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An Open Letter to the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain and the Communist Workers' Movement from the Stockport Communist Group.

Dear Comrades,

You should by now be well advanced in the process of unifying your two organizations. We will not offer any pious or hypocritical 'congratulations.' If your unification takes place on the basis of the existing opportunist lines of your organizations, then the cause of the working class will have suffered a setback. Strengthening the forces of opportunism can in no way be considered a victory for this cause. We will offer congratulations to the extent that you succeed in overthrowing opportunism in your organizations and thereby further the interests of the international proletariat and the oppressed peoples and nations.

In a few months time you will have a Congress at which we understand you will adopt a new "programmatic document." It is imperative that at this Congress you overthrow the present opportunist line, especially the social-chauvinism, of your organizations, and adopt a platform of implacable hostility to British and all imperialism, of proletarian internationalism and of unconditional support for the anti-imperialist struggle of the oppressed peoples, nations and countries.

In this open letter we make severe criticisms of the social-chauvinist line of the RCLB and CWM. We make these criticisms, and in the form of an open letter, not because we are 'splitters,' but because we desire unity. It is only through struggle, struggle conducted in the bright light of the open day, that Marxism can triumph over revisionism. Our criticisms are made in the expectation that they will be seriously studied by all the members of the RCL and the CWM and that they will help your organizations to defeat the revisionist ideological and political line which is in command in them. Our criticism concentrates on the RCL. To the comrades of the CWM we say: if the cap fits (as it unfortunately does in most cases) wear it; if the cap doesn't fit, then ensure it doesn't start to fit.

We know that the members of the RCL and the CWM want socialist revolution in Britain. Despite the fact that the line and practice of your organizations is opportunist, flashes of revolutionary sentiments are sometimes still to be seen in them. The recent article in 'Class Struggle' (vo. 4, no. 9) entitled 'Imperialist Hands off Iran' was a strong anti-imperialist article, and, earlier, also in 'Class Struggle,' the RCL's 'Open Letter to John Pilger' on the struggle in Kampuchea was frankly inspiring. We give these instances not to flatter you, but as evidence of the fact that it is possible, given a fierce struggle, for Marxism to triumph over revisionism in your organizations. At present though revisionism has the upper hand in your ranks and in this open letter we shall show that the line and practice of your organizations is one that is diametrically opposed to your subjective wishes - that far from being organizations that fight British imperialism and its state, you in fact render it sterling help in its efforts to maintain its exploitation and oppression of the British working class and people and of many millions of other people around the world. The main political reason for this is your revisionist, social-chauvinist line that British imperialism should be supported in its inter-imperialist rivalry with the two superpowers, especially with the Soviet Union. Despite all the sophisms, humbug and casuistry - "dual nature," "uniting with the third world," "treating the Soviet Union as the primary target," socialist revolution being the "main task," etc., this is the crux and essence of your political line. You of course dress up your support for British imperialism in the harlot's clothes of a struggle for 'national independence.' But what you must grasp, is that in the era of imperialism British capitalism's national tasks are directed against the development of the productive forces and against the British proletariat and people, and that therefore defence of Britain's 'national interests' and socialist revolution are two mutually incompatible aims, so long as Britain is ruled by the British bourgeoisie.

The most recent theoretical statement from either of your organizations on the theoretical debate on the class struggle internationally and the tasks of the British proletariat is the 'Revolution' article entitled 'Against the ACW's Hopeless Dogmatism.' (vol. 4, no. 2) (1). We shall leave it to our comrades of the ACW to comprehensively reply to the RCL. Here we will take up only the most blatant examples of revisionism, social chauvinism and historical falsification contained in the article.

War and the four fundamental contradictions in the contemporary world.

In the first paragraph of the article (p 40 of 'Revolution') the author (2) says: "It should be self-evident that the development of the class struggle in Britain is inseparably linked to the class struggle internationally." Quite right! (In fact we would go further and say that the development of the class struggle in Britain is to a considerable extent determined by the class struggle internationally.) But having noted the smug and complacent claim that the RCL (and by implication unlike the ACW and other 'dogmatists') have attached due importance to the international class struggle, it becomes crystal clear in the very next sentence that by the "class struggle internationally" the RCL mean not the exceedingly complex international class struggle as a whole, but only a part of it: "We need to take account of the effects of superpower contention on the world in general and on Britain in particular..." Is that all? Not of the struggle of the oppressed peoples, nations and countries against imperialism? Of the struggle of the proletariat of the imperialist countries? Of the struggle of the socialist countries against imperialism? Of the other inter-imperialist contradictions? To hoist the RCL by their own petard: "Contemporary world politics, according to the (RCL), is the monopoly of the two...superpower(s). The peoples of the world are mere onlookers, passive spectators." (p42). We shall make it abundantly clear in this letter that the author's statement is no mere oversight, no slip, but an expression of the fact that for the RCL the class struggle internationally can be reduced to just one problem - that of superpower contention, and in fact just to the 'aggression' of the Soviet Union. We on the other hand shall preface our remarks on the RCL's social chauvinism and on the particular tasks of the British proletariat and communists with a brief look at the four fundamental contradictions in the contemporary world as they affect the points at issue. This is a question of the general line of the international communist movement, of which the CPC rightly said in 1963:

"...the starting point is the concrete class analysis of world politics and economics as a whole and of actual world conditions, that is to say, of the fundamental contradictions in the contemporary world.

If one avoids a concrete class analysis, seizes at random on certain superficial phenomena, and draws subjective and groundless conclusions, one cannot possibly reach correct conclusions with regard to the general line of the international communist movement, but will inevitably slide on to a track entirely different from that of Marxism-Leninism.

What are the fundamental contradictions in the contemporary world? Marxist-Leninists consistently hold that they are:

the contradiction between the socialist camp and the imperialist camp;

the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the capitalist countries;

the contradiction between the oppressed nations and imperialism; and

the contradictions among the imperialist countries and among monopoly capitalist groups...

These contradictions and the struggles to which they give rise are inter-related and influence each other. Nobody can obliterate any of these fundamental contradictions or subjectively substitute one for all of the rest." (3)

What we wish to draw attention to here is the method of analysis: as a whole the formulations used to describe the contradictions are somewhat out of date due to changes in reality since then. The RCL have abandoned this method of analysis, this "starting point," they "obliterate" (or rather attempt to obliterate) the four fundamental contradictions. In the article in question there is not the slightest mention of them. The RCL thinks that it can analyse the development of history before and during the second world war and now without reference to these contradictions. It is under the misapprehension that the theory of the three worlds is an alternative to the four contradictions. This is quite wrong. The theory of the three worlds is the result of applying these four contradictions to the present world situation. The four contradictions are the foundation of the theory of the three worlds. The point is that these contradictions have developed in such a way as to bring about precisely those three worlds. But the RCL divorce the theory of the three worlds from the four contradictions, which leads them to opportunism. They end up thinking that there are three kinds of countries, and they forget that the types of countries are, generally speaking, imperialist countries and oppressed countries; moreover, they forget about classes. Inevitably therefore the RCL blurs class differences and blurs the fundamental difference between oppressor and oppressed countries.

Corresponding to each of the four contradictions there is a particular kind of war. The military continuation of the politics of the contradiction between the capitalist class and the working class in the advanced capitalist countries and imperialist countries is civil war for proletarian revolution and socialism; corresponding to the contradiction between imperialism and the oppressed nations is the war of national liberation; to the contradiction between socialism and imperialism it is war for the defence of the socialist fatherland. All of the three types of war just mentioned are anti-imperialist in nature. But the continuation of the politics of the contradictions between the imperialists is inter-imperialist war.

In the 'Revolution' article under examination the author says that the ACW "repeat ad nauseam...the maxim that war is the continuation of politics by other means." (p 42). It is clear that what makes the RCL nauseous is not the repetition but the maxim itself, for, despite claiming that they agree with the maxim they invent two kinds of war - 'anti-fascist' and 'anti-superpower' wars - which do not at all correspond to the politics of the real world. The term 'anti-fascist' war corresponds to the period from 1936 onwards when revisionism was growing in strength in the international communist movement. It was used in 1936 to justify the revisionist version of a 'popular front' line, a version which invented a new stage between the bourgeois and socialist revolutions. As far as the war of 1939-45 is concerned it was used to cover up the social-chauvinist betrayal of 1941 when the 'defence of the fatherland' line triumphed in the western parties. The war of 1939-45 had different phases to which corresponded different natures - it was at different times and in different places inter-imperialist and anti-imperialist, but it was never anti-fascist as far as its essential nature was concerned. Fascism, as Dimitrov said, is "the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital." (4) I.e., it is a policy of imperialism. If one forgets this and talks only of the surface phenomena, the policy of fascism, one is bound to forget, as the western parties did, that the task in the imperialist countries, whether under conditions of bourgeois democracy or fascist terror (notwithstanding necessary differences in tactics), whether one's 'own' country is 'aggressive' or 'defensive,' is socialist revolution. Now the RCL uses and builds on the revisionist invention of an 'anti-fascist' war to introduce the further invention of an 'anti-superpower' war.

When the RCL uses these terms without reference to the four classic types of war in the era of imperialism it does so in order to blur the issue and to make a war between two imperialist countries (Britain and the Soviet Union) sound like a war between an oppressed nation and an oppressor nation. Behind this attempt to hoodwink the working class and people of this country is the

attempt to indeed blur the types of country and substitute 'second world' for 'imperialist.' But comrades, the concept 'second world' does not in the least imply that the concept 'imperialist' is outdated, as we shall see later.

A war of the inter-imperialist type becomes inevitable when, and only when, the contradiction between the imperialists becomes the principal one. Unfortunately for the RCL, because they ignore the four contradictions they are quite unable to explain why particular types of war suddenly break out. According to them, the Comintern was determined to have an anti-fascist war, when, just because Chamberlain and Daladier went to Munich, a different kind of war suddenly broke out! This is the height of idealism. If the RCL had gone to the trouble of investigating the development of the four contradictions they would have seen that the fact that the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries had resulted in setbacks for the proletariat was the factor making a new imperialist war inevitable. The proletariat was defeated temporarily in many of the major European countries by the 1930s: in Germany and Italy by the imposition of fascism, whilst in Spain the battle for the defence of the Republic was lost. Such defeats meant that the rival imperialists, having achieved some breathing space at home (which they had not had since 1917), and having inflicted major setbacks on the oppressed peoples in Abyssinia and China, were now in a much better position to attack their rivals. The contradiction which now started to determine world history, which became principal, was the inter-imperialist one: the dam broke in 1939. (The RCL's attempt to place the start of the war in 1937 (see p. 62) is simply an attempt to blur the distinction between anti-imperialist war (China, Abyssinia) and inter-imperialist war (1939)).

A similar method of analysis would have shown the RCL that in 1941, after Germany invaded the Soviet Union, the principal contradiction in the world had become the one between imperialism and socialism. In the war between the Soviet Union and Germany the socialist Soviet Union made use of those imperialists prepared to fight the particular imperialists attacking it, the fascist axis alliance. If you choose to call this an 'anti-fascist' war, it is most important to realise that fundamentally it is a war between imperialism and socialism.

Today: precisely because the Soviet Union has become social-imperialist, and therefore the contradiction between the huge socialist camp which existed after 1945 and imperialism is not so acute; precisely because the oppressed nations are struggling with such vigour and success against imperialism; and also because the development of the contradictions among the imperialists has led to there being two superpowers and quite a few minor imperialist powers; for these reasons it is correct to speak of three worlds. In this situation the factors for imperialist war are great and growing, but the main tendency is still revolution. There are various things which can be done to hold back the inter-imperialist war: a) support the unity of the third world in their struggle against imperialism. It is this struggle which has held back inter-imperialist war for so long since the second world war; b) give scientific leadership to the proletariat and people in the imperialist countries so that they gain revolutionary strength in their struggle to overthrow imperialism in socialist revolution. The more this struggle develops, the higher the chances of deferring war. If we have revolution and overthrow the imperialists there will be no war; and c) the oppressed nations and socialist states can exploit the contradictions between the imperialist powers of the first and second worlds.

What kind of war is presently looming on the horizon? We must give a scientific answer to this question based on the development of the four contradictions. Is it an imperialist war against socialism, e.g. an attack on China? No, the development of the contradiction between socialism and imperialism is not the most acute at the moment, nor is it becoming the principal contradiction. Is it civil war in the imperialist countries? The RCL will be the first to agree that unfortunately this is not the case. Is it national liberation wars? These are already going on at the moment in Azania, Namibia, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, to name just a few. We see here two possibilities. If the unity of the third world against imperialism can be upheld against all attempts to split

them, and if they continue their struggles, then the situation will be bad for the imperialists and good for us. But the unity of the third world cannot hold off an inter-imperialist war indefinitely. Only revolution in the imperialist countries can prevent an inter-imperialist war, and it such a war that is looming. The other possibility is that the attempts to split the third world into one camp supporting the USA and the other camp supporting the SU are successful. In that case inter-imperialist war will break out all the sooner, and it would break out under conditions favourable to the imperialists. Either way, without revolution in the imperialist countries, an inter-imperialist war is inevitable; sooner or later the inter-imperialist contradictions will become principal in the world.

But the RCL claim that there might two types of war concerning Britain: an inter-imperialist war between the two superpowers; and an 'anti-superpower' war between Britain and the Soviet Union. Let us assume that the Soviet Union attacks Britain. What contradiction will the attack express in military terms? What will the Soviet Union be after? It will be the right to exploit the British workers, to make use of the factories here, and to make use of Britain's colonies and neo-colonial spheres of influence. It should be clear even to the RCL that when the British imperialists and the Soviet social-imperialists fight for that booty, then such a war is an inter-imperialist war. Even if we looked at this one piece of military aggression - i.e., an attack on Britain by Russia - in isolation, the nature of the contradiction would be inter-imperialist. But of course it wouldn't stop there. Does the RCL really think that the Soviet Union would be satisfied, or could be satisfied, with Britain's share of the imperialist's plunder? Who are they trying to fool? The nature of imperialism means that the Soviet Union, like all other imperialists, wants world hegemony. The fact that the Soviet Union is a superpower means that it is actually in a position to start a war for those ends. An attack on Britain, if that is the way the next war starts will be but the beginning. To get world hegemony the Soviet Union will have to smash US imperialism, and the US knows this. What tactics the US uses in this situation - appeasement or immediate military retaliation doesn't change the heart of the matter: it would be an inter-imperialist war. Our recognition of the fact that without revolution in the imperialist countries and inter-imperialist war between the two superpower alliances is inevitable results from our understanding of the development of the four fundamental contradictions as they are expressed in the theory of the three worlds. The RCL doesn't have the courage to say that they think that these contradictions are no longer relevant. The RCL obviously thinks that today there is only one contradiction - that between the Soviet Union and every other force. They think that it's "dogmatic" to ask whether these other forces are imperialist countries or oppressed nations. It's a pity they don't say this openly. Then they could be asked to explain how in the 'highest stage of capitalism' the contradiction between imperialism and the oppressed peoples and nations has disappeared and a contradiction between one superpower and all the rest has taken its place.

'The Junius Pamphlet' - National Wars in the Era of Imperialism.

Ignoring the four fundamental contradictions in the world allows the RCL to treat the question of British 'national independence' in a manner which glosses over the fact that Britain is an imperialist country and that an analysis of Britain in the contemporary world must take this simple fact as its starting point. In the 'Revolution' article under discussion the author completely ignores this fact in his remarks on the matter of British 'national independence.' This is well illustrated by his comments on 'The Junius Pamphlet.' We hope that the members of the RCL and the CWM have acted upon the exhortation in this article to study Lenin's work and have seen for themselves how the author shiftily evades the main point in the ACW's reference to 'The Junius Pamphlet' - that, generally speaking, the national movement is a thing of the past in advanced capitalist countries like Britain - but rather rests his case on theoretical falsifications of Lenin and crude historical analogies from the 1930s and 1940s. In fact the article makes no attempt whatever - whether through stupidity, bankruptcy, ignorance or dishonesty - to deal theoretically with the question: can there be a just national war of Britain against an-

other country, and if so, under what circumstances?

The relevance of 'The Junius Pamphlet' to this question is that it was in part a reply to the ultra-left position, taken by 'Junius' (Rosa Luxemburg) and others during the imperialist war of 1914-18, that just national wars were no longer possible in the era of imperialism. Lenin refuted this view in several works, notably 'The Junius Pamphlet' and 'A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism.' He pointed out, firstly, that national wars on the part of the oppressed nations of eastern Europe and of the colonies against imperialism were both just and inevitable in the era of imperialism. So far we think that the RCL and CWM will agree with us. But national wars on the part of imperialist countries? Here is the parting of the ways. This question is comprehensively dealt with in the ACW's 'On the Social Chauvinism of the RCLB,' and to a lesser extent in our 'The Present International Situation and the Tasks of the Proletariat.' Here we will only summarise our position, which is best summed up in the following quote from Lenin:

"In the western countries the national movement is a thing of the distant past. In England, France, Germany, etc., the 'fatherland' is a dead letter, it has played its historical role, i.e., the national movement cannot yield here anything that will elevate new masses to a new economic and political life. History's next step here is not transition from feudalism or from patriarchal savagery to national progress, to a cultured and politically free fatherland, but transition from a 'fatherland' that has outlived its day, that is capitalistically overripe, to socialism." (5)

The forging of nations is, generally speaking, a task of the capitalist epoch. The development of the productive forces accomplished in the struggle for national unity by the bourgeoisie of various western European countries in the epoch which ended c. 1871 was a tremendous historical step forwards which freed millions of people from backwardness. But we live now in the epoch of socialism, when mankind's task is the transition to a world-wide communist society; and in the course of struggling for socialism and communism, mankind must transcend nations. In the imperialist countries, the nation itself is a reactionary institution, historically obsolete, which is why Marx said that the workers "have no country," and it is for these reasons that Lenin pointed out that the national movement of these countries was a "thing of the irrevocable past" and that it would be "an absurd, reactionary utopia" to try to revive it. It is not a case, as the RCL ludicrously claim on p46 of the article in question, of the bourgeoisie being unsuitable "to rule in the name of the nation," but of the nation itself being obsolete, as a consequence of the fact that the productive forces have long since transcended national boundaries. Where the productive forces have led, the RCL is reluctant to follow and wishes to retard their future development which can only come about through socialist revolution.

The fundamental reason why national wars on the part of nationally oppressed countries are just, i.e., progressive, and why, except in the most exceptional circumstances (which we shall refer to later) they are reactionary on the part of the imperialist countries, is that in the former case such wars can advance the development of the productive forces by expelling the foreign oppressor - as in the recent national war in Zimbabwe - whilst in the latter case it is the domestic bourgeoisie which is the political force obstructing the development of the productive forces. In this latter case it is only socialist revolution which can liberate the productive forces. Further, it is because capitalism has exhausted its progressive features in the advanced capitalist countries that it has become an oppressor of other nations. It is through such oppression that capitalism in these countries has artificially extended its life for the past eighty years. Lenin pointed out that:

"From the liberator of nations that capitalism was in the struggle against feudalism, imperialist capitalism has become the greatest

oppressor of nations. Formerly progressive, capitalism has become reactionary; it has developed the forces of production to such a degree that mankind is faced with the alternative of going over to socialism or of suffering years and even decades of armed struggle between the great powers for the artificial preservation of capitalism by means of colonies, monopolies, privileges and national oppression of every kind." (6)

Note, dear comrades of the RCL and CWM, how starkly Lenin puts it: either "going over to socialism" or "decades of armed struggle between the great powers." We suspect that Lenin's approach will not be sufficiently 'dialectical' for the RCL as we shall see later, but it is a fact that mankind is still faced with this alternative: it is socialism or war. Perhaps you would sign your names to such a declaration dear comrades, because you have learnt by rote that war is inevitable if there is no socialist revolution. But the significance of this point, which you have not grasped, is that any war waged by British imperialism would be a war for the "artificial preservation of capitalism," a war to prevent socialism. Any war fought by British imperialism would be an imperialist war, for the purpose of fighting other imperialists in the interest of the subjugation of the working class and the oppressed peoples and nations. 'Junius,' unlike the RCL, grasped this point, and therefore we will not do them the unjust honour of comparing them too closely to Rosa Luxemburg. Luxemburg, in practice, fought 'her' imperialists tooth and nail. In theory, however, there is a similarity. Both regard the national question independently of its class content, i.e., independently of the economy and of class interests. The nation was a progressive aim in the struggle against feudalism and still is for oppressed nations in their struggle against feudalism and imperialism. In Britain today there is nothing progressive about the nation. It is because they divorce the question of the nation from its content that both 'Junius' and the RCL make the mistake of opposing inter-imperialist war with a national programme. The old feudal, dynastic wars and present-day imperialist oppression could and can be opposed by wars for national liberation. But the new inter-imperialist wars must be opposed by civil wars against one's 'own' imperialist bourgeoisie. Any war, we repeat, of British imperialism against another imperialist country, (even against the Soviet Union!), would be an inter-imperialist war, and any policy other than opposition to the war would be, even if we repeat the point "ad nauseam," a policy of opposing imperialist war with a national programme.

The author of the 'Revolution' article tries to refute the ACW's criticism in several ways. The first method is the false reference to Lenin, the conjuror's sleight of hand used to distract the reader's attention away from the real point at issue. On p. 45 of 'Revolution' Lenin is quoted as saying that he is not against 'defence of the fatherland' "in general" because "in the imperialist epoch" there may be "national, civil, socialist and such like wars." Quite so, but which of these categories may apply to a war of British imperialism against another imperialist country, comrades of the RCL? The "national" category? We think not. It is crystal clear from all of Lenin's writings that by "national" he had in mind (and said that he had in mind) wars of nationally oppressed countries. When the RCL invoke Lenin to support their social chauvinism, their 'defence of the fatherland' in an imperialist country, they are in exactly the same position as those opportunists of 1914 who invoked Marx and Engels' support of Prussia against France in 1870 and of whom Lenin said:

"Whoever refers to Marx's attitude towards the wars of the epoch of the progressive bourgeoisie and forgets Marx's statement that the 'workers have no fatherland,' a statement that applies precisely to the epoch of the reactionary, obsolete bourgeoisie, to the epoch of the socialist revolution, shamelessly distorts Marx and substitutes the bourgeois for the socialist point of view." (7)

The next attempt at refutation of the ACW by the RCL is to say that the question of 'national' tasks in imperialist countries is an "Aunt Sally," that the RCL doesn't "tilt lances at feudalism," but that they have "raised the question

of defending and extending national independence in the context of the fight for socialism." (p. 45) It is difficult to know whether the appropriate reaction to this statement is laughter or tears. We agree with the author that the RCL are not at all Quixotic, but he, the author, certainly has a good line in mendacity. Dear comrades, it is precisely because national tasks have long since been accomplished, i.e., that feudalism has been vanquished in Britain, France, Germany etc., that the task there is socialist revolution, or, to put it the other way round, if the task in these countries, then there can be no national tasks of these countries. The era of progressive capitalism, the era when capitalism was sweeping away feudalism and absolutism, the era of the progressive bourgeoisie has long since vanished in these countries and all essential traces of pre-capitalist production have been swept away. Since towards the end of the nineteenth century, and especially since the advent of imperialism, these states and these bourgeoisies have been utterly reactionary, historically obsolete, and ripe for being overthrown in socialist revolution. It is for these reasons that the resurrection of national tasks in these countries is an "absurd, reactionary utopia," and, we must say, the vilest social chauvinism. The only way that the productive forces can be liberated, and the oppression of other nations finally ended, in these countries is through socialist revolution; alliances with the bourgeoisies of these countries can only be social chauvinist alliances for the maintenance of a moribund, decaying, parasitic capitalism, for the preservation of the most monstrous tyranny over hundreds of millions of workers and oppressed peoples. The author of the 'Revolution' article himself uses, either unwittingly or mendaciously, a quote from Lenin that makes precisely these points:

"In the imperialist war of 1914-17, between the two imperialist coalitions we must be against 'defence of the fatherland,' since 1. imperialism is the eve of socialism, 2. imperialist war is a war of thieves over booty, 3. in both coalitions there is an advanced proletariat, 4. in both the socialist revolution is ripe. Only for these reasons are we against 'defence of the fatherland,' only for these reasons." (p. 45)

The author thinks (or hopes his readers will think) that the quote given supports the RCL's revisionism in resurrecting national tasks in imperialist countries. In fact, all of these reasons given by Lenin for not supporting 'defence of the fatherland' in 1914 are exactly the reasons given by the ACW and ourselves for not advocating 'defence of the fatherland' in Britain today, or in any other imperialist country. All of the reasons given by Lenin are based on the essential point that capitalism is a reactionary, historically obsolete force in the countries concerned, i.e., that there are no national tasks to be completed by these countries, only socialist tasks. Are we no longer on the eve of socialism? Are the imperialist countries (all of them) no longer fighting each other for booty? Is socialist revolution no longer ripe in these countries? And is there not an advanced proletariat in these countries? Five minutes honest, sober study of these points, comrades of the RCL and CWM, must convince you of the trickery resorted to by the author of this article.

On p. 46, the author, having claimed that the RCL too opposes "dragg(ing) a national programme into (an) imperialist war," goes on to do precisely that. He claims (without a shred of supporting evidence) that the ACW "negates" national factors (when they merely oppose dragging such factors into the programme of the proletariat of the imperialist countries) and then implies that the "main point" in the 'Junius Pamphlet' supports the RCL's social chauvinist line by giving a long quote from 'The Junius Pamphlet' which starts: "The chief defect in Junius' pamphlet...is its silence regarding the connection between social chauvinism and opportunism," and which continues with Lenin's views on what sort of national wars can be supported by the proletariat of the imperialist countries. Two points must be made here. Firstly: that after the sentence beginning "The chief defect..." a whole page of text is omitted, without any indication that it has been omitted, thus giving the unwary or ignorant reader the erroneous impression that the "connection between social chauvinism and opportunism" was an underestimation of "national factors," whereas it was the whole right opportunist history which led up to the betrayal of 1914, a

history which is being repeated by the RCL and others today. Besides setting the historical record straight this is pointed out as an example of the sort of base trickery and dishonesty resorted to by our author throughout his article. Secondly: in the quote Lenin does not at all support national wars on the part of imperialist countries (as the article implies) but only 1. supports national wars on the part of nationally oppressed countries and 2. admits to the possibility of national wars on the part of the proletariat of imperialist countries which have become annexed - the 'exceptional circumstances' mentioned earlier in this letter and referred to as the "subjugation of viable national states" in Lenin's speculative arguments about the circumstances in which a national war might be possible in Europe:

"...if the European proletariat remains impotent, say for twenty years; if the present war ends in victories like those of Napoleon and in the subjugation of viable national states; if the transition to socialism of non-European imperialism (primarily Japanese and American) is also held up for twenty years by a war between these two countries, for example, then a great national war in Europe would be possible. It would hurl Europe back several decades."

The quote is given in full to show the highly speculative nature of Lenin's remarks, and it is ironic to say the least that those who howl about others being "dogmatic" and the need for concreteness should latch on to these highly abstract remarks of Lenin's as a justification for their revision of Leninism. The particular conjuncture of circumstances envisaged by Lenin have not come about: in particular the nation states of western Europe are far from "subjugated" but are very much alive, as vicious, voracious imperialist bandits exploiting and oppressing hundreds of millions of people around the world. (The states of eastern Europe, under the domination, and, in most cases, the military occupation, of the Soviet Union, are another matter, and the people of these countries would certainly be justified in waging war on the Soviet Union). The author of our 'Revolution' article, despite his frequent and sanctimonious appeals to be "concrete" has strangely ignored the fact that the circumstances speculated about by Lenin have remained nothing more than speculation. The author presumably hopes that his readers will be stupid enough not to notice this. If the circumstances mentioned by Lenin were to come about, then a national war by a western European country might be just, as the French, Dutch, Norwegians etc. were justified in fighting against German imperialism from 1940 to 1945. They were justified for the simple reason that 'their' bourgeoisie had been vanquished. The state power which they had to overthrow, the reactionary power standing in the way of socialist (not national) revolution, and hence of the liberation of the productive forces, was no longer 'their' bourgeoisie, but German imperialism and the German state. To help overthrow this power in socialist revolution had become their main contribution to the world proletarian revolution. (We should add that any alliance with the domestic bourgeoisie that did come about in such circumstances would have to be strictly limited to the aim of expelling the foreign invaders; such support as that given by the French communists after the last war for colonial reconquests by the French imperialists would be in no way justified.)

The Proletariat's Strategy is to Defeat All Imperialism.

Because the RCL use the theory of the three worlds as a substitute for examining the development of the four fundamental contradictions they are unable (or choose not) to see the political struggles of today in their epochal significance, i.e., in the context of their relation to the world-wide transition to socialism. The basic strategy of the proletariat is to defeat all imperialism in socialist and national democratic revolutions and to begin the construction of the world-wide communist society. To do this the proletariat must have a correct assessment of the development of the four fundamental contradictions and of its friends and enemies at each given stage of the world proletarian revolution.

Our author - because of his thoroughly bourgeois world outlook - shows no

sign of having grasped this long-term strategy of the proletariat and can see only the necessity for a strategy for each stage of the world proletarian revolution. For over he advocates strategies for each stage which conveniently correspond to the needs of the British bourgeoisie. Thus: he distorts Comintern strategy of the 1930s and 40s in such a way as to pretend that the object of this strategy was to defeat only German imperialism, not all imperialism; he claims that Mao and the CPC advocated building a united front against "US imperialism" (p. 43. No source given) in the 1950s and 60s, whereas the published statements, for example 'A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement' use the significantly different formula of a united front "to oppose the imperialists and reactionaries headed by the United States" (p6); and today he advocates a united front against the superpowers only (and in practice only against the Soviet Union) as against the correct formulation "against imperialism headed by the two superpowers."

These arguments about differences in formulations are not merely about semantics. They reflect whether one wishes to overthrow all imperialism in worldwide proletarian revolution or whether one wishes to construct social-chauvinist alliances with one's 'own' imperialist bourgeoisie. We are aware of the importance of isolating and defeating the chief enemies and of making distinctions amongst the enemies of revolution. That is one reason why we think that the theory of the three worlds is a correct theory and why we agree with our author's statement that at each stage of the revolution the proletariat must draw up a "new strategic plan for uniting the maximum forces against the principal obstacle and enemy of the revolution." Unless though this plan takes account of the fact that the purpose of defeating the main enemy (or enemies) is to enable the proletariat to pick off "one by one," as Mao put it, all the class enemies, and that subordinate enemies on a world scale may be the chief enemies of particular national detachments of the proletariat (as, for example, British and US imperialism are in Britain bigger enemies than Soviet social-imperialism) then opportunist alliances with the enemies of the proletariat are inevitable. (It is of course possible for socialist and third world countries to construct principled tactical alliances with enemies of the proletariat. The Soviet-German pact of 1939 and today's relationship between China and the United States being obvious examples). The RCLB though advocate a social-chauvinist alliance of all political forces against the superpowers, and in practice against the Soviet Union only. Their strategy, were it to be carried out by the proletariat, would lead to the strengthening of part of the world imperialist system to the detriment of another part, the Soviet Union, just as the social chauvinist alliances of 1941 onwards led to the temporary strengthening of US imperialism at the expense of the axis powers.

Having rightly said that the proletariat must have a strategic plan for "each historical period," and after calling the line for all other periods a "strategic" line, our author says that Lenin's views on 'defence of the fatherland' in 1914, and with specific reference to the quote beginning "In the imperialist war of 1914-17..." given on p. of this letter, were a matter of "tactical line." (p45. our emphasis). When a matter of strategic line suits the RCL's revisionist book they are quite prepared to accept it as such, but if it is inconvenient, as the Marxist view of the war of 1914-18 is, the RCL drops it like a hot brick. This constant shifting of position, this elusiveness and evasiveness, is something common to all opportunists, for what an opportunist must do to substantiate his position is to snatch at whatever meets "the mood of the moment," "the fashion of the day," to quote Lenin. Lenin's analysis of the nature of the war of 1914 and of the treachery of the social-chauvinists is clearly based on the general strategy for the world transition to socialism in the epoch of imperialism. The author's claim that such theoretical points as "imperialism is the eve of socialism" are "tactical" matters is designed to convince his readers that those who adhere to these formulations and apply them to present conditions are "dogmatists," who use Marxism-Leninism as "universal principles" to be applied "irrespective of concrete conditions." (p45) By a process of association the author evidently hopes that his readers will treat Marxism-Leninism itself as an "irrelevant dogma unsuited to new conditions," as Khrushchev would have said. Our author's intent in pretending that

these matters are tactical matters is to provide a theoretical justification for his jettisoning of those fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism on imperialism, war and revolution which are presently under discussion. Comrades, respective of the time, place and concrete conditions, imperialism is the eye of socialism, and that is why such an analysis is strategic, not tactical.

'Dual Nature' or Dialectics?

There next appears on the stage of the RCL's palace of varieties the amazing 'dual nature.' We are all familiar with the RCL's assertion that Britain (and by implication the British imperialist bourgeoisie) has a 'dual nature,' and now there crops up, in the article under discussion, the further assertion, or rather implication, that the war of 1939-45 had a 'dual nature;' an 'anti-fascist' and national liberation nature and an imperialist one. (see p. 62). The RCL introduce this concept in two ways: one, as we have seen, by claiming that the war started in 1937, not 1939, thus blurring the imperialist nature of the war which erupted in 1939, and by making the portentous comment that Lenin's remark in 'The Junius Pamphlet' that "here is a national liberation war in which imperialist rivalry is an auxiliary element," (8) has "immense importance." (p. 47)

Lenin made his remark - referring to French support of the American war of independence against Britain in 1776 - as an example of the fact that national wars could take place as an "auxiliary element" of a war which in its fundamental nature is imperialist, or vice-versa, giving as an example the war of Serbia against Austria-Hungary in 1914. But in refutation of those who -like Kautsky - claimed that this meant that the war had a 'dual nature'-that it was at one and the same time both imperialist and national - Lenin remarked: "In his pamphlet, 'The National State' etc., written in February 1915, Kautsky asserted that 'still in the final analysis,' the war is 'an imperialist one.' Now a fresh reservation is introduced: it is not a purely imperialist war. What else can it be? It appears that it is also a national war! Kautsky arrives at this monstrous conclusion by means of 'Plekhanovist' pseudo-dialectics." (9) Lenin goes on to say:

"There are no 'pure' phenomena, nor can there be, either in nature or in society - that is what Marxist dialectics teaches us, for dialectics shows that the very concept of purity indicates a certain narrowness, a one-sidedness of human cognition, which cannot embrace an object in all its totality and complexity. There is no 'pure' capitalism in the world, nor can there be; what we always find is admixtures either of feudalism, philistinism, or of something else. Therefore, if anyone recalls that the war is not 'purely' imperialist, when we are discussing the flagrant deception of 'the masses of the people' by the imperialists, who are deliberately concealing the aims of un- disguised robbery with 'national' phraseology, then such a person is either an infinitely stupid pedant, or a pettifogger and deceiver. The whole point is that Kautsky is supporting the deception of the masses by the imperialists when he asserts that to 'the masses of the people,' including the proletarian masses, 'the problems of national liberation were of 'decisive importance,' whereas to the ruling classes the decisive factors were 'imperialist tendencies,' and when he reinforces this with an alleged dialectical reference to the 'infinite variety of reality.' Certainly, certainly, reality is infinitely varied. That is absolutely true! But it is equally indubitable that amidst this infinite variety there are two main and fundamental strains: the objective content of the war is a 'continuation of the politics' of imperialism, i.e., the plunder of other nations by the decrepit bourgeoisie of 'Great Powers' (and their governments), whereas the prevailing 'subjective' ideology consists of 'national' phraseology which is being spread to fool the masses." (10).

The RCL's purpose in introducing the concept of the 'dual nature' of the war of 1939-45 is to attempt to prove, over twenty-odd pages of crude historical simplification and falsification, that the period of 1939-41, when the communist parties were united in condemning the war as an imperialist one was most unifor-

tunate, and that if events had turned out differently there could have been an alliance with the imperialists of the allied states from 1939 instead of only from 1941. The poison which which the RCL hopes the working class will swallow is the notion that the wars of the peoples of those countries fighting national liberation wars against the various axis powers - the wars in Abyssinia, China, Poland etc. - had the same character as the alliance of the working class of Britain and the USA with their imperialist bourgeoisies. The fact that the war of Britain and the USA was waged in order to preserve their colonial empires is completely glossed over by the RCL. The fact that Britain had a huge empire in India, Burma, Egypt, Malaya etc., etc., is not mentioned once in the article we are discussing. (The fact that these colonial possessions were in part temporarily seized by Germany, Italy and Japan, is, as far as the fundamental nature of Britain's war is concerned, of interest only to philistines and deceivers.) All of this is ignored in order that it can be pretended that there was in principle no fundamental objection to an 'anti-fascist' (read social-chauvinist) alliance of the British working class with the British bourgeoisie in 1939.

To justify their view that the war had a dual nature the RCL quote Stalin's view that the second world war "from the very outset assumed the nature of an anti-fascist war, a war of liberation." (cited on p. 49 of the article). We think Stalin is incorrect here. The second world war was a titanic historical struggle in which all the fundamental contradictions were heightened to an extreme, as in any imperialist war, and in which the inter-relationship of the contradictions was particularly complex. Around the period 1939-45 three of the four contradictions were so acute that they erupted in war at different times. These wars were: the inter-imperialist war of the allied powers on the one hand and the axis powers on the other; the national liberation wars of China etc.; and the war of the socialist Soviet Union against imperialist Germany. It is therefore not correct simply to characterise the whole period of 1939-45 as one of imperialist war. At different times, dependent on which of these three types of contradiction was playing the dominant role, the war was principally reactionary (1939-41) or principally progressive (1941-45). This is not to say that the war had a 'dual nature;' it means rather that the war changed its nature, that the secondary, historically progressive elements of the war, which had been present since 1939 (and, indeed, from 1937, as the RCL point out) became dominant from 1941 onwards, when defence of socialism became the chief element of the war. Of course the war wasn't 'purely' imperialist or 'purely' anti-imperialist at any stage, but it did have an essential character at all times. From 1939 to 1941 the inter-imperialist contradiction was the dominant element of the war and meant that the war had the character of an imperialist war for the redivision of the world. From 1941 to 1945 the contradiction between imperialism and socialism, manifested in the war between the Soviet Union and Germany, was principal and gave the war as a whole an historically progressive character. The attack of German imperialism on the Soviet Union was: a) an attack on the continuing existence of socialism; b) an attack on the socialist aspirations of the entire proletariat; and c) an attack on the world citadel of revolution.

Concomitantly with the main struggles going on in the world were other historically subordinate struggles, "auxiliary elements," as Lenin put it. In the period 1939-41, the Chinese, French, Irish and many other peoples were carrying out armed struggles against foreign invaders and occupiers - nevertheless, the character of the war at this stage was an inter-imperialist war for the redivision of the world. After 1941, the historically decisive struggle was the struggle in defence of the Soviet Union. Notwithstanding this, the war of the British and US imperialists was still imperialist. Britain and the US were still fighting the axis powers for the right to exploit the working class and for mastery of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In Asia and Africa this was particularly obvious - or does the RCL think that Britain and the US were fighting Germany, Italy and Japan to defend Egypt, the Sudan, China, Burma, Malaya, etc.? - but even in Europe British imperialism was merely defending the base from which it sought to establish world hegemony. It is important to grasp that the tasks of the proletariat in each country are not determined by the principal contradiction on a world scale, but merely considerably affected by it. The proletariat

of each country has its particular tasks to carry out and in so doing must take due account of the class struggle internationally. We, i.e., the Marxist-Leninists, are not Trotskyists and recognise that the world proletarian revolution is not one revolution, but a series of interconnected national revolutions. And to be successful, i.e., to make its particular contribution to the whole, the proletariat of each country must determine its strategy and tactics primarily on an analysis of the particular conditions of its 'own' country. Thus the contribution of the British proletariat is to overthrow British imperialism. This remained so even in 1941-45. In this period the British proletariat had the very important task of taking whatever steps it could to defend the Soviet Union, but can one seriously doubt but that a) the best way to defend the Soviet Union was to seize state power and smash British imperialism and b) that the British proletariat's alliance with British imperialism was directed against socialism, a social-chauvinist alliance in defence of British imperialism's colonial privileges and its 'right' to exploit the British working class.? The Soviet (and the Chinese etc.) people could use the fact that British imperialism and themselves were temporarily on the same side, fighting the same immediate enemy, to their advantage - they could ally with British imperialism. And if this sounds like what is vulgarly called a 'contradiction,' comrades of the RCL and CWM, then so it is, a real contradiction arising out of the fact that the proletariat of the different countries have different tasks to perform on their way to the common final goal of communism.

In the period under discussion the contradiction between socialism and imperialism led to the great victory of the Soviet Union in 1945. The contradiction between the oppressed peoples and nations and imperialism led to the victories the national liberation wars and civil wars in Korea, Vietnam and China over US, British, French and Japanese imperialism and domestic reaction. Thus, in the balance sheet of history, the international proletariat advanced its cause in the war of 1939-45. But the debit side of this balance sheet is that the proletariat of the imperialist countries allied themselves with the bourgeoisie instead of struggling to overthrow them, and as a direct consequence the imperialists as a whole were able to temporarily stabilise their position - imperialism as a world system was not defeated. The present situation in which the imperialists are threatening to plunge the world yet again into the miseries and horrors of imperialist war is the consequence of the inability of the proletariat of the imperialist countries, mainly caused by the treachery of the communist parties of those countries, to overthrow imperialism in 1939-45 and thus put a stop to imperialist war. And in this coming war, comrades of the RCL and CWM, if you don't change your line, you will follow in the footsteps of the traitor R. Palme Dutt, who felt able to say in 1942:

"A world alliance of free nations (sic), represented by Britain, the Dominions, the United States, the Soviet Union and the Chinese republic, confronts the robber (sic) alliance." (10)

And no doubt like Dutt, the social chauvinists of the RCL will call on the British working class, and those nations and peoples oppressed and exploited by British imperialism, as Dutt did in the case of India, not to rise up and overthrow British imperialism, but to support 'free' Britain against the 'robber,' the Soviet Union.

To all of this the RCL will cry 'Metaphysics.' All things have a 'dual nature' you see. In criticism of the ACW's view that the nature of the war changed in 1941 the RCL say "A purely inter-imperialist war cannot become a purely anti-fascist war." (p. 62) The RCL is preparing the ground for an alliance with British imperialism under any circumstances, using 'dialectics' much as an hypnotist uses 'passes' to put his victims to sleep. The RCL already has its 'dialectical' assessment of Britain - that it has a 'dual nature' - to justify support for Britain in the event of war with the Soviet Union. Now the author of the 'contributed' article is 'contributing' the theory of the 'dual nature' of war (any war, you note, because a war can't be 'purely' imperialist or 'purely' national) to provide the justification for support for war against the Soviet Union under any circumstances. This justification being that the Soviet Union

is fascist, aggressive etc., just as similar excuses were cooked up in 1939 and 1941 to provide the excuse for supporting Britain against Germany. As 'bold' as the RCL has yet been, the kite is flown of a possible alliance with the USA: "In a certain sense the US superpower has already become an indirect ally in the united front, while remaining a target of the front." (p. 71) After all, if Britain could be supported against Germany in the 1940s, what is stopping support, using reasoning as specious as that which prevailed in 1941, for the US imperialists against Soviet social-imperialism in the 1980s.

Philosophically, it is important to nail the 'dual nature' theory. Dialectics helps us to understand how the nature of a thing changes, not how it has two natures. Let us look at an example which should inspire us: an imperialist war can be transformed into civil war. This happened in Russia in 1917 where an unjust war was transformed into a just war. Is this because the imperialist war of 1914-18 had a 'dual nature?' No! It is because the inter-imperialist war was a process consisting of many contradictions, one of which at any one time was principal, with a principal aspect which determined the nature of the war. Until October 1917 the contradiction between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the proletariat in Russia was of course present in the war - the imperialists forced the proletariat and in particular the peasantry to be slaughtered. But it was not until the Russian workers and peasants turned their guns on the bourgeoisie that the nature of the military events in Russia changed from being unjust to just. That contradiction which had until then been subordinate in determining events became principal and that aspect of the contradiction - the proletariat and peasants - which had been subordinate also became principal. The theory of a 'dual nature' is the RCL's attempt to substitute metaphysics for dialectics. The reason the RCL offers for the character of the last war changing in 1941 is its alleged 'dual nature.' The reason dialectics offers is that out of the many contradictions involved in the process of that war, a different one became principal in 1941. It is of course vital in our analysis of any process, after noting its many-sidedness and the number of contradictions it involves, not merely to refer to its 'complexity' (the RCL don't even get this far, they see only its 'dual nature'), to discover the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of that contradiction. Only then can we understand the nature of the process. Its nature can change when a different contradiction or aspect of a contradiction becomes principal, but at a given time every process has a particular nature and no other. The 'dual nature' theory is an idealist theory which allows opportunism such as that which prevails in the RCL to subjectively proclaim that a thing is whatever it wants to be, to evade the issue, to obscure the most fundamental point. Just as Kautsky's purpose in declaring that the war of 1914-18 was both imperialist and national was to cover up his social-chauvinist treachery, so the RCL's sophisms about 'dual nature' are intended to cover up their social-chauvinism. Their clap-trap about the war at no stage being 'purely' imperialist or 'purely' 'anti-fascist' has but one purpose - to cover up in 1939, in 1941 and in the 1980s the nature of British imperialism and its role in the world. Here is a quote not of "immense importance" but of some relevance, which the RCL conveniently omitted from the lengthy quote they give from 'The Junius Pamphlet' on p. 47 of 'Revolution:'

"Only a sophist can disregard the difference between an imperialist war and a national war on the grounds that one might develop into the other. Not infrequently have dialectics served - and the history of Greek philosophy is an example - as a bridge to sophistry." (12).

The Present International Situation.

It is necessary, as the RCL never tires of pointing out, to be concrete. It is necessary to study the particularity of the war which is coming because it will certainly be different in form from the wars of 1914 and 1939-45, and in certain respects it will be different in content. The necessity for concreteness though does not absolve us from what is equally necessary: to study reality in the light of Marxist theory. It is not the ACW who are being dogmatic - for their pamphlet shows many signs of being based on a study of present reality

as well as on past experience - but the CL and CWM who are being revisionist. The author of the 'Revolution' article uses his calls to "study reality" as a smokescreen to hide his wholesale attack on Marxism-Leninism, his ignoring of the hard-won and bitter experience of the international proletariat in two imperialist wars. The author urges the proletariat to forget that they lost tens of millions of dead in two imperialist wars, that as a result of the betrayals of the proletariat by the 'communists' in both of these wars, imperialism temporarily stabilised itself in the imperialist heartlands and has continued its vile rule for decades longer, remained free to continue to exploit the proletariat of the imperialist countries and to inflict further suffering on the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. "Forget all this," he cries, and go onto the battlefields of imperialist war once more, to shoot and bomb, kill and maim, the workers in uniform on the other side. Let British worker kill Russian worker, Polish worker kill American worker, all in the holy cause of surplus value and in the service of the lords of capital.

The RCL and the CWM have never presented one theoretical argument which would demand that the existing Marxist theory on imperialist war should be updated to take account of a new development. Nothing that they have said shows that the old theory is inadequate and that a new one must be substituted. As far as the article in question is concerned, the author's shifty evasions, theoretical and historical falsifications and bombastic assertions amount to one thing - the RCL has no such theoretical arguments, the emperor has no clothes (and nor have the rest of the international gang of social chauvinists) and he hopes that no one will notice his theoretical nakedness. Our concreteness on the other hand will very much bear in mind the historical experience, the theory of the working class and apply it to the present international situation.

What is particular to the present stage of the imperialist epoch? What developments have taken place over the past thirty years or so? Like you comrades of the RCL and the CWM we consider that the particularity of today is best summed up in the theory of the three worlds. Unlike the RCL and the CWM though we regard the three worlds theory as being the application of the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism to present-day conditions. We have not used the theory as an excuse to forget what has already been learnt.

The Contention of the Two Superpowers is the Main Cause of War.

Today, as the RCL and the CWM rightly say, the Soviet Union is the most dangerous source of war. It is not though correct to say, as the 'revolution' article we have been looking at does, that the Soviet Union is "hellbent on becoming the one and only superpower, This is dragging the world towards a new world war." (p. 40) It is both superpowers (and for that matter all the imperialist countries) which are bent on becoming "the one and only superpower," and it is the struggle between the two superpowers for a redivision of the world which is "dragging the world towards a new world war." For a supposed communist in a country which is in alliance with the US superpower, and which is advancing its own hegemonial strivings, to forget these fundamental facts is the most contemptible social-chauvinism. The United States, and the smaller imperialist countries allied with it, Britain, France, West Germany, Japan etc., already have the lion's share of the imperialist plunder. The Soviet Union, for its part, has an 'unfair' share of this plunder, i.e., its share is not commensurate with its economic strength. The Soviet Union is struggling to redivide in its favour, as opposed to the existing division, which is in favour of the western imperialists, predominantly the United States. It wants to take from the USA, Britain, France, West Germany, Japan, etc., their share of the loot. Whoever glosses over this fundamental fact, as does our author, betrays socialism and the proletariat and allies himself with imperialism and reaction. The ACW are absolutely right to compare the position between the two imperialist coalitions today with that of the two coalitions of 1914. When your organizations pour scorn on this historical comparison, comrades of the RCL and CWM, they (and you, dear comrade, if you support their line on this matter) are concealing the real class content of the coming war, pretending that what is at issue is not a struggle for the redivision of the world, but a struggle between 'aggressive' and 'defensive' powers, criminally ignoring what the 'defenders' are defending. They, and you, are in the

same position as those despicable social-chauvinists of 1914 who defended 'their' imperialist country on the pretext that 'their' country was being invaded.

What logically follows from the RCL's opportunist analysis is of course the policy of "treating the Soviet Union as the primary target in the struggle against hegemonism." In plainer English, in English less clouded by lofty rhetoric and schematic substitutions for concrete analysis, this means: not fighting first and foremost the imperialist coalition, moreover one's 'own' imperialist coalition, which actually exploits the workers of north America, western Europe, Japan, Australasia etc., and the vast majority of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, but that imperialist power, the Soviet Union, which wants to grab these prizes from the US and its allies. It is, dear comrades, the most shameless and treacherous social chauvinism, and if you wish to remain a part of the world proletarian movement you must rectify it forthwith. What has your line meant in your actual practice? It has meant that while you have spent much time and energy in shadow-boxing with the Soviet Union ('shadow-boxing' because you cannot in practice deal significant material blows at the Soviet Union) you have not in your practice lifted a finger to attack the alliance of the British imperialists with the US in NATO, to expell the US bases from Britain and so forth. You in fact support NATO and in consequence the continued ability of the US and British imperialists to use Britain as a staging post to commit military aggression in the middle east and Europe. What did the RCL have to say in 'Class Struggle' when Carrington went running round the world as a lickspittle of Carter in his attempts to gain bases in the middle east in response to the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan? The deafening silence of the RCL on the question of the partial success of the US imperialists, aided and abetted by the British imperialists in their attempts to gain bases in the Sudan, Oman, Somalia and Kenya can only be construed as support for the war preparations of US and British imperialism. Likewise, what did the RCL have to say - apart from a sanctimonious reference to "support" in "neighbouring countries" - about French military intervention in the Central African Empire (now Central African Republic)? We could go on ad nauseam, but the objective situation, comrades, is that you are acting as allies of the British, European and US imperialists, and as accomplices in their schemes to retain their lion's share of the imperialist booty.

The result of these policies, if they are carried out by sufficient people, can only be to hasten the onset of war. War can only be prevented by revolution in the imperialist countries, but it can be prevented if the people of the world struggle to obstruct the schemes of both of the superpowers. Our share of this struggle is to fight British and US imperialism: we must expect the Soviet workers and the workers and people of those countries oppressed by the Soviet Union to fullfil their internationalist duty by fighting the Soviet Union. Your practice, comrades of the RCL and CWM, is to call on the people of the entire world to fight mainly (and in practice only) against the Soviet Union. What effect could this have other than to strengthen the US and the other western imperialist powers, make the Soviet Union more desperate, and hasten the onset of a war out of which either the US and its allies or the Soviet Union and its allies will emerge, albeit temporarily, greatly strengthened?

The main factor preventing war at present is the struggle of the third world against imperialism. It is this struggle which is making it difficult for both superpowers to win positions from which to attack each other. Of particular importance is the non-aligned movement which has had considerable success in fighting the superpowers' attempts to split the third world by winning third world countries and national liberation movements to their sides. Recently though, both superpowers have had some success in splitting the non-aligned movement - the Soviet Union with Vietnam and Cuba, the US with Egypt, as examples - and your policy, comrades, is on the one hand to support, either actively or by sins of omission, the attempts of the US to split the movement, as over Camp David and its response to the Afghanistan question; and on the other hand, ironically, to drive those countries who try to resist the US into the hands of the Soviet Union. Is it surprising that Syria, for instance, has moved closer to the Soviet Union, or that Iran, at the time of writing, is looking to the Soviet

Union for assistance against the US's military threats, when one considers the almost complete lack of militant opposition to the plots and schemes of US imperialism and its allies on the part of the communists of the north American and west European countries? Is it any wonder that the Maltese government has to turn to the Soviet Union for assistance when the RCL, CWM and the workers of Britain do nothing to fight the continued threats by Britain, as a part of NATO, to the independence of Malta?

Who is not "being concrete," comrades, is it the ACW and ourselves, or is it the RCL and the CWM? Read again the 'revolution' article under discussion and note that there is no concrete discussion of the world today, but only waving of the totem of the theory of the three worlds, schematic formulations - "primary target," "dual nature," etc. - and assertions which pass for concrete analysis. Any real concrete analysis shows very clearly that the world is indeed heading towards a new imperialist world war between the US-led coalition on the one hand and the Soviet Union and its allies on the other. It doesn't need a "crystal ball" to see this, it only needs "concrete analysis." The RCL's line that there may be an "anti-superpower war" waged by, say, Britain, against the Soviet Union, is, even if such an eventuality were to come about, the most gross social-chauvinism, as the ACW and ourselves have amply shown. But when the RCL goes on to claim, despite the mounting and overwhelming evidence to the contrary, and against Marxist theory on the inevitability of imperialist war, that the next war may not involve the United States, that this superpower may sit back and allow its rival to devour its possessions, then we must suspect trickery and dishonesty.

A major factor which will make the coming war substantially different in form from the wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45 is that the war will be fought out not only in Europe, but also over Europe. The war of 1914-18 was fought out in Europe mainly to decide which of the imperialist coalitions would control the colonies. The coming war will also be concerned with deciding who gets the lion's share of the booty from Asia, Africa and Latin America, but it will also decide which of the two imperialist superpowers has control of the riches of western Europe, and, to a lesser degree, of eastern Europe. The advanced means of production and experienced proletariat of western Europe are of immense importance to the two superpowers' struggle for world hegemony. The US and its western European allies are determined to prevent the Soviet Union from grabbing this prize - they wish to continue exploiting and oppressing the hundreds of millions of workers in western Europe themselves. It is absurd, contrary to all the evidence, and, we suspect, a deception, to claim that the USA will idly stand by while the Soviet Union attempts to devour the riches of western Europe. The Soviet Union wishes to dominate Europe in order that it can take on the United States itself, directly, i.e., in order that it can try to smash the USA. The idea that the US would inactively stand by and just allow this to happen is utterly unmaterialist; contrary to the nature of imperialism and to the assessment that it is the contention between the two superpowers which is the source of the coming war. Sooner or later the United States will be compelled by its own imperialist nature to fight the Soviet Union, just as Britain was compelled to fight Germany in 1939. We must here add that should the Soviet Union succeed in devouring western Europe (which possible eventuality, you, dear comrades, are helping to bring about, by your peddling of social-chauvinist sentiments and your abdication of your responsibility to train and educate the working class in militant struggle against imperialism and the imperialist state; for only a working class trained and tempered in implacable hostility to all imperialism will be able to prevent the Soviet Union devouring Europe) or should the western imperialists succeed in devouring eastern Europe, then a "great national war" of the type envisaged by Lenin would be possible in Europe and it would be historically progressive, i.e., just. Unless this unfortunate possibility comes about, it is the responsibility of the communists of all the imperialist countries to lead the working class to attempt to take advantage of the tremendous heightening of contradictions caused by war to overthrow all the bandits in civil war. For as Lenin ^{said} the necessity for a "great national war" would "hurl Europe back several decades" (13), i.e., it would be a tremendous historical setback. It is such

a setback, i.e., a war that led to conquests, not to revolution, that you comrades of the RCL and the CWM are working might and main to bring about by fighting for a social-chauvinist alliance with the British, US and European imperialists.

Your organizations claim that they are preparing for "both possibilities" - war with the Soviet Union in which the United States is not involved and one in which it is involved - but are they? Your line and practice clearly shows that you are preparing to support, and will end up supporting, British imperialism no matter what, that you will end up supporting the US-led coalition in the coming war (we have already pointed out your reference to the US as an "indirect ally," and in your practice you treat it is a direct ally). We think that the myth of an "anti-superpower revolutionary war" is a smokescreen behind which the groundwork is being laid for support for US imperialism. Your practice is not at all to prepare for "both possibilities." You have backed your horse and you are urging it on to win. You support NATO, you support the military strengthening of the bourgeois state, you refuse to take up the struggle to expell the US bases etc., etc.. How can this be "preparing for both possibilities?" What practical preparations are you making to turn the imperialist war into a civil war if the war is a US-led one, as your organizations claim you will? The RCL's and the CWM's talk about "both possibilities," comrades, is a trick - a trick which your organizations hope will provide solace for fools and a cloak of respectability for knaves.

Comrades, the main enemy of the proletariat of the imperialist countries is, as Lenin said, "at home." This means we fight British imperialism, European imperialism and US imperialism, Any other policy, no matter how dressed up with Marxist phrases, can be nothing other than an alliance with imperialism against the proletariat.

British Imperialism's Strivings for World Hegemony.

What of British imperialism in its own right? Britain is still a very powerful imperialist country, as even the most cursory examination of the available data will show. From a theoretical point of view we have simply demonstrated that Britain cannot - with the sole exception of its being annexed - wage a just national war. You members of the RCL learn by rote that imperialism is "moribund, decaying, parasitic capitalism." But because you are discouraged from studying further to discover the real significance, the class and historical meaning of these words, you are unable to use to evaluate what is actually going on in the world. You do not grasp that imperialism is "reaction all along the line," that British imperialism is utterly reactionary, incapable of acting in an historically progressive manner. Because of this, you support, as we have seen, British imperialist rivalry with the Soviet Union. And it is also because of this that you do not, except in token fashion, support the struggles of those peoples and nations fighting British imperialism, nor fight against British imperialism's continued attempts to extend its sphere of interest. Look at Zimbabwe for instance. The major concessions forced on the people of Zimbabwe in the recent 'settlement' (which, judging from your commentaries in 'Class Struggle,' you do not appear to recognise as concessions at all) - the duration of the election campaign, the number of assembly areas, the reserved seats for the white settlers, the vast compensation that must be paid if the land is to be expropriated, the presence of British troops etc. - and the concessions that imperialism is forcing on the people of Zimbabwe now, after independence, the appointment of Walls as Commander-in-Chief of the army for example, are all in part a direct consequence of the lack of support for the people of Zimbabwe by the British working class. In turn it is the treachery to the people of Zimbabwe and to the British working class by the RCL (yes, treachery, comrades, despite your self-congratulations in 'Class Struggle' (vol. 4, no. 5) to the effect that you "consistently supported" the struggle of the people of Zimbabwe), in abandoning the start that was made in rallying practical support among the working class for the people of Zimbabwe in the RCL's Zimbabwe campaign of two years ago, that was a major reason why there was so little support. You may have salved your consciences, comrades of the RCL, with your pathetic 'ZANU election fund,' but you betrayed the people

of Zimbabwe many months previously, and you have done nothing since to raise the level of political activity of the British working class on their international responsibilities. Similarly, the RCL supports British imperialism when it attempts to use the contradictions between the superpowers and the third world to try to get these peoples into its sphere of influence. For example, when the EEC countries, taking advantage of the contradiction between the US imperialists and the Arab people, try to capture the PLO for European imperialism by offering recognition of a Palestinian 'homeland,' the RCL says Britain's stance is a "positive development." ('Class Struggle' vol. 4, no. 8). If the EEC countries, for their own imperialist reasons, decide to recognise also, as at the time of writing (June. '80) it looks as though they might, the PLO, then this of course should be supported. But the RCL is incapable of understanding that imperialism is utterly reactionary and cannot see that the purpose of any such decision would be to win a better position for European imperialism in the middle east. As a consequence the writer of the 'Class Struggle' article fawns on the imperialists and grovels to them. Contemptibly, he says that the west European countries are "in favour of recognising the national rights of the Palestinian people." (p. 7) Are they? Do these countries support the PLO position that the state of Israel is an imperialist creation and has no right to exist? Of course they don't, but only such a position is compatible with "recognising the national rights of the Palestinian people," because their national rights and the continued existence of Israel are mutually incompatible. As on many other issues the policy of the RCL and those of the imperialists are essentially the same - in the case support for Israel, for no other interpretation can be put on the RCL's glowing and unsolicited testimonial to the imperialists of the EEC.

British imperialism's long-term strategy is to achieve world hegemony, just like all imperialists wish to do. It is of course true to say that it has no immediate prospect of achieving this goal. At present it has to be satisfied with its position as a junior partner of US imperialism ^{and} its alliance with the other European imperialists, while looking for every opportunity to advance its independent interests. While its interests may change over the years, its present economic interests compel British imperialism to ally with US imperialism, whilst it hopes to strengthen itself for its own hegemonial strivings in the course of that alliance. Are you blind, comrades of the RCL and the CWM, that you cannot see that this is the significance of the NATO alliance, Carrington's recent middle east trip, the siting of the Cruise missiles in Britain, British warships being sent to the Persian Gulf to support the US over Iran, the recent announcement in the 'defence' white paper that a "mobile force" is being set up to operate outside the NATO area etc.. In this coming war Britain will take part much as Holland and Belgium took part in the war of 1914-18. And as Lenin said at the time:

"If the war is a reactionary, imperialist war, that is, if it is being waged by two world groups of the imperialist, rapacious, predatory, reactionary bourgeoisie, then every bourgeoisie (even of the smallest country) becomes a participant in the plunder, and my duty as a representative of the revolutionary proletariat is to prepare for the world proletarian revolution as the escape from the horrors of a world war." (14. Our emphasis.)

But Britain's a second world country! we can hear you all cry. Yes, so it is, but the significance of this is by no means that Britain is no longer imperialist (which, despite your pious references to "imperialism" in your publications, is how you behave in practice) but that there are considerable inter-imperialist contradictions between the two superpowers and the second world countries which can be exploited to the advantage of the working class and the oppressed peoples and nations, as we discussed earlier. For example, the recent dispute between the US and western Europe over the 'response' to be taken on the question of the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, provided excellent opportunities, if the will was there, to take advantage of the division among the imperialists by calling for the expulsion of US bases from Europe and for withdrawals from NATO. Likewise with the similar dispute over Iran. Here the opportunity

presented itself to drive a wedge between the US and Britain by fighting to mobilise the masses to prevent the British warships being sent to the help of the US in the Persian Gulf, to force the government to send the Chieftain tanks it is holding back to the Iranian government. But this doesn't hit the Soviet Union (at least not directly) does it comrades? It only directly hits Britain and the US, and that would never do!

Socialist Revolution or Class Collaboration?

We have clearly shown that a) the line of the RCL and the CWM that there may be, under present circumstances and even if the Soviet Union were to invade Britain, a just national war of Britain against the Soviet Union, is social-chauvinist; and b) the view that the next war will not be a war of two imperialist, superpower-led coalitions, a war in which Britain will take part as a junior partner of US imperialism can stem only from the most crass failure to study concrete reality or from conscious deception.

Comrades, we said at the beginning of this letter that you were, at least formally, pursuing two mutually incompatible aims: the defence of Britain's 'national interests' and socialist revolution. From a theoretical point ^{of view} we have demonstrated that these two aims are indeed incompatible. We have looked briefly at a few aspects of your practice and have indicated that essentially you are not pursuing two aims at all, but one only - the aim of providing whatever help you can to British imperialism, and also to US imperialism, in their desperate struggle for survival. You are criminally trying to give a few more years of life to a dieing but still terrible and rabid monster, the monster of imperialism, a monster which has devoured hundreds of millions of people, caused untold misery and suffering and which is determined to shed the blood and take the lives of many millions more people in defence of its sacred right to extract surplus value and accumulate capital. But although the aim you are pursuing is criminal we think that you can be rehabilitated. We shall look at two further aspects of your line and practice in the hope that we can finally convince you of the rottenness of the line you are practising.

What is your attitude to the army comrades? The army is the bulwark of the bourgeois state: "A standing army and police are the chief instruments of the force of the state power." (15) The Marxist demand on this question, propagated by Marx and Lenin, has for over a hundred years been: the abolition of the standing army and police and their replacement by the universally armed people. This measure was the very first measure of the Paris Commune: "The first decree of the Commune...was the suppression of the standing army and the substitution for it of the armed people." (16) The demand for these measures became a part of the minimum programme of the parties of the second international, before their degeneration, and also of the RSDLP and later of the Bolsheviks. We have adopted this demand ourselves and are convinced that it must become a part of the programme of the British communists. Propagating and fighting for this demand will greatly raise the consciousness of the masses on the nature of the state, prepare them for the revolutionary seizure of power, educate them on the nature of socialism, and, to the extent that it is achieved and becomes a part of the consciousness of the working class, greatly weaken the ability of the bourgeoisie to suppress the revolutionary strivings of the proletariat and to take counter-revolutionary measures after the seizure of power. A fight against the standing army, even if at first it is only a propogandist fight, is an essential element of the struggle for socialist revolution, for, as Lenin pointed out:

"...the army is the most ossified instrument for supporting the old regime, the most hardened bulwark of bourgeois discipline, buttressing up the rule of capital, and preserving and fostering among the working people the servile spirit of submission and subjection to capital. Counter-revolution has never tolerated and never could tolerate armed workers side by side with the army. In France, Engels wrote, the workers emerged armed from every revolution: 'therefore, the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeois who were at the helm of the state.' The armed workers were the embryo of a new army, the organised nucleus of a new

social order. The first commandment of the bourgeoisie was to crush this nucleus and prevent it from growing. The first commandment of every victorious revolution, as Marx and Engels repeatedly emphasised, was to smash the old army, dissolve it and replace it by a new one. A new social class, when rising to power, never could, and cannot now, attain power and consolidate it except by completely disintegrating the old army." (17)

Comrades, you cannot raise the demand for the replacement of the standing army by the universally armed people if you wish to fight for the 'national interest,' for the fight for such a demand would greatly weaken the bourgeoisie's defence of the 'national interest' against the Soviet Union. Here you see how incompatible is the 'national interest' with the interests of the proletariat. The proletariat of Britain "have no country" and 'national interest' to defend. Either the socialist revolution, for which you must fight against the military arm of the state, fight to abolish it; or 'defence of the fatherland,' for which you must fight with the standing army, fight to strengthen it. But of course this "either: or" is not 'dialectical,' is it comrades? We're seeing things in black and white, not grasping Britain's 'dual nature' aren't we? But fortunately we will not follow you across the bridge to sophistry and will only point out that your refusal to raise the demand in question, your support for NATO (with or without the USA), your support for "military integration by the European bourgeoisie (no matter how larded with hypocritical qualifications about such support being only for 'defence!'), all show that your line and practice is a line and practice solely for the defence of British, US and European imperialism against the encroachments of Soviet social-imperialism.

In the article in 'Class Struggle' which commented on the result of last May's general election, the RCL commented that a "positive" aspect of the Tories' return to power was that they would "stand up" to the Soviet Union "more" than would a Labour government. (vol. 3, no. 10) The last twelve months have shown what is the substance of this 'better' stance of the Tories'. Yes, they have 'stood up' more to the Soviet Union (in honest parlance, they have been more aggressive imperialists than the Labour party). We have already looked at some of this 'standing up' viz-a-viz Zimbabwe, Iran, Afghanistan etc., but lets look at the economic significance of the "positive" aspect of Tory policy at home. To 'stand up' the imperialists need more guns, bombs, planes, tanks, ships, soldiers and policemen (to quell the workers' resistance to the consequences of 'standing up') etc., etc.. They also need an efficient steel industry, nuclear energy etc.. There is only one way to finance all this - greatly increased exploitation of the working class, massively increased taxation and massive cuts in public expenditure of schools, housing, hospitals etc.. Here again we see how utterly incompatible are the national interest and socialist revolution, how the bourgeoisie can only "defend Britain," i.e., British imperialism, by increased exploitation and oppression of the British working class and of hundreds of millions of other people around the world. To oppose these things would be to oppose British imperialism's war preparations, which is of course the reason your organizations, comrades of the RCL and the CWM, either oppose these things not at all or only oppose them feebly. For instance, in 'Class Struggle's' article on the recent budget (vol. 4, no. 7), despite correctly pointing out that one aim of the budget was to split the working class, you were unable to see the most salient feature of the budget: that it was a war budget. You didn't point out that the only areas of public expenditure protected from cuts in one form or another were 'defence,' i.e., preparations for war, and 'law and order,' i.e., measures designed to protect the bourgeoisie from the peoples' wrath. You didn't mention the increase in the armed forces' military capacity announced in the 'defence' estimates. Why not? It is because you must support these things if you are to consistently fight for the 'nation' against Soviet social-imperialism. And open support at the time of the budget attacks on the working class and people would expose you utterly as poseurs as far as socialist revolution is concerned. The main reason why the budget measures were aimed at splitting the working class and driving down the real level of wages (as 'Class Struggle' also correctly pointed out) is that the bourgeoisie needs a docile, demoralised and defeated working class if it is to be able to drive it out on to the battle-

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fields of imperialist war once more. Again 'Class Struggle' was unable to point this out (or chose not to point it out).

Look, finally, at the tax question. In the budget, despite the cuts in most areas of public expenditure, the burden of taxation on the people increased. The Marxist answer to the tax question is to demand: No indirect taxes; public expenses to be borne entirely by the progressive taxation of income and inheritance; no income tax to be levied on the average industrial wage. These demands are once again based on the experience of the Paris Commune. But comrades, how can you raise these demands, when the vast sums of money stolen from the people by the bourgeoisie in taxes are absolutely essential for there to be bombs, guns, planes, tanks etc., to 'defend' Britain from the Soviet Union? Imperialist war is an expensive business comrades, and especially expensive for the working class and people!

Comrades, you are advocating to the working class that in the event of war with the Soviet Union they should ally with the imperialist bourgeoisie in defence of British 'national independence.' (We have shown that your qualification that such an alliance will take place only if the US imperialists are not involved is simply not to be taken seriously). Your practice shows that what you are working might and main to bring about is a social chauvinist alliance in defence of British imperialism. To reassure the anxious and fool the gullible you assert that such an alliance will lead to the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is though significant that out of the many thousands of words devoted by the RCL and the CWM to the propagation of their line on war and revolution, not one has been spent in explaining how this remarkable sequence of historical events will come about.

We will give you some credit, comrades, by making the assumption that you consider that the dictatorship of the proletariat will be established consequent upon the seizure of power through revolution. Consider comrades: how will the working class seize state power through revolution against the state power of the ruling bourgeoisie when it is an alliance, however temporary, with that class? This would be, in an imperialist country, an unparalleled historical phenomena. Let us look at Lenin's classic description of the circumstances in which a revolution may take place:

"1) When it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the 'upper classes,' a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes bursts forth. It is usually insufficient for the 'lower classes not to want' to live in the old way; it is also necessary that the 'upper classes should be unable' to live in the old way. 2) When the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual. 3) When, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in 'peace time,' but who, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis and by the upper classes themselves into independent historical action." (18)

A victory for the US-led coalition, which is a possible outcome of the war, will strengthen the imperialist countries in that coalition, no matter how temporarily. It will certainly not lead to the sort of crisis described by Lenin. The British imperialists would emerge from the war in a better position to maintain their rule. And it such an outcome that comrades who claim that they are fighting for socialism are working for! Even a defeat (which the RCL and the CWM positively will not work for) will not lead to revolution unless there is a revolutionary party, which, from the very beginning of the conflict, has been taking advantage of the misery inevitably inflicted upon the masses to arouse indignation and revolutionary sentiments and is thus ready to lead the masses in striking the fatal blow at the moment when the time is ripe. It is a British defeat which we must now start to lay the foundations for comrades: Lenin put it well - "An oppressed class cannot but wish for the defeat of its 'own'

bourgeoisie in a reactionary war."

Lenin further pointed out that: "It is not every revolutionary situation that gives rise to a revolution: revolution arises only out a situation in which the above-mentioned objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely, the ability of the revolutionary class to take revolutionary mass action strong enough to break (or dislocate) the old government..." The RCL's social chauvinist line is utterly incapable of furthering this subjective change. It cannot further the proletariat's ability to take revolutionary mass action. On the contrary, your line, comrades, of subordinating the interests of the working class to the interests of the bourgeoisie, would completely incapacitate the proletariat, prevent it from taking advantage of a revolutionary situation. Only a working class schooled in class struggle will be able to do this. But the RCL is doing its best to lead the proletariat away from class struggle. The significance of this magnified a hundred fold when we recall that imperialist wars always bring about objectively revolutionary situations. The RCL is rendering magnificent service to the British bourgeoisie by trying to ensure that a) the war develops in such a way that no revolutionary situation arises and b) that should one arise (as it inevitably will) the British proletariat is subjectively unable to take advantage of it.

The duty of the communists at the commencement of the war will be clear: to start work there and then to try to turn the imperialist war into civil war; or, if that is not possible due to the objective and subjective conditions, to spread defeatism, to expose the real purpose of the bourgeoisie, to sabotage the war, to do everything possible to bring about a defeat. And it will of course be the duty of the communists of all the other imperialist countries to do precisely the same thing. But what ^{will} you be doing, comrades of the RCL and the CWM? If you stick to your present line you will be attempting to console the masses in their suffering with fairy tales about the war being 'just.' No doubt you will be urging the workers in uniform to fight harder to kill the workers on 'the other side' with the guns, bombs, planes and tanks extracted in tribute from them and the oppressed peoples and nations by the imperialists. You will have your damndest prior to the war to ensure that the bulwark of the state, the standing army, is intact, that US bases are still in Britain, that Britain is still a part of NATO. In general, to ensure that Britain and the rest of the US-led coalition are in a position to achieve victory. Comrades, you will have become class traitors, traitors to the revolution. It is up to you to fight against social-chauvinism in your organizations and to join those struggling to lead the working class on the path of revolution.

Comradely Greetings,

The Stockport Communist Group.

Notes and References.

1. In this article the author accuses the ACW of "centrism" of attempting to adopt the middle ground between what the author considers to be the Marxist line and the revisionist line. "Centrism" was a term coined by Lenin in 1914 to describe those like Kautsky who tried to cover their social chauvinism with a formal adherence to the aim of socialist revolution. Lenin pointed out that in practice there was no difference between Kautsky and the open social chauvinists like Plekhanov, because both, despite formal differences, allied themselves with the bourgeoisie in the imperialist war. We do not consider that the term 'centrism' is of great use today in clarifying the political tendencies which have emerged in the international communist movement. These tendencies are: the social chauvinist line, represented in this country by the RCLB, CWM, WPS(M-L) etc.; the ultra-left line, which also has many social-chauvinist features, represented here by the CPB(M-L); and the international line, represented by the ACW, NCG and ourselves. Superficially, the accusation of "centrism" levelled by the RCL at the ACW has some justification; the ACW's political line does occupy a middle position between right and 'left' deviations, which is only another way of saying that it is a correct line. Only in this sense can the ACW's line be called 'centrist.' If the term 'centrist' is applicable to anyone it is to the RCL and CWM who, like Kautsky, combine a formal adherence to the aim of socialist revolution with a practical renunciation of it. The practice of your organizations, comrades of the RCL and CWM is not whit different to that of the WPS(M-L), RMLCL etc., who have openly abandoned socialism. Your 'criticism' of these organizations amounts to ticking them off for giving the game away, for being open, honest social-chauvinists. Your dishonest, concealed social-chauvinism prefers to dress itself up with false words of 'socialism.' Thus your organizations are more dangerous social-chauvinists than the WPS etc., although as far as practical politics are concerned you are birds of a feather.
2. We note that this article is "contributed," i.e., a device to allow the RCL to publish and then disclaim responsibility. The article is though 'contributed' in exactly the same sense that Peregrine Worsthorpe contributes to the 'Daily Telegraph.' We shall therefore treat the article as the authentic voice of the RCL.
3. 'The Polemic on the General Line of the International Communist Movement.' Original ed., p 6.
4. 'For the Unity of the Working Class Against Fascism.' Red Star Press, p 42.
5. 'A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism.' Moscow ed. p 18. We should add that we are not at all opposed to national wars within the British state, i.e, of the Scottish and Welsh nations against British imperialism, but only to wars of the British imperialists, conducted by the British state.
6. 'Socialism and War.' pp 7&8 of the Peking Collection 'Lenin on War and Peace.'
7. Ibid. p 17.
8. 'The Junius Pamphlet.' Contained in 'The Australian Communist', issue no 87, p 13.
9. 'The Collapse of the Second International.' Moscow ed., p 30.
10. Ibid, p 33.
11. 'Britain and the United Front.' Lawrence and Wishart 1942, p 78.
12. 'The Junius Pamphlet,' p 5.
13. Ibid, p6.
14. 'The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky,' Peking ed., p 80.

15. 'State and Revolution,' Peking ed., p 12.
16. 'The Civil War in France,' Peking ed., p 6.
17. 'The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky,' Peking ed., p 77.
18. 'The Collapse of the Second International,' Moscow ed., pp 11/12.

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