published under the title of "October Books", a label not specifically identified with the RCL.

The reason for this decision was primarily political. The article makes a critique of Marx and Engels mainly from the ideological point of view. In doing so it draws on, and implicitly accepts, the economic position of Samir Amin. That position has at its centre a controversial approach to the question of the creation of Surplus value. In his notion of "unequal exchange", Amin appears to deny the classical Marxist tenet that surplus value is created in the process of production, and not in the process of distribution, because commodities are sold at their value. The Eurocentrism article relies on this approach of Amin's, but, because it is primarily concerned with ideology rather than political economy, it does not openly confront the contradiction.

This difficulty is exacerbated by the length and complexity of the article. It is an elaborate work of scholarship, replete with references and footnotes. It is very difficult to understand. After much expenditure of effort and time, the editor managed to produce a summary of its main arguments. But he still cannot be sure that the summary is a fair and accurate one.

It was initially envisaged that the article would be published as one entire issue of the journal, together with an editorial. But on reflection the CC decided that, however much the editorial pointed potential disagreements with the article and that it was not RCL policy, outside readers would interpret it as RCL policy because of the emphasis given by devoting a whole issue to it. On that basis, the CC took its decision for separate publication, at the same time instructing the editor to request the author for a concise and readily comprehensible article summarising the contents in about 20 or 30 pages. This could then be published in the journal to stimulate debate.

There was also a secondary practical problem with the publication of the Eurocentrism article in the theoretical journal. The editor and the CC were never clearly informed what was intended for publication. After the first draft, which was circulated to Branches, the CC expected a revised version for publication which merely polished and improved on that draft. The revised version, however, was very different from the first draft. It moved into different areas, and, in particular, it relied heavily on the economic view referred to above. This revised draft was approved by the editor after a superficial assessment, before the CC had had a chance to consider it.

At the same time as the CC was considering the revised draft properly, they were informed that it was only Part 1, and that another part, presumably of the same length, was to be included in the journal. To date, neither the editor nor any CC member has seen this second part. Then, at the last CC meeting, it was indicated that the original draft was to be included in the publication, a decision which had not been mentioned to the editor or CC members before. Clearly no theoretical journal can be expected to accept material on such a basis.

The CC decision has to be seen in the context of a changing attitude towards theory and towards the study of Eurocentrism in particular. The CC document on liquidationism sets this out in the following terms: "Also in attempting to break new ground, as have some comrades in the work on Eurocentrism, we have to be very clear what we are taking and what we are rejecting/criticising from basic Marxism. It is wrong that the CC has made this study (Eurocentrism) the total of its theoretical work over the past period. That is not to say that the development of this work is not important but we have to be clear on what basis we do this."

The CC has not fully analysed the process of its change in attitude towards the study of Eurocentrism. It seems that the CC has tended to drift along with the view that this was a very important field of study (although not accepting that it

was the key link) on the basis that a number of comrades had done a lot of work on it and had a high opinion of its significance. The CC neglected its leading role in promoting study and developing theory. This was a result of our liberalism and part of the general tendency towards liquidationism which we are now struggling to combat. We still see the need to pursue the study and struggle in relation to the question of Eurocentrism, but this must be in the context of the overall leadership of the CC on theoretical work, based firmly in Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong thought.

It is regrettable that the next issue of the theoretical journal will be delayed as a result of this situation. Plans have been made for the following issue, but it is not possible to bring it forward. There are weaknesses in the editorial committee's grasp on the ordered production of the journal, and these must be resolved by honest self-criticism and hard work. ~~THEXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ But comrades should also be aware that a significant part of the problems with producing the journal has been the difficulty in getting comrades to contribute, or to contribute promptly. The editor therefore urges comrades to consider how to give more emphasis to contributing to the journal along the lines set out in the last editorial. It is also important that comrades make efforts to distribute October and to seek out readers' opinions on it.

March 31st, 1986.

To London Branch Committee.

Dear Comrades,

The CC has heard indirectly that the BC is opposed to the CC decision to print the article on Euro-centrism as a separate pamphlet and not as the second issue of October. We have also received two letters from comrades in London - one before and one after the recent CC.

At its recent meeting the CC re-considered its decision and decided not to reverse it. i.e. the article should be published as a separate pamphlet; and that a more condensed and clearer article had been commissioned for October. We considered the possibility of the first draft of the document being printed in October but were unable to decide on this as it was not clear whether this was in fact included in the article that was under discussion. The Editor of the TJ should be writing to spell out the reasons (probably in the IB) but I want to outline them briefly here.

The CC generally considers the work that has been done on Euro-centrism and the study of the political economy of imperialism as important. However, in its second draft, the article on Euro-centrism raises important questions about Marxism, relating these back to the work of Marx and Engels without clearly saying which is correct and what needs correcting. It says in general that we are not overthrowing Marxism but does not spell this out in detail in the arguments put forward in the article. For example, it rightly criticises the Europe centred view of history but does not spell out how the exploitation of the working class fits in with a non-Europe-centred view of the world. At a time when the League is in some disarray, we felt that to publish the article as a double issue of October would be to concentrate too much on the questions that are the source of a lot of debate rather than on other questions where we are more united.

This obviously relates to secondary questions to do with the length of the article and the various drafts that exist. A communist theoretical journal has to put arguments and theories in a form that is relatively easy to get to grips with. It is not easy to do this when we are dealing with complex questions particularly at an early stage of the work. However CC comrades felt that the original draft was clearer and one article written for CS was very clear as opposed to the current draft of the article. It also seems to be the case that neither the editor of the TJ nor the CC have actually seen the full text of the article under discussion. As far as we were aware there was a first draft (already circulated to branches) and a second draft (circulated to the CC) but we are now told by JG that there is in fact a third part which has not been seen and that it is proposed to include this in the TJ. I don't understand why this confusion has happened but it obviously is not correct for decisions to be taken about what does or does not go in the TJ on the basis of incomplete texts.

Comrades are right to be critical of the CC for its general stand on this question in the sense that the CC has definitely changed its position on these questions recently. Although the CC never accepted the formula put forward that the study of Eurocentrism was the key link in our theoretical work, it did not take a clear stand on this. In general it has made the study of Eurocentrism and Amin's work the main aspect of any theoretical work it has done. We have not given a good lead on theoretical work.

There are general questions involved in the issue concerning who we want to reach with the theoretical journal and where our main emphasis should be. It is important to work with progressive intellectuals who would be interested in the questions raised in the article and be able to cope with its length. These people may also have a common understanding of what the basic Marxist approach is and how we can hold on to that while questioning some aspects of Marxism. But this is not the case with working class people who would simply be confused by the article in its present form. That is not to say that they would not understand the arguments put forward in a clearer and briefer form. Also with people like these basic Marxist theory, e.g. on the state, on imperialism, on national liberation struggles etc. need spelling out and applying to present day conditions.

The issue also raises another question about our democratic centralism in the League. The CC replied to London's proposal that we adopt Eurocentrism as the key link in theoretical work and requested a meeting with the Branch Committee. We wrote letters that were never replied to and I came down to London for a meeting with the branch committee which turned out to be with RB. There have also been two meetings of primary leaders where these questions have not been raised. Comrades who felt most critical of the CC, we think, did not bother to attend either of these meetings. We have also not yet received any letter from the BC even on this question although one member has written as an individual.

There has been one branch report sent to the CC since Congress and not one Class Struggle report. Given that I understand that comrades in London are putting a lot of work into selling the paper and think there are some good things about CS, it considerably weakens our ability to produce the paper if the comments, criticisms, views etc. of comrades in London are now known.

We have heard (again ~~indirectly~~ indirectly) that in general the London BC is critical of the CC's leadership or rather lack of leadership. We would not ourselves claim that the CC has been strong or not make mistakes. But it is liberal and ultra-democratic for the London BC not to spell this out to us. On the particular issue of the theoretical journal it has meant that the differences have been there, not properly discussed and are now surfacing over the question of how it is published.

I also want to raise some separate questions in relation to CS and coverage of Wapping.

One of the lessons of the way we covered the miners' strike was that there was not enough direct reporting and direct contact with miners. This meant that a lot of the material was second hand and not very lively. It also meant that criticisms or analysis of opportunism within the NUM or Labour Party could only be very general and

abstract. We also thought that in a very concrete way, CS can be used as a collective organiser. For example, someone can visit a picket line or go on a demonstration, and make direct contact with people. They can ask for an interview or comments and show people CS so that they know what the material is going to be used for. When something is printed it can be taken to the person and discussed with them thus forming the basis for a longer term contact. Photographs are important too.

We did this in a limited way in the miners' strike but could have done more. It would be good if comrades in London could do this in relation to Wapping. It doesn't have to be done on a Saturday night when I understand the main demonstrations take place. Friends of mine from Leeds have been to the pickets at the gates at Wapping in the day time and got a good reception.

It is not important that the material comes in the form of a complete interview. Scattered comments or notes are useful and usually there are a lot of anecdotes that come up talking to people direct that never get reported in the press. It is important early on to state that people are collecting information, interviews etc for Class Struggle so that people know what the situation is.

CS also needs photos of Broadwater Farm - as you may have noticed. There are plenty of police photos but we think there's a problem of overkill with filling up the page with photos of riot police. I know it's difficult to get photos for obvious reasons of activists etc at the Farm but even some photos of the estate in general would be useful.

In solidarity,



The CC is planning to hold a weekend school in mid-May (probably 10/11 May) at which it is hoped some of the above questions can be discussed. The Saturday is planned to cover general party-building and in particular the two documents on 'Where We Stand' and liquidationism. The second day will be discussion of Eurocentrism introduced by RB.