

CRITICISM OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF ENGLAND (MARXIST-LENINIST) (CPEML)
WITH REGARD TO THE MOVEMENT FOR ZIMBABWE SOLIDARITY.

On December 6th, 1975, the Zimbabwe Solidarity Committee held its Annual General Meeting - the first general meeting since the split in the organisation (indeed, the only thing to happen in ZSC since the split). Among the documents circulated at this meeting was a "Letter to ZSC" from the Communist Party of England (Marxist-Leninist) which, ostensibly, set out "the position of the Communist Party of England (Marxist-Leninist) with regard to the ZSC"; the letter was dated 30th November, 1975. This is the document we shall consider here; but before we do this we shall summarize the main points of the general position of the CPE(ML).

This organisation, the CPE(ML), is no organisation of Marxist-Leninists, as it claims, but a bunch of cranks and utopian socialists (i.e., cranks - in the context of the present world). According to the CPE, there is certainly an international system of imperialist oppression, but, if there is any such thing as imperialist super-profits, it is confined solely to the monopoly capitalists: there is no such thing as an "aristocracy of labour"; the British working class in general do not benefit at all from imperialist super-exploitation of 'third world' countries (and, indeed, any benefit the monopoly capitalists get is merely incidental, the main reason for their oppression being sheer nastiness and misanthropy). British workers are ultra-exploited, super-oppressed, seething with internationalist benevolence, and literally verging on revolution. And why are they verging on revolution? Because of sheer outrage and moral indignation, their brotherly love of all people the world over, their self-sacrificial adoration of high ideals, and love of Chairman Mao.* The imperialist system must be overthrown because it contradicts the Principles of Justice, and the sententious British people just will not tolerate injustice. Clearly, this is typical of the kind of idealist social theory of which Hegel remarked: "As if the world had waited on it to learn how it ought to be, and was not!" (Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences: Vol.1, Logic). In particular, it is typical of pre-Marxian (i.e. utopian) socialism; and the CPE are just such utopians, only they exist after Marx, and, as such, they are a comic anachronism.**

*This is not meant in any way to detract from the greatness of Comrade Mao Tse-Tung. Rather, it is the CPE, more than anyone else, who do this by their deification of him, their general religious attitude, their continual invocation of Mao's name coupled with their continual disregard of the substance of his writings (e.g. the Leninist theory of imperialism), and, in general, by the mere association of Mao's name with their emetic and peurile empty phrases.

**We do not here fully substantiate that this is the general position of the CPE, though we deal with all these points in so far as they manifest themselves in their "Letter to ZSC". Nevertheless, dare the CPE opugn even one single word of this summary of their general position and we shall substantiate it fully, adducing lengthy quotations from their literature. Since, however, the most effective way to ridicule CPE is by giving publicity to their own literature, we are sure that the threat to quote from them at length will be sufficient to frighten them into silence.

Let us, then, have a laugh at this comic anachronism as we deal with their afore-mentioned "Letter to ZSC". One of the first things we meet here is the accusation that the Association of Communist Workers (ACW) used ZSC "As a centre for attempts to complicate the issues and introduce anti-people theories". Now the view expressed by ACW was not a view exclusive to ACW, but was held by other members of the ZSC, and, indeed, was embodied in the Aims of the organisation (and is now embodied in the Aims of the ZSF). We can summarise this position as follows: Our aim is to build support among the British working class for the armed struggle of the people of Zimbabwe led by ZANU. To this end it is necessary to show to British workers that the victory of the struggle in Zimbabwe is in their own interests. But what are the effects on the British working class of the struggle in Zimbabwe? The immediate effect is a cut in living standards and an accentuation of the general crisis, because the struggle of the Zimbabwean people is an attack on imperialism which weakens the system. However, it is in the interests of the British working class to get rid of the imperialist system and to replace it by a socialist system; and it is in this way that the Zimbabwean attack on imperialism is in the interests of the British working class; that is, only by linking the Zimbabwean revolution with the struggle for socialism here can we show to British workers that it is in their interests to support the struggle in Zimbabwe .

Oh, but wait, this is an "anti-people theory", exclaim the CPE in horror. They say in their letter: "We are not supporting Zimbabwe to oppress the British people more." Well, neither are we. In fact, we are supporting Zimbabwe in order to liberate the British "people" (or, as we Marxists would prefer, the 'proletariat'), as the above argument shows. Why then are we "anti-people"? This is a perplexing situation since, it seems, we both agree and yet disagree. Let us employ a little dialectical reasoning to try and extricate ourselves from this "antinomy" (as Kant would put it). Luckily, we can call in to help us the founder of consistent dialectics, Karl Marx.

In considering the struggle of the Irish against British domination (a not unsimilar situation to Zimbabwe), Marx had the following to say: "quite apart from all phrases about 'international' and 'humane' justice for Ireland...it is in the direct and absolute interests of the English working class to get rid of their present connection with Ireland" (Letter to Engels, 10.12.1869.- Marx's emphasis). A question we should ask ourselves here is, what does Marx mean when he talks of the "absolute interests" of the working class? (Indeed, this question may even be asked by a more attentive member of the CPE, i.e., a newer member - before the 'leading members' of CPE have had time to breed the young fruit on their poisoned minds with stinking ordure.) Let us consider the question in the context of the Zimbabwean situation. As we have said, the victory of the Zimbabwean revolution would have the immediate effect of accentuating the crisis of imperialism, which means more unemployment, less wages, and so on; therefore, relative to the imperialist system, the struggle for Zimbabwe is not in the interests of the British working class, i.e., it is not in their 'relative interests'. In other words, relative to the bourgeois system, "supporting Zimbabwe oppresses the British people more". But let us consider the absolute interests of the British working class, i.e., not what is in their interests relative to a particular system, but what is in their interests independently of any particular social system, which resolves itself into the question: what social system is in the

interests of the working class? Clearly, communism is in the absolute interests of the working class. Now, as already said, the struggle in Zimbabwe, by accentuating the crisis of imperialism, forces upon the British working class the necessity of making socialist revolution; hence it is in the absolute interests of the British working class to support Zimbabwe.

Thus, ACW and co. view the Zimbabwean revolution from the standpoint of the absolute interests of the working class, and support it because it liberates the working class. This analysis the CPE call "anti-people", and these venom-spitting basilisks accuse us of "supporting Zimbabwe to oppress the British people more". Clearly this shows that the CPE view the Zimbabwean revolution solely from the standpoint of the relative interests of the working class; their absolute frame of reference is the bourgeois system - they see no further than this, and so, for them, the working class is always and only a part of the capitalist system. The success of the Zimbabwean struggle will reduce imperialist superprofits, and accordingly will reduce the share of these that fall as crumbs to the working class in the imperialist countries, and this, for the CPE, is "oppressing the British people more", and the CPE are "not going to support Zimbabwe if it oppresses British people more". The outlook of the CPE is, clearly, constrained within a bourgeois framework; like all utopian socialists in the present day, the CPE is thoroughly bourgeois.*

* Incidentally, the CPE also accuse ACW and co. of wanting to "oppress the British working class further to make them revolutionary" (Letter to ZSC). There is nothing new in this type of charge that CPE hold against us: the bourgeois philosophers, historians, political theorists, sociologists and sycophants have been accusing the Marxists of 'wanting to oppress the workers' for years. The Marxists have always spoken of the economic crisis of capitalism being the 'material' prerequisite of revolution; for example, Lenin says: "revolution is impossible without a nation-wide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters)" (Left-Wing Communism). And to this the bourgeois sophists have said: 'You Marxists want to oppress the workers more', 'You want a crisis to oppress the workers and make them revolutionary' etc. Of course, it is not a case of Marxists 'wanting' a crisis: such crises are but necessary consequences of the capitalist system - it produces them by its own internal logic. Nor is it a case of Marxists 'wanting to oppress the workers more': Marxists want to liberate the workers, which is why we call for revolution as the only solution for crises and other such corollaries of capitalist economy. The bourgeois makes such charges because he views the working class as only and always a part of the bourgeois system. But then the bourgeois is a bourgeois. And, being the product of his social conditions, the bourgeois sees no further than his bourgeois horizons and class interests permit; his outlook is hemmed in by the "selfish misconception" (as Marx put it) of his class that the bourgeois system is given and absolute. And, tailing after the ordinary bourgeois, we find the CPE with their 'ACW want to oppress British workers to make them revolutionary' etc. The CPE also take the bourgeois system as given, viewing the interests of the workers as relative to the bourgeois system. The only way that the CPE distinguish themselves from the ordinary bourgeois in this respect is by calling themselves "Marxist-Leninist". But who would believe them?

As opposed to the materialists of ACW etc., who ask the British workers to support Zimbabwe because it is in their absolute class interests, the CPE say: "We in Britain should support the struggle of any oppressed people against exploitation and that is the decisive issue in regards to the Zimbabwean people as it is with all other oppressed peoples." We may well ask why we should support these struggles. But such a question would be out of place, for, as they say, "the decisive issue" is that "we should support them". What we have here is a veritable Kantian "Categorical Imperative": do this - and not for any purpose - just do it, it's your duty. Kant, of course, was an idealist, and, indeed, the very best formulation of idealist ethics, which, incidentally, is characteristic of every form of utopian socialism; so the CPE go to the workers armed with their "Critique of Fractical Reason", i.e., their parsons' ethics, and they say to the workers: 'Support the people of Zimbabwe because they are oppressed and oppression is unjust'. But the workers are unlikely to take much notice of such moralising, for, as Lenin pointed out, "workers are practical men and not sentimental intellectuals" (State and Revolution).* Indeed, it was Lenin, again, who gave the sharpest formulation of what he called "communist ethics": "morality is subordinated to the interests of the proletariat's class struggle" (Tasks of the Youth Leagues) - which, of course, brings us back to class interests. The only way to get support from the workers is to show them that such support is in their own interests.

Hence, we see that CPE is not only bourgeois, but also idealist, and to that extent, at least, they are consistent. And what they put out as "Marxism-Leninism" is but the vilest bourgeois idealism.

From what has been said, it is evident that the Zimbabwe Solidarity movement must be led by Marxist-Leninists; for only Marxist-Leninists are capable of working out, on the basis of historical and social science, a scientific analysis of the current world situation; only Marxist-Leninists can see that appeals for support must be made on the basis of class interest; only Marxist-Leninists can see in what this class interest consists, and that the struggle for Zimbabwe must be linked with the struggle of the proletariat for socialism. Now, in words at any rate (or rather, in words as always) the CPE agree with this: "ZSC must be led by Marxist-Leninists. This is because no other political trend is capable of leading and uniting the people of Britain to support the Zimbabwean, or any other revolution, in a principled way." So far so good (though, not completely, as we shall point out later). "At the same time ZSC is set up to support the Zimbabwean revolution in a principled manner and to unite with all/ progressive and democratic sections to do this work." Wait a minute; this merely repeats the preceding sentence - and so it adds nothing new at all - and yet this is said to be happening "at the same time". Well obviously it is happening at the same time because it is the same thing! See the sort of crass idiots we have to deal with? (As usual, the CPE utter a vacuous tautology, with which no-one can disagree, and then pompously prate about the 'unity' achieved.) "This", we are told, "deals with the discussion that is going on the question of whether it is necessary to support socialist revolution in Britain or not, in order to be a

* Incidentally, the CPE fall into neither category: they cannot be workers because of their putrid sentimentality; and they cannot be intellectuals because of their marked absence of any intellect.

member of ZSC.* It is necessary to support the principles of ZSC, that is all." Now we are getting somewhere; this was precisely the dispute that led to the split in ZSC, its decay, and supersession by the ZSF: ACW and co. insisted that members of ZSC must support the principles of ZSC (and that this and only this was the political qualification for membership); however, the ZSC also had as members people from the Communist Unity Association, the East-London Group, the inimitable Mr. Lester Lewis - and also CPE - who had joined the ZSC but did not support the principles of the organisation; moreover, these unprincipled disruptors eventually constituted a majority and effectively made it impossible for those members of ZSC who did support its Aims to participate in the ZSC; we were forced to leave and set up the ZSF.** As for the unprincipled disruption on the part of CPE, we shall demonstrate this below, quoting from their "Letter to ZSC", where they condemn themselves.

But for the moment there will be a short interlude with some entertainment as we quote the next sentences of the CPE without comment. Take a laugh at the following moronic utterance: "However, Marxist-Leninists should not hide their views and should clearly assert the necessity for Marxist-Leninist united leadership of all aspects of the revolutionary movement in this country, including the support movement for national liberation struggles. It is wrong to say it is necessary to support the socialist revolution in Britain in order to support ZSC. But then who is going to support ZSC and the armed overthrow of the white racist regime, and at the same time not support socialist revolution in Britain?"

To return to a slightly more serious note (though utopian socialists in the present era cannot be taken seriously), the CPE suggest, in their "Letter to ZSC", some amendments to the ZSC Aims (these amendments were put to the ZSC AGM on 6th December, 1975). "Paragraph (a) of the ZSC preamble*7 is erroneous in its statement that the third world is leading the struggle against imperialism. The third world is the main force. The leadership is the international communist movement, itself led by the Communist Party of China, with Chairman Mao at its head." The word 'leading' - and this will surprise the CPE - has more than one meaning, just as all words - and this will surprise the CPE even more - have more than one meaning, though (when they are used correctly) the meaning they have in any particular context is suggested by that context. When we say that the 'third world' is leading the struggle against imperialism, we mean, as the context would suggest, that the 'third world' is in the forefront of the struggle, that the struggle against imperialism is most intense in the 'third world' countries, that "the principal contradiction in the world today is that between imperialism and the peoples of the third world" (Mao Tse-Tung). So when the CPE deny that the 'third world' are leading the struggle, are they denying that the 'third world' is in the forefront of the

* Incidentally, it does not "deal with" this question at all. As always, the CPE construct a phrase which everyone can agree with but which glosses over the differences. The agreement produced is merely superficial and ad hoc; and yet this is, for CPE, 'unity'. This will be further discussed below.

** For a full report of all this see "The Split in the Zimbabwe Solidarity Committee, and the Formation of the Zimbabwe Solidarity Front" in No.s 1 and 2 of 'Revolutionary Zimbabwe'.

***Also paragraph (a) of the Preamble of the ZSF.

s struggle? It certainly would not surprise us, for they do not accept the Leninist theory of imperialism, of which it is a part, and, besides, the CPE believe that the British working class is going to unleash revolution at any minute, so the struggle in Britain must be pretty intense.

But in the sense in which the CPE use the word 'leading', viz., to refer to the role of a conscious revolutionary vanguard organisation, they still incorporate it into perverse utterances. They say: "The leadership [of the struggle against imperialism] is the international communist movement, itself led by the Communist Party of China, with Chairman Mao at its head." Well, there is certainly an international movement towards communism, but there is certainly not any international leadership of this movement. The movement is led, in each nation, by the respective (national) revolutionary organisations. So the CPE's "international communist movement" which is leading the struggle is a mere fiction. But the CPE themselves seem to recognize this, for their "international communist movement", which is supposed to be the conscious vanguard of world revolution, needs itself to be led, and, indeed, by a national organisation, viz., the Communist Party of China! This is as bad as the absurd theory that explains that 'the earth rests on whales, the whales swim on water, and the water is on the earth'. We are sometimes led to think that the CPE are a bit confused.

The next "improvement" suggested by the CPE is: "The emphasis in paragraph (e) [of the ZSC preamble*] on the desire of British imperialism to pull out and impose a neo-colonial solution is wrong.... The main point about British imperialism is its opposition to the Zimbabwean people (!), its exploitation of the labour and resources of Zimbabwe. The British monopoly capitalist class has no interest beyond this, and is quite prepared to have a colonial solution if that best served their interests." Well, we have a nice piece of self-contradictory asininity here! On the one hand we have that the imperialists want what ^{ever} best serves their interests. Now it is self-evident that it best serves the interests of the imperialists to get the co-operation of the people they exploit, not their resistance and opposition. And yet, on the other hand, CPE tell us that "the main point about British imperialism is its opposition to the Zimbabwean people"! With what sort of mental pygmias are we dealing here? Clearly, the stupidest sort.** The last quotation really reveals the idealist position of CPE: imperialists oppress because they are nasty, and any economic benefit they obtain from this is purely incidental, "the main point" being their "opposition to the... people". Actually, imperialists oppress and exploit because they

* Also paragraph (e) of the Preamble of ZSF.

** We often say the CPE are stupid; and this is certainly true, but it does not constitute our criticism of them - our criticism of CPE is a criticism of their political line. Also, when we call them 'stupid' we do not mean that they have zero IQ (though in some cases this may be true); rather, we mean that they take the stand of utopians, of pre-Marxians, and that anyone who takes such a position in the present era is bound to look stupid. Nor do we say that they take the stand of utopians because they have a zero IQ; rather, they take this stand because of their petty-bourgeois consciousness. Nor do we say that they have a petty-bourgeois consciousness because they have a zero IQ; rather, such a consciousness is determined by their social conditions of existence.

derive superprofits from it, and they would always prefer to be on good terms with the people they exploit, merely because it makes the exploitation easier and more secure. For the CPE, imperialists are oppressive, and, contingently arising out of this, they therefore receive superprofits: their superprofits are the product of their sheer nastiness: their "consciousness determines their social being". In fact, imperialists need to exploit, to extract superprofits, and they are 'nasty' and oppressive because of this: their oppression is the product of their profits: their "social being determines their consciousness".* "The main point about British imperialism" is not "its opposition to the Zimbabwean people", but its desire and need to continue to extract superprofits from Zimbabwe.** This is impossible in the context of a colonial solution because the Zimbabweans will wage an armed struggle against any colonial regime that is imposed. But it may be possible through a neo-colonial solution, and it is this that British imperialism is hoping (and scheming) for - because the only alternative to it is a revolutionary Zimbabwe, free from imperialist exploitation, the mere existence of which would also threaten imperialist interests in southern Africa generally.

Of course, in the past, British imperialism ruled Zimbabwe through a colonial regime: this it could do in the past, but not now. Learning from the past is one thing, but living in it is quite another; and, although imperialism consistently takes the former option, it is the latter option that is taken by the CPE when they say that "the emphasis on the desire of British imperialism to pull out and impose a neo-colonial solution is wrong" and that Britain "is quite prepared to have a colonial solution" etc.

One more point in connection with the last quotation from CPE: they talk of "exploitation of the labour and resources of Zimbabwe." We have already said that CPE are not Marxists but are utopian socialists. Now, every science emerges from phantasy, and scientific socialism, in particular, was preceded by utopian socialism. When a science begins, it takes the concepts ready to hand, which are vague and loose, and it modifies them to suit its purposes, giving them a technical precision. Nevertheless, the words which denote these scientific concepts continue being used in the old colloquial way (e.g. the physical concepts 'Force', 'Energy', 'Work'). No confusion results from this so long as the different meanings are not conflated, i.e., so long as the word is used in its scientific meaning in a scientific context, and so on. But it would be most confusing, most obscurantist, and most unscientific, to use a word in both its scientific and non-scientific meanings in the same context. And yet this is what the CPE are doing here.

* "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (Marx: Preface to a 'Critique of Political Economy').

** British imperialism exploits the Zimbabwean people, and it is therefore opposed to their interests. But this does not use 'opposition' in the same sense as CPE when they say that 'British imperialism is opposed to the Zimbabwean people'. Certainly, the first kind of opposition engenders the second kind; but it is the comprehension of the direction of the causal connection between them that separates materialism from idealism (the denial of a causal connection being dualism).

'Exploitation' is a term which Marxism gives a precise, scientific meaning, viz., the extraction of surplus value. The term continues to retain its broader pre-scientific meaning of 'using for one's own purposes' etc. No confusion results from this - until some half-witted muddlehead of the CPE comes along and talks about "exploitation of labour" (a context in which 'exploitation' has its narrower, scientific meaning), and in the same context (indeed, in the very same phrase) talks of "exploitation of resources" (which uses 'exploitation' in a non-scientific sense).* We can excuse the old pre-Marxian utopians for using words in this way, since in their time the science had not yet constituted itself (and, moreover, because they were actually preparing the theoretical ground for the emergence of the science), but when this happens in the present day, and, indeed, by people who call themselves Marxist-Leninists, it shows a disregard of the precision necessary for science and a cynical contempt for Marxism; it is not only thoroughly disgusting, but is also thoroughly obscurantist and thoroughly bourgeois.

It can in no way surprise us that such an irredeemably bourgeois organisation as the CPE should find itself in opposition to the proletarian Aims of the ZSC. We have already seen their objections to paragraphs (a) and (e) of the Preamble, which appraise the current situation in the world in general, and in Zimbabwe in particular. But the CPE also object to paragraph (f) of the ZSC Preamble**, which outlines the 'global strategy' of the anti-imperialist struggle, and shows the unity of interests of the people of Zimbabwe (in the struggle for national independence) and the proletariat of Britain (in the struggle for socialism). Their letter states: "In our view the entire paragraph (f) should be eliminated", because it expresses an "erroneous view".***

* "With such confusion of language, nonsense is inevitable" (Engels: Dialectics of Nature).

** Also paragraph (f) of the ZSF Preamble.

*** And what is this "erroneous view"? It is nothing less than the Leninist theory of imperialism, according to which: (1) the imperialist world is divided into oppressing and oppressed nations; (2) some 'crumbs' from the imperialist superprofits extracted from the oppressed nations fall, in the oppressing nations, to the working class in general, and in particular to the "labour aristocrats" who form the 'official' leadership of the working class (trade union bureaucrats etc.); (3) the overthrow of imperialism is brought about by the unity of the struggle of the proletariat of the oppressor nations to overthrow its 'own' bourgeoisie, and the struggle of the oppressed nations for national independence; (4) the relatively better-off conditions of the proletariat of the imperialist heartlands, due to imperialist super-exploitation of the colonies, temporarily takes away the necessity for it to make socialist revolution; (5) consequently, "the principal contradiction in the world today is that between oppressing and oppressed nations" (Mao).

As usual, the CPE give no refutation of this theory, they merely denounce it as an "erroneous view". For them, there is no such thing as a "labour aristocracy"; indeed, when Trotskyists criticize the trade-union bureaucrats the CPE denounce them for "attacking the trade unions", when it is rather the case that the Trotskyist criticism of the trade-union bureaucracy is always inadequate, springing from their desire to occupy such positions themselves. For the CPE, the British working class receive no (temporary and insecure) benefits from imperialist super-exploitation: British workers are downtrodden and live in the most abominable conditions of material deprivation. For

The CPE also want to delete from paragraph (c) of the aims of ZSC* the section which declares the aim of ZSC to be "showing how the struggle for Zimbabwean liberation helps the struggle for working class power in Britain."

We may well ask: how is it that an organisation with such radical disagreements with the Aims of ZSC nevertheless joined the ZSC? Especially when this very organisation, as we have already quoted, states that "in order to be a member of ZSC it is necessary to support the principles of ZSC". This is arrant dishonesty and hypocrisy. And yet, not only did CPE join the ZSC, whose Aims they so radically disagree with, but at the Founding Conference, at which the Aims were accepted, the CPE raised no objections at all to them. Instead, like a greedy vulture who swoops to devour the tender limbs of the new-born young, unprincipled disruptors of the CPE obsequiously wormed their way into the ZSC, with whose Aims they did not agree, and acted as support for the sabotage of the organisation carried out by Lester Lewis, Communist Unity Association (CUA), and the East-London Group (ELG).** Hence CPE were responsible for a veritable disruption of the work of the ZSC in implementing its proletarian Aims. However, ACW and co. insisted that "in order to be a member of ZSC it is necessary to support its principles", and we carried on a struggle against all attempts to subvert the Aims of ZSC and against all disruptions of the work of ZSC. But the odious opportunists of CUA, ELG, Lester Lewis and co., and CPE were in a majority and they "fascistically", as one comrade put it, stopped ACW and co. participating in ZSC.** And what do CPE say on this? "We oppose the liberal way (!) in which their ACW's disruptions (!) were dealt with." It is clear, however, who was disrupting; and it is clear that the way in which ACW was suppressed was fascist. But it does not surprise us that fascist treatment of ACW should appear liberal to CPE; for when one of our comrades was doing nothing more "disruptive" than distributing a leaflet outside a CPE public meeting, the CPE came out and beat him up. And this also does not surprise us; and not only because we have come to expect anything from the CPE cranks, but for a more specific reason. The CPE are in no way scientific; they are dogmatic, obscurantist and fideist; they have an antipathy to saying things that people have not already heard; their literary output is restricted to collections of slogans,

The CPE, the working class does not make revolution out of necessity or because of class interests, but out of love of mankind and because it's their 'internationalist duty'. For the CPE, it cannot be the case that the benefits of imperialism have (temporarily) subdued the revolutionary spirits of the ^{British} working class; on the contrary, British workers are hyper-revolutionary, and, for example, "The Azanian people... have the support of the British working class" (see CPE leaflet issued on the Anti-Apartheid demonstration, 23/3/75). In fact, of course, the British working class just are not rushing to give support to Azania. It is perfectly clear who holds an "erroneous view". Having rejected the Marxist-Leninist theory of imperialism, i.e., the scientific theory on which any sound analysis of the current world situation must be based, we may wonder why the CPE call themselves 'Marxist-Leninist'. But, of course, everyone knows that utopian socialists in our era are nothing but cranks; so in order to get any hearing at all, these cranks have to call themselves 'Marxist-Leninists'.

* Also paragraph (c) of the Aims of ZSF.

** See: "The Split in the Zimbabwe Solidarity Committee and the Formation of the Zimbabwe Solidarity Front" in No.s 1 and 2 of 'Revolutionary Zimbabwe'.

phrases, banalities, and unsubstantiated accusations; they are capable neither of giving nor of understanding even the simplest scientific argument - all this has been shown above and will be further shown below. Consequently, when argumentation is presented to them they can have no answer: either they say nothing, like dumb idiots; or they beat you up, like demented cretins (or, as is more usual, they reel off a list of denunciations and accusations which they have neither the ability nor the inclination to substantiate).

Further on in the letter, the CPE meander on: "The reference to the Labour Party as social imperialist is in our view unscientific." How about that?! The CPE, epitome and paragon of scientific ideals, declares that it is "unscientific" to call the Labour Party "social imperialist"! And why? Because "the term social imperialist is applied to revisionist parties and in particular, the revisionist party of the soviet union", and because (wait for it - years of empirical research, it seems, has taught the CPE the profound truth that) "The Labour Party is a different party to the soviet revisionist party." But hold on, Venus is different to Jupiter, but we call them both planets; gold is different to copper, but we call them both metals. Well, clearly, the CPE's argument does not hold, since science would get nowhere if it did not apply the same term to different things - so long as they share something in common, which the term denotes. Indeed, it seems pretty scientific to us to use words according to their meanings; and the term 'social imperialist' means 'socialist in words and imperialist in deeds'; and this term, we see, applies both to the revisionist party of the Soviet Union and to the Labour Party, since both profess socialism and practise imperialism - this much they certainly have in common, and it is this that we affirm when we refer to them both as 'social imperialist'.* Hence "the reference to the Labour Party as social imperialist" is fully scientific after all. And anyway, who are the CPE to instruct us about the ways of science? We have already seen their obscurantist disregard of scientific precision in the use of the term 'exploitation'. We have already seen their disregard of Marxist scientific materialism and substitution for it of bourgeois idealism. We have already seen their rejection of scientific socialism in favour of utopian socialism. We have already seen their foul dishonesty, illustrated by their membership of ZSC when they disagreed with its Aims, and by not making a single objection to the Aims when they were voted on at the Founding Conference - and yet honesty is a first demand of science. We have already seen that scientific practice is to use words according to their meanings, i.e., to say what you mean and mean what you say; and we have seen CPE do the opposite of this when they say that "members of ZSC must support its principles" and yet themselves join ZSC without supporting its principles. We have already seen, from their amendments to the ZSC Aims quoted above, that CPE reject the Leninist scientific analysis of imperialism, thinking, instead, that they can build an anti-imperialist movement on empty phrases and mere slogans. We have already seen that, in true utopian style, the CPE prefer to talk of "the British people" rather than the British proletariat: Marxism is a theory of classes and not of "the people" - the class concept is essential for historical science,

* Incidentally, it is not only "we" who are referring to the Labour Party as 'social imperialist'; this practice was also pursued by a not insignificant Russian Marxist, called 'V.I. Lenin', whom, we are told, is not entirely unknown to the CPE. Was Lenin then "unscientific"? Of course he was not: as we have just shown, there is nothing unscientific in referring to the Labour Party as 'social imperialist'.

and its development was a scientific advance; Marxism made full and proper use of this concept, replacing the amorphous "the people" with the rigorously-defined "proletariat". Of course, it is still scientific to talk of "the people" in the context of, e.g., Zimbabwe, for what we have here is a war of national liberation, i.e., a war of the Zimbabwean people against imperialism; but in the context of the situation in Britain, where social advance can come about only through socialist revolution, to substitute "the people" for "the proletariat" not only shows a contempt for scientific advance, but it is downright reactionary, for it conceals the class nature of present social reality when our task is to bring it to the fore. However, this 'Rightist' mistake does not stop the CPE from also making the corresponding 'Leftist' mistake, for in their letter they say: "the Zimbabwean people struggling against the white racist regime are the class brothers of the British working class" (our emphasis). So on the one hand, we have the British people uniting with the Zimbabwean people: this is CPE's 'Rightist' mistake. While on the other hand we have the British working class uniting with the Zimbabwean working class: this is CPE's 'Leftist' mistake. Actually what we have is the British working class uniting with the Zimbabwean people. Though, we are sure the CPE are not conscious of the fact that they have made a mistake on the Right, and at the same time, and in regard to the same issue, also a mistake on the Left; for the CPE only throw out phrases and slogans, often dressed in Marxist nomenclature, but they do not pay any attention at all to the meaning of their utterances - it's all merely jargon; and if the CPE occasionally (or rather, often) mix up the jargon, well that's to be expected, for when one plays with things in which one can see no meaningful interrelation, the way in which one orders them is bound to be arbitrary. And it is these dilettanti who are reproaching us (and also Lenin!) with being "unscientific"! Well, horses cannot speak, but CPE have shown us that asses can. Finally, we shall soon see that the CPE substitute metaphysics for dialectics, even though, since Hegel's time (early 19th century), metaphysics has been the most pernicious ideological influence on the development of the sciences, especially social science.

Pharisaically, the CPE conclude their letter with the following dishonest remarks: "We would like to have established a committee in which unity and principledness dominates." The CPE, which, as we have seen, is the paradigm case of unprincipledness take it upon themselves to lecture us on principledness! Such unprincipledness! And as for 'unity', the CPE are the kind of people who talk about unity without seeing the differences: unity is an end in itself; we must unite, and anyone who wants to resolve political differences is accused of "giving prominence" to "interminable differences of an 'insoluble' nature" (CPE Letter to ZSC). One member of CPE tells us, "the B and ICO are 'splittist'; but it is not Marxist-Leninist to split: Marxist-Leninists seek unity". Oh, but wait a moment - ignoring the question of BandICO as irrelevant here - we have heard somewhere that Marxism is a theory of class struggle; that Marxists, far from seeking class unity 'seek' class struggle; that Marxists talk of overthrowing the bourgeoisie; that, consequently, Marxists are 'splittist'. And yet, nevertheless, it cannot be denied that Marxists seek unity. Again we are faced with an "antinomy"; and again, let us see whether a little dialectical reasoning can help us.

Marxism is a theory of both unity and struggle. Firstly, Marxism recognizes the inevitable struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie; but it also recognizes that in this struggle the proletariat must have unity in its ranks. That is, unity with those who take

the class stand of the proletariat, and struggle against all those who do not.* Hence, unity must always be on the basis of correct proletarian principles; it must therefore always be for the purpose of promoting the class interests of the proletariat; i.e., unity must always serve the cause of socialist revolution. Struggle, then, takes place against those who do not accept the proletarian principles, for they are taking the side of the bourgeoisie (not necessarily consciously, but then, not necessarily unconsciously either). So unity is not an end in itself; it must always serve the class struggle of the proletariat. Hence, when anyone asks us for 'unity', we always ask, 'for what purpose are we uniting?', and consider whether this purpose serves the class interests of the proletariat, i.e., the struggle for socialism. Thus, for Marxists, 'unity' and 'principledness' are inseparable..

However, we have not yet properly touched the question of how we achieve unity in the ranks of the proletariat (of how we achieve unity around correct principles), for there are always differences within its ranks. The CPE think that in order to have unity it is necessary to ignore the differences that exist; this is a typically metaphysical view for which unity absolutely excludes difference and difference absolutely excludes unity. The 'unity' achieved here can only be a fragile, paper unity, and one which, moreover, serves the class interests of the bourgeoisie. Real unity, however, unity for the purpose of serving the class interests of the proletariat, a unity which is strength, is achieved not by papering over the differences, but by fighting to eradicate them. This, of course, demands firstly, that we take cognizance of the differences that do exist; secondly, it demands an honest attitude from all parties to the dispute; and thirdly, it demands a struggle in the form of the freest possible debate - a struggle of conflicting views. If, as we have premised, an honest attitude is present in all parties, agreement and unity can certainly

* And we mean here, not unity with those who say they do, but unity with those who actually do. The CPE seem to think that we must have unity with everyone who calls himself a 'Marxist-Leninist', i.e., with anyone who says he takes the side of the proletariat. But if the National Front were to call themselves 'Marxist-Leninists', would we want unity with them? Well, we would not; but we shall not answer for the CPE. For example: one member of CPE tells us that in connection with the national movement in Ireland, Marxist-Leninists in Britain should support the Communist Party of Ireland (Marxist-Leninist). And why? Because it is the duty (sic!) of Marxist-Leninists in an imperialist country to support the Marxist-Leninist organisations in the national movements in the oppressed countries. But this is nonsense. Marxist-Leninists support the overthrow of imperialism; they support the national movements in the oppressed countries because they are anti-imperialist; consequently, Marxist-Leninists support the organisations which are leading these struggles, e.g. ZANU. We have no fetish about people who like to call themselves 'Marxist-Leninist'; especially since the demonstrated strength of Marxism-Leninism means that all sorts of cranks (like the CPE) have to call themselves 'Marxist-Leninist' in order to get any hearing at all. We support the organisation that is leading the struggle, whether it calls itself 'Marxist-Leninist' or not, because it is acting in a Marxist-Leninist way, or at least, in a more Marxist-Leninist way than any of its rivals. And if an organisation which ^{likes to} calls itself 'Marxist-Leninist' is not acting in a Marxist-Leninist way, we shall certainly not support it, despite denunciations from the CPE.

be achieved. And this unity will not be a paper unity but will be a strong and purposeful unity. So unity is made possible by struggle; and also, struggle is made possible by unity - for a certain amount of unity is always presupposed, and also because there must exist a desire to replace the existing differences by unity. (We have here a manifestation of Hegel's 'subjective end.- means - realized end' where means and ends are opposites - in this case, struggle and unity.) Unity is achieved through struggle and struggle is achieved through unity. Hence, unity and struggle do not absolutely exclude each other but rather mutually include each other*.

Unity in this sense, the only sort of unity that can serve the class interests of the proletariat, will never be achieved by the CPE. Firstly because they refuse to take cognizance of the differences that exist; they have a metaphysical view of unity which must exclude all difference; they want unity with everyone - which must necessarily be a false and fictitious unity precisely because it is unprincipled. For the sake of their 'unity', the CPE must be unprincipled; they must be all things to all people. For example, we have quoted from their letter to ZSC where they denounce ACW & Co as "disruptive": this gives them 'unity' with Lester Lewis, CUA and ELG. But when we were speaking to a CPE member, we mentioned that we heard that CPE thought we were disruptive in the ZSC; "that was not our view" replied this CPE member. And so now CPE have 'unity' with ACW & Co **. Similarly, at the ZANU demonstration against detente on 7 December 1975, the CPE (who, as we have seen, demand cognizance of the leading role of the CPC and Chairman Mao, at all times and in all places) made not a murmur when a revisionist gave an anti-China speech, even though they had a full opportunity to do so: for the sake of 'unity' another difference must be ignored; "principledness" must vanish in the face of this "unity". And again it was the ACW who "disrupted" this blissful 'unity' by defending socialist China and exposing the "anti-people" role of Soviet social imperialism.

Secondly, the CPE will never achieve real unity because of their unprincipledness and noisome dishonesty. Scientific advance is impossible, and principled agreement cannot be reached, unless we are honest about our own positions, and honest in treating of other positions, which, of course, presupposes a desire to reach the truth. But we have seen that CPE are plainly dishonest - for example, by their remark that "in order to be a member of the ZSC it is necessary to support its principles" which they show to be a lie by their own action of joining the organisation while opposing its principles. And their desire for 'unity' (which for them must exclude difference) meant that they, dishonestly, could not raise any objections to the Aims of ZSC when they were to be accepted at the Founding Conference of the ZSC.

* We are often told that Marxism is the doctrine of the UNITY of opposites; and this is a perfectly precise formulation and in no way one-sided. For, because we have OPPOSITES which are in UNITY, they necessarily struggle. And if we were to break the unity, the opposites would be separated and hence could not struggle. Therefore, opposites which STRUGGLE are necessarily in UNITY. Unity is impossible without struggle and struggle is impossible without unity. Clearly, unity and struggle themselves form a unity of opposites.

** We know that CPE have no POLITICAL ARGUMENTS to put forward against anything that has been said in this article, so we are printing the whole of their "letter to ZSC" as an appendix - to make sure that they do not try to evade these criticisms by a "that was not our view" stratagem, by accusing us of quoting them out of context, or by denouncing us as 'distorters'.

Thirdly, the CPE will never achieve real unity because of their pusillanimous avoidance of all struggle (STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE UNITY), and their fear of any political debate (for they are incapable of giving or of understanding any argumentation - either you join them in childish repetition of empty phrases, or you are denounced in verbose and orotund jargon). Any attempts to resolve political differences through open discussion are seen by CPE as "disruption". For CPE political differences are "interminable differences of an 'insoluble' nature"; and this, clearly, MUST be so for them (a) because political differences within the ranks of the working class can only be solved by political argument, and this is wholly alien to the CPE; and (b) because in the context of CPE's 'unity' there can be no difference.

Given the CPE's metaphysical conception of 'unity', it is not surprising that they can never say anything of substance for fear of "giving prominence" to "interminable differences of an 'insoluble' nature", and that they try to restrict their comments to the most banal platitudes which everyone can agree with, to the most empty tautologies which no-one can disagree with, and to the substitution of phrases for scientific analysis.*

We have, then, dealt at sufficient length with the position of the CPE(ML) with regard to the movement for Zimbabwe solidarity. In conclusion we shall say that the CPE pose themselves as an ENEMY to the Zimbabwe Solidarity movement. They have no scientific analysis of the modern world, or any part of it, and no theory on which to base such an analysis; they have only a moralising abhorrence for the existing order, and consequently can only spread confusion and despair. Like all utopians, they live in a dream world, ruled by Kantian ethics, and not in the real world dominated by material interests: they refuse to fake cognizance of the filthy truth of this foul hell, thinking that it is possible to build a revolutionary movement on moral outbursts, empty phrases, and despairing calls to action: consequently, they are (rightly) dismissed as cranks, and any serious movement would be much better off without them. The CPE are hostile to anything that could properly be called 'political argument'. They view the world (in so far as they look at it at all) through ideological spectacles which are thoroughly bourgeois. They are characterised by unprincipledness and dishonesty, and can consequently serve no useful purpose in proletarian politics - they will always find themselves in the camp of the bourgeoisie. Indeed, we have seen that they played their part in the sabotage of the ZSC. And this is the only kind of role they can play in the Zimbabwe solidarity movement: the dirty role of unprincipled disrupters. 44

Lastly, the CPE may remark that the criticisms in this article are "uncomradely". On this we shall make a few points. Firstly, it would not surprise us, for with the CPE, any criticism is "uncomradely", "disruption", etc. Secondly, you don't refute an argument by calling it "uncomradely"; it is very easy to stick pejorative epithets to views you do not like, but the only proper way to condemn an argument is to refute it. The CPE habitually 'denounce', and we expect no arguments from CPE, but we have anticipated their denunciation, equally habitually fail to refute. Thirdly, if the word "uncomradely" is to be used at all, it conduces to clarity to use it in its common acceptation, in which case it more properly applies to the CPE themselves. For they joined ZSC without supporting its aims; they sat quiet in the face of the disruption of the organisation by CUA,

* "Idiots make very few or no propositions, and reason scarce at all" (John Locke: Essay Concerning Human Understanding).

ELG & Co.; they made no objection to fascistic treatment of ACW and co, and they actually termed such treatment 'liberal'; they called our defence of the Aims of ZSC "disruption", and this not to our face and whilst we were in the organisation, but behind our backs and after we were driven out. All this, and more, we have already shown, and substantiated with quotations from them, particularly from their letter to ZSC. We have no wish to distort the words of CPE; indeed, any distortion could only make them appear better than they are. But to ensure that we do not receive from the CPE terrifying denunciations and accusations of 'distortion' etc., we are printing the whole of their "letter to ZSC" as an Appendix to this article (without even correcting spelling mistakes and the like). Also, since the best way to expose the CPE is merely to publicise their own literature, we can stop writing now in the confident belief that the most effective, and by far the funniest, part of the polemic is yet to follow.

February 1976

APPENDIX

COPY OF CPE'S LETTER TO ZSC:

30-11-75

Dear Comrades,

We have received your letter of October, 30th, 1975.

We are writing to explain the position of the Communist Party of England (Marxist-Leninist) with regard to the ZSC. We wish also to make a number of recommendations as to how the preamble and constitution of the ZSC should be changed.

Firstly, in our view the ZSC should support the struggle of the Zimbabwean people, support the struggle for the armed overthrow of the white racist regime, and support those organisations genuinely leading the Zimbabwean people to carry out this historic task. This means in particular supporting ZANU as the organisation which has consistently led the Zimbabwean people in armed struggle since its formation in 1963. We have seen in ZSC a number of groups and individuals making very heavy weather of this simple question. We in Britain should support the struggle of any oppressed people against exploitation and that is the decisive issue in regards to the Zimbabwean people as it is with all other oppressed peoples. In our view the resolution should simply state the situation, and in future ZSC, internally and externally, should not be used as a centre for attempts to complicate the issues and interduce anti-people theories. We in particular oppose the view expressed by the Association of Communist Workers, which has apparently resigned from the committee. But we also oppose the liberal way in which their disruptions were dealt with and all attempts to compromise on the issue. We are not supporting Zimbabwe to oppress the British people more. We are supporting the people of Zimbabwe, firstly, because they are oppressed and then, secondly, because all struggle against oppression serves in the long run all sections of the oppressed people.

With regard to the organisation of the ZSC, we think that the Organising Committee of the ZSC must contain representatives of all the organisations supporting the ZSC. At the moment the Communist Party of England (M-L) is excluded from this committee and there have been

recurring attempts to exclude the CPE(ML) from the activities of the ZSC. We see this as a manifestation of what is wrong in ZSC. The Committee is not used in a straightforward way to do propaganda for the Zimbabwean struggle; instead, this side of the work is undermined and interminable differences of an "insoluble" nature are given prominence.

ZSC must be led by Marxist-Leninists. This is because no other political trend is capable of leading and uniting the people of Britain to support the Zimbabwean, or any other revolution, in a principled way. The revisionist movement uses contradictions in the world to promote the interests of Soviet social imperialism and the Trotskyite role in this country. At the same time ZSC is set up to support the Zimbabwean revolution in a principled manner and to unite with all progressive and democratic sections to do this work. This is the perspective on ZSC, and this deals with the discussion that is going on the question of whether it is necessary to support socialist revolution in Britain or not, in order to be a member of ZSC. It is necessary to support the principles of ZSC, that is all. However, Marxist-Leninists should not hide their views and should clearly assert the necessity for Marxist-Leninist united leadership of all aspects of the revolutionary movement in this country, including the support movement for national liberation struggles. It is wrong to say it is necessary to support the socialist revolution in Britain in order to support ZSC. But then who is going to support ZSC and the armed overthrow of the white racist regime, and at the same time not support socialist revolution in Britain? What is at stake is that some people are asking us to support the erroneous view that it is necessary to oppress the British working class further to make them revolutionary, and that this is the first object of the ZSC.

In our view the entire paragraph (f) should be eliminated. This promotes the erroneous view that the third world will be used as an assault centre on the advanced capitalist countries, and it promotes the erroneous view that revolution in Britain is going to come about as a result of increased oppression of the British people.

In our view the preamble should denounce Soviet social imperialism and US imperialism specifically. Otherwise it liberalises the issue of the Soviet Union and leaves in doubt whether we oppose this superpower, and thereby whether we are genuine allies of the African people.

Paragraph (a) could state specifically the name of the two superpowers as a suggestion. Paragraph (a) is erroneous in its statement that the third world is leading the struggle against imperialism. The third world is the main force. The leadership is the international communist movement, itself led by the Communist Party of China, with Chairman Mao at its head.

The emphasis in paragraph (e) on the desire of British imperialism to pull out and impose a neo-colonial solution is wrong. This reflects a general line on the question of the role of British imperialism. The main point about British imperialism is its opposition to the Zimbabwean people, its exploitation of the labour and resources of Zimbabwe. The British monopoly capitalist class has no interest beyond this, and is quite prepared to have a colonial solution if that best served their interests.

The reference to the Labour Party as a social imperialist is in our view unscientific. The term social imperialist is applied to revisionist parties and in particular, the revisionist party of the Soviet Union. The Labour Party is a different party to the Soviet revisionist party. The latter claims to support Marx, Engels and Lenin and from this position oppresses millions of people and supports the slaughter of all peoples who threaten their hegemony. The Labour Party is a social democratic party which arose in a different era and it has its own specific features. The two types of parties should not be confused.

Out of this we are putting forward a series of specific recommendations for how the basic resolution should be altered. However, we would like to point out that the main point is that ZSC should become an effective organisation to support the Zimbabwean people. In order to do this it should unite on the most basic principles and no groups or individuals should use the organisation as a means of self-promotion.

Our ^{own} organisation has supported the struggle of the Zimbabwean people through its own organs as well as through various other committees and organisations. We have carried out this work partly because of the difficulties inside the ZSC. Our attitude towards ZSC and to any other Zimbabwean support committee is that insofar as it actually supports the Zimbabwean people we will support it. We would like to have established a committee in which unity and principledness dominates, and thereby through which the most effective support for the Zimbabwean people can be built. We intend to carry out, if this proves possible, separate as well as united work with the ZSC in support of the Zimbabwean people's struggle.

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to Preamble:

1. Delete paragraph (f) entirely, change (g) to (f).
2. In paragraph (g), delete the first three lines. Replace with:
"recognising that the Zimbabwean people struggling against the white racist regime are the class brothers of the British working class ..."
3. In paragraph (e), delete Social Imperialist. Delete all after "British Labour Party" and replace with "... is in no way reconciled to defeat and continues to back the white racist regime of Smith and engages in nefarious activities to obstruct and suppress the revolutionary movement of the Zimbabwean people and ZANU which is leading that movement.
4. In paragraph (a), delete lines three and four, and add: "... have become the main force in the struggles of the oppressed peoples and nations throughout the world against the hegemonistic designs policies of the two superpowers, US imperialism and Soviet social imperialism."

Amendment to Aims

1. In paragraph (c), delete all from "Showing how .." onwards.

Amendments to Constitution

1. In paragraph (1), add "organisations and individuals" after the word "all". Add "for individuals and £5 for organisations" at the end.
2. In paragraph (4), delete entirely. Replace with: "The Executive Committee shall consist of one representative of each of the organisations participating in the programme of ZSC, and three individuals to be elected at the AGM. The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer to be elected by the Executive Committee."

Lastly, we would like to apologise for the lateness of this letter and amendments.

With Revolutionary Greetings

Mike Clark

on behalf of the London and Southern
Regional Branch of the Communist Party
of England (M-L).