

EUROCENTRISM AND REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS



**A Two Day Conference Organised by
the Political Economy Study Group and
the Revolutionary Communist League
(London Branch)**

Saturday, Dec. 12th-Sunday, Dec. 13th

10a.m. at

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,

London W.C.1.

Registration: £3.00 (£1.50)

From "Eurocentrism and the Communist Movement"

Because Eurocentrism is the predominant ideology of capitalist society it crops up also within the 'left' movement. It is not inevitable that the left will be sucked into this trap, but it will tend to be drawn into the dominant ideological system unless it *consistently* adopts historical materialism, adopts the standpoint of humanity as a whole and above all incorporates *centrally* into its ideology and politics not just the lessons of the practical revolutionary struggles of the oppressed nations, but also their theoretical achievements. The 'left' variant of Eurocentrism is essentially the same as the openly bourgeois forms, but it has certain specific features in terms of form. It is the main purpose of this paper to investigate 'left' Eurocentrism, and it may be useful here to give a brief definition. It does the following things:

1. It builds upon the bourgeois unilinear theory of 'social progress' (with Europe as the highest point, leading factor and universal point of reference of world history), extending this *beyond* the point of capitalism (where the bourgeoisie stops short), so that Europe also becomes the factor leading the world forward to *socialism*.
2. It uses a semblance of historical materialism to invent a historically progressive role for capitalism *world-wide*, during a period when capitalism was in reality only progressive in relation to the feudal system within the major European states.
3. It underplays the history of colonialism, the slave trade, etc. as a basis for the capitalist mode of production.
4. It schematises world history on the basis of the European experience and forces everything into this mould, as for example the expectation that all societies must have a succession of the same modes of production (slave, feudal) as in Europe or are 'backward' if they haven't.
5. It holds that advanced productive forces necessarily produce advanced struggles, looks down on the peasantry, conceives of revolution primarily as a sharing-out of the national cake between proletariat and bourgeoisie of particular industrialised countries and subordinates everything to this.
6. It elevates inter-imperialist contradictions above the fundamental contradiction between oppressor and oppressed nations and considers relations among the great powers to be the main events in world politics.
7. It fails to see the continuing character of super-exploitation and the unequal international division of labour as the fundamental basis for imperialism and seeks to explain the dynamics of crisis and restructuring in the contemporary world economy without giving pride of place to relations between the imperialist countries and the third world.
8. It fails to see how the main contradictions of the capitalist mode of production have been embodied in contradictions between oppressor and oppressed nations, and regards nationalism in the colonial countries as a backward, tiresome, 'drag-inducing' factor; a prejudice to be treated at best with condescension.
9. It generally regards the national liberation movements as subordinate to the supposed interests of the proletarian movement in the industrialised countries, and tells them what to do.