

ON THE SOCIAL-CHAUVINISM OF THE R. C. L. B.

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST
LEAGUE OF BRITAIN (M.L.)

"Social-chauvinism, being in practice a defence of the privileges, prerogatives, robberies and violence of 'one's own' (or any other) imperialist bourgeoisie, is a total betrayal of all socialist convictions..."

LENIN

"There is one, and only one, kind of internationalism in deed: working wholeheartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in one's own country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy and material aid) such, and only such, a struggle and such a line in every country without exception."

LENIN

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNIST WORKERS

PREFACE

It is clear to any keen observer of the present international situation, let alone revolutionary Marxist-Leninists, that, notwithstanding the fraudulent mask of detente, the two imperialist coalitions - one under the leadership of the USA and the other under the leadership of the USSR - are frantically and furiously preparing for a third world war. It is clear that the post-Second World War stabilisation of capitalism is giving way to its destabilisation. It is clear that owing to the emergence of the USSR in the last decade or so as a fully-fledged imperialist power (from being at one time the bastion of socialism, as she undoubtedly was during the lifetime of Comrades Lenin and Stalin) and the working of the law of uneven development of capitalism, such a clash between the old imperialist powers headed by the USA, on the one hand, and the new imperialist coalition headed by the USSR, on the other hand, has, from the point of view of capitalism, become necessary and inevitable. It is clear that the principal content of the spirit of Helsinki is the spirit of war*. The two imperialist coalitions speak of peace while continuing to arm themselves with ever new means of mass death and destruction. Each of the two imperialist coalitions would, in such a war, seek to mobilise their respective peoples by the use of demagogic, fraudulently deceptive, and deceptively seductive, slogans. Whereas the coalition headed by the USA is likely to present such a war on its part as being aimed at liberating the peoples of Eastern Europe from the yoke of 'Soviet totalitarianism' and restoring 'human rights', the coalition headed by the USSR is likely to operate under the fraudulent slogan of freeing the peoples of Western Europe and elsewhere from the horrors of capitalist imperialism, colonialism and wage slavery. Nothing, however, could be farther from the truth. The truth is that BOTH the imperialist coalitions would be fighting for world domination and spheres of influence, not for liberating peoples; they would be fighting to preserve capitalism in general and to strengthen their own capitalism in particular, and not to destroy capitalism; they would be fighting to enslave the peoples of the world and not to bring prosperity and freedom to them. In other words, such a war would be an inter-imperialist war, and therefore a reactionary war, ON BOTH SIDES.

In view of this it is the duty of the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Parties, Groups and individuals to bring home this truth to the proletariat. It is our duty to mobilise people everywhere, in particular in our own respective countries, against the outbreak of such a war - to do everything in our power to prevent the outbreak of such a war. Our guide to action in this situation must be the correct Marxist-Leninist proposition - a proposition which has been verified and tested over a long period of time - according to which either revolution will prevent war or war will lead to the revolution. It is our ardent desire and fervent hope that the former will be the case, that revolution in the imperialist countries will prevent war, and the people will be spared the unprecedented

* See Appendix (1)

horrors and torments, the unparalleled hunger, death, destruction and savagery which would accompany a third world war, fought as it will be with such gigantic instruments of death as modern weaponry which are a part of the nuclear arsenals of the two imperialist coalitions. But it also has to be admitted that, notwithstanding our efforts to the contrary, the war may nevertheless break out. Whereas such a war would visit the most unprecedented horrors, torments and death on the working people everywhere, the most unparalleled destruction of the productive forces, it would also present the working class of the USA and of Europe (including the USSR), by shifting yet again the centre of revolution to Europe, with an opportunity to wipe capitalism off the face of the USA and the WHOLE of Europe (including the USSR), and thus wiping capitalism off the face of the earth.

This, however, will not happen of itself. A third world war would not automatically lead to the disappearance of capitalism. Such a result can only be the consequence of conscious, energetic, decisive and organised action on the part of the proletariat in the various imperialist countries. It is our view that such a result could only be brought about by the proletariat of the warring imperialist countries putting into effect the slogan: convert the inter-imperialist war into a civil war for socialism. The proletariat in the imperialist countries must be imbued with the consciousness that the conversion of the imperialist war into a civil war for the overthrow of imperialism and the establishment of socialism is the only revolutionary tactic in such a war. However, this urgent task of preparing the proletariat in the various imperialist countries is hindered as long as there exist in these countries Parties, Groups and individuals - operating under the signboard of Marxism-Leninism - who, far from imbuing the working class with Marxist-Leninist tactics and leading it in the struggle for socialism, have actually made, consciously or unconsciously (it matters not), an alliance with their own bourgeoisie or the bourgeoisie of one of the imperialist coalitions and degenerated into social chauvinism (socialism in words, chauvinism in deeds). It is the duty of revolutionary Marxist-Leninists to conduct a thoroughgoing, consistent, principled and merciless struggle against such social chauvinism, for this struggle against social chauvinism is a part and parcel of the struggle for preparing the proletariat for socialism. We must not go soft on these parties, groups and individuals; we must tear the mask from their faces and expose them for what they really are, namely, socialists in words but chauvinists and agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class movement in practice. The choice is clear: either be kind to the social chauvinists and desert the proletariat, or be cruel to the social chauvinists and remain with the proletariat. For us in the ACW, only the latter can be our choice. We wish to remain with the proletariat and precisely because of this, in the pages that follow, we subject to merciless criticism, whatever the cost to us, the view of the RCLB (Revolutionary Communist League of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)) which are nothing but a most concentrated expression of social chauvinism. The RCLB is not the only social-chauvinist organisation in the Marxist-Leninist movement. There are others who can claim, along with the RCLB, their pride of place. Nevertheless, we have chosen to criticise the RCLB for it is at the present time the most representative spokesman of the kind of

social chauvinism that we subject to criticism in this pamphlet; only the RCLB at the present time are most consistently, albeit in a most incoherent, contradictory and muddled,*not to say inconsequential and elusive, way typical of the RCLB, putting forward this variety of social chauvinism. Unless this social chauvinism, typified by the RCLB, is defeated, the future of socialism, the future of the working class, is very bleak indeed. It is with this in mind, with the purpose of defeating social chauvinism and of uniting all true Marxist-Leninists into a single Party, and forging ahead the struggle for socialism through the victory of the proletarian revolution that we are undertaking this task, to which task we shall proceed immediately.

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNIST WORKERS

August 1978

*There is method behind the madness of the RCLB.

ON THE SOCIAL-CHAUVINISM OF THE
REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF BRITAIN (MARXIST-LENINIST)

INTRODUCTION

The RCLB has now for quite some time been putting forward a social-chauvinist line in connection with the war now under preparation by the various imperialist countries. This social chauvinism of the RCLB is formulated (we wish we could say succinctly and clearly) most of all in an article entitled 'Birch no longer part of the Marxist-Leninist movement !' in Volume 3 number 1 (February 1978) of their 'theoretical' journal 'Revolution'. In it, it puts forward the point of view that in the event of Britain being "invaded by a super-power", the RCLB would "fight for a united front [with its 'own' bourgeoisie - ACW] to repel the invader and wage a war of national independence. This is exactly how this question is posed on page 11 of RCLB's journal 'Revolution' of February 1978, Vol 3 no 1:

"Today, such is the concentration of imperialism residing in the superpowers, that it is almost entirely the superpowers who are keeping the edifice of imperialism intact. ONLY the two superpowers are capable of struggling for world hegemony. In these circumstances if Britain were to be invaded by a superpower should we fight for a united front to repel the invader and wage a war of national independence? Or should we try to fight both the superpowers [sic] and our 'own' bourgeoisie."

In our view the very formulation of the question is an opportunist one, and implicit in it is the opportunist answer to this question, which follows in the very next paragraph on page 11. Here is this answer: "The latter is the viewpoint of the 'left' opportunist line".

Thereafter the RCLB goes into a tirade against the "headquarters of this line", i.e., Reg Birch and the party he leads, to wit, the CPBML (Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)). We are not concerned for the moment with either Reg Birch or the CPBML. We have over the years pronounced ourselves on the CPBML and have repeatedly stated that it is not a Party of the working class, that it is guilty of economism and social chauvinism, that it is guilty of national jingoism - in a nutshell, that its mode of thought and its practice are alien to Marxism-Leninism. And if the RCLB comrades have discovered this now, however belatedly, that is to their credit. It is, however, not to their credit that they should oppose the opportunist Birch and the opportunist CPBML by even more opportunist, wretchedly monstrous and social-chauvinist arguments. And, in our humble opinion, the arguments that the RCLB put forward in support of their thesis, just mentioned above, in the above-mentioned issue of their journal 'Revolution', constitute a concentrated expression of social chauvinism, monstrous distortion and a crude falsification of Marxism-Leninism, and are a complete departure from it. If their crude falsification is not defeated, then there is not a hope in hell for the working-class movement in Britain to make any advance. It is in view of this that we feel the necessity, to use the language of Lenin, of "pouring vinegar and bile into the sweet waters of your revolutionary democratic eloquence". It is in view of this and precisely this that we too "can remain silent no longer".

*Pardon the hyperbole.

CONCRETE ANALYSIS OF CONCRETE CONDITIONS IS THE ESSENCE OF MARXIAN DIALECTICS.

Although the comrades of the RCLB accuse their opponents of pursuing "a line which tries to disarm the working-class and oppressed peoples and nations in their struggle against superpower hegemonism and imperialism", we hope, during the course of the following lines, to be able to demonstrate that it is they (the RCLB comrades) who are in fact pursuing "a line that most certainly disarms the working class" of the West European imperialist countries and also, most probably, the oppressed peoples and nations in their struggle against superpower hegemonism and imperialism. Although the comrades of the RCLB correctly accuse Birch of being possessed of an "elusive and inconsequential style" as a writer, they themselves go on to write an article which is literally littered with elusive and inconsequential arguments - arguments which depart from Marxian dialectics and constitute a series of logical errors and logical absurdities. Although the comrades of the RCLB demand of their opponents that they should stick to Marxist dialectics, which call for a concrete analysis of each specific historical situation, of each specific war, etc., they, having made this demand, go on immediately to depart from this Marxist requirement of concreteness. They accuse their opponents of "practising idealism and metaphysics, not dialectical materialism. All of them proceed not from the objective world in which we live, but from the world in which they wish to live. A world in which revolutionary purists can indulge their petty-bourgeois revolutionary phrase-mongering and not have to face up to the reality of an extremely complicated world ... The class struggle internationally is extremely complicated and it needs careful study to properly analyse the various class forces in the world. This the super-revolutionaries are not prepared to do - as Chairman Mao said 'dogmatists are lazy-bones'".

Strong words indeed ! Only one would have thought that people who used such language to characterise their opponents would at least themselves not be guilty of the same sins;* that such people would practise dialectical materialism and not idealism and metaphysics; that they would proceed from the "objective world in which we live" and not the "subjective world in which they wish to live"; that these people would be capable of making a careful study and a proper analysis of the "extremely complicated" class struggle internationally. But alas ! We search in vain for proof of this in the entire article. The comrades of the RCLB cite quotations right, left and centre from the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung, but they have shown a singular lack of ability to ponder over the meaning of these quotations, and in doing so have not only misapplied these quotations, have not only used them out of context, but have also positively distorted their meanings. In doing so they have acted like the dogmatist lazy-bones and they have ended up by turning the sound propositions of Marxism-Leninism into caricatures. But then, as the great Lenin pointed out more than 60 years ago, "Not infrequently have dialectics served - and the history of Greek Philosophy is an example - as a bridge to sophistry." Without mincing words, it is our honest & firm belief that the comrades of the RCLB are using Marxian dialectics "as a bridge to sophistry." Let us, therefore, examine how they accomplish this - not very desirable for a self-professed Marxist - aim.

*RCLB act on the advice of the charlatan in Turgenev's poem: Denounce most of all those vices which you yourself possess.

To repeat, concrete analysis of the concrete situation is the soul and essence of Marxian dialectics. Since the comrades of the RCLB have refused to descend - or, what amounts to the same thing, are unable to descend - from "the world in which they wish to live" into the sinful "objective world in which we live", let us look at this world, however boring and unpleasant the task may be, and ask the question: of all the major contradictions in the world, which is AT THE PRESENT MOMENT the principal contradiction? Without doubt the answer must be that it is the one between the oppressed peoples and nations of the world on the one hand and imperialism (old and new - 'social' and non-'social' imperialism) on the other hand. On this, we think and hope, we have no differences with the RCLB comrades. The next question that arises is: is the above contradiction guaranteed its primary position on a world scale, or is it possible for it to move to a secondary or even a third place? The answer is that it is quite possible for it to cease to be the principal contradiction. How and in what way can this take place? There are several ways in which this change in the relative position of major contradictions could come about, but the one most likely - most probable - is through the instrumentality of an inter-imperialist war, which would have the effect of bringing to the fore the inter-imperialist contradiction. Is such an inter-imperialist war a possibility in the world today? Such a war is not only possible but even probable. Imperialism and the law of uneven development of capitalism see to that. If such a war* belongs not only to the realm of possibility, but also to that of probability, a further question inevitably arises, namely, between whom is such a probable inter-imperialist war LIKELY to be fought? Proceeding from the "objective world in which we live" , not the "subjective world" in which the RCLB comrades wish to live, and taking dialectical materialism as our guide, and not being led astray by idealism and metaphysics, as, unfortunately, the comrades of the RCLB, notwithstanding their vociferous advice to their opponents to practise dialectical materialism, give the appearance of being, we answer this question thus: we say that such an inter-imperialist war is probable between the two imperialist coalitions - each coalition being under the leadership of a superpower. In other words, we assert that such an inter-imperialist war is most likely to be fought between Western imperialism under the leadership of the United States on the one hand, and Soviet Social imperialism with its satellites on the other. To be more precise, it is most probable that it would be a war not just between Britain or another Western imperialist country on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other, nor is it likely to involve only the USA and the USSR. It would be a war, we repeat, between the two imperialist coalitions. Such a war would not be an accidental phenomenon; it would be the result of a whole period of historical development since the Second World War, of not only West European and US imperialism, but also of the developments in the USSR, in which, with the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU(B), which brought to power the revisionist Khrushchovite gang of capitalist roaders, began the process of capitalist restoration. This process of capitalist restoration has been completed to such a degree that it has qualitatively changed the nature of the Soviet Union: from being a mighty bastion of world revolution under Lenin and Stalin, it

* "The epoch of imperialism", said Lenin, "inevitably engenders new imperialist wars (until the triumph of socialism)."

has become, under Brezhnev and Kosygin, a fully-fledged imperialist power - a superpower, and one of the two most powerful gendarmes of world reaction. The new ruling clique in the Soviet Union, making use of the heavy industrial base developed during the period of socialist construction in the USSR, and transforming the nature of the Soviet enterprises from socialist into capitalist enterprises, has further developed the industrial and military might of the Soviet Union and is frantically engaged in competition with the other imperialist powers, in particular with the USA - the other superpower - for the purpose of achieving world hegemony and spheres of influence. The law of uneven development has operated in such a way that the Soviet Union, through the most circuitous route (from socialism to restoration of capitalism, to imperialism) has spurred ahead and has become far more powerful. But its share in the world loot, in world hegemony, is disproportionately small in relation to its present strength. It, therefore, not surprisingly, wants a fresh division of the world which would be more 'just' and one that would correspond to its present strength. On the other hand, the Western imperialist powers, with the USA at their head, have been lagging behind and have become weaker, but their share in the world booty, based as it is on their previous strength, is disproportionately large. However, these old imperialists, equally not surprisingly, are not very keen, to put it very mildly, to give up any of this loot. They therefore do not want a fresh division. In these circumstances there is only one way left for effecting a fresh division, and that is by war. No one, least of all a Marxist, should be surprised at the prospect of such catastrophic convulsions and wars whose aim is to re-divide the world and to decide which of the predatory slave-owners shall have what proportion of the slaves.

THE PROLETARIAT IS OPPOSED TO THE DEFENCE OF THE FATHERLAND IN AN IMPERIALIST WAR.

In the event of a war of the type described above breaking out, what should be the attitude of the proletariat towards such a war?

The proletariat would be opposed to the defence of the fatherland in this imperialist war because of its predatory, slave-owning, reactionary character, and would strive to convert it into a civil war for socialism. The proletariat would oppose to the imperialist war, civil war for socialism. The fighting slogan of the revolutionary proletariat would be: convert the imperialist war into a civil war for socialism. Such, and such alone, must be the tactics of the revolutionary proletariat in the event of an inter-imperialist war. This is how Lenin, with typical brilliance, pronounces himself apropos the First World War:

"The class character of the war - that is the fundamental question which confronts a Socialist (if he is not a renegade). The imperialist war of 1914-18 is a war between two coalitions of the imperialist bourgeoisie for the partition of the world, for the division of the booty, and for the plunder and strangulation of small and weak nations. This was the appraisal of the war given in the Basle Manifesto in 1912, and since then it has been confirmed by facts. Whoever departs from this point of view ceases to be a Socialist. "If a German under Wilhelm, or a Frenchman under Clemenceau, says:

'As a Socialist, I have the right and it is my duty to defend my country if it is invaded by an enemy,' he argues not like a Socialist, not like an internationalist, not like a revolutionary proletarian, but like a PETTY-BOURGEOIS NATIONALIST. Because this argument leaves out of account the appraisal of the war as a WHOLE from the point of view of the world bourgeoisie and the world proletariat: that is, it leaves out internationalism, and all that remains is a miserable and narrow-minded nationalism. My country is being wronged, that is all I care about - this is what this argument reduces itself to, and that is why it is petty-bourgeois nationalist narrow-mindedness. It is the same as if in regard to individual violence, violence against an individual, one were to argue that socialism is opposed to violence and therefore I would rather be a traitor than go to prison. 'The Frenchman, the German or Italian who says: 'Socialism is opposed to violence against nations, THEREFORE I defend myself when my country is invaded', BETRAYS socialism and internationalism, because HE ONLY THINKS OF HIS OWN 'COUNTRY', he puts 'his own' ... 'BOURGEOISIE' above everything else and forgets about the INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS which make the war an imperialist war, and make HIS bourgeoisie a link in the chain of imperialist plunder. 'All philistines and all stupid and ignorant yokels argue in exactly the same way as the renegade Kautskyians, Longuetists, and Turati-ists: 'The enemy has invaded my country; I do not care about anything else*.' 'The Socialist, the revolutionary proletarian, the internationalist, argues differently. He says: 'The character of the war (whether reactionary or revolutionary) is not determined by who the aggressor was, or whose territory the 'enemy' has occupied; it is DETERMINED BY THE CLASS that is waging the war, and the politics of which this war is a continuation. If the war is a reactionary imperialist war, that is, if it is being waged by two world coalitions of the imperialist, violent, 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 ONLY escape from the horrors of a world war. I must argue,

* (Lenin's footnote): "The social-chauvinists (the Scheidemanns, Renaudels, Hendersons, Gomperses and Co.) absolutely refuse to talk about the 'International' during the war. They regard the enemies of their respective bourgeoisies as 'traitors' to ... socialism. They SUPPORT the policy of conquest pursued by their respective bourgeoisies. The social-pacifists (i.e., the Socialists in words and petty-bourgeois pacifists in practice) express all sorts of 'internationalist' sentiments, protest against annexations, etc., but in practice they continue to support their respective imperialist bourgeoisies. The difference between the two types is slight. It is like the difference between two capitalists - one with rude, and the other with sweet words on his lips."

** Let the RCLB note the importance that Comrade Lenin correctly attaches to the class that wages a war. But of this, more anon.

not from the point of view of 'my' country (for this is the argument of a poor, stupid, nationalist philistine who does not realise that he is only a plaything in the hands of the imperialist bourgeoisie), but from the point of view of MY SHARE in the preparation, in the propaganda, and in the acceleration of the world proletarian revolution. 'This is what internationalism is, and this is the duty of the internationalist, of the revolutionary worker, of the genuine Socialist. This is the ABC that Kautsky the renegade has 'forgotten''. ('Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky', Vol 7 Selected Works pp. 175-177).

We would like to believe that every Marxist-Leninist would find himself in complete and total agreement with the above propositions of Leninism. And it would appear that the RCLB too are in agreement with these propositions, for they state on page 57 of their article against Birch "that in the event of an inter-superpower war in Europe / Why limit the area of operations of such a war to Europe only? - ACW / 'WE WOULD BE for the defeat of our own bourgeoisie if* it took us into such an inter-imperialist war' ('Manifesto of the RCLB')." But this agreement is only an apparent agreement, designed to deceive innocent onlookers, not a real agreement. If one reads through their whole article, which covers 28 pages, and reads the three lines just quoted in their proper context, one cannot help coming to the following important conclusions:

(a) The RCLB do not think it probable that the future war is most likely to be fought between the two imperialist coalitions - one coalition under the leadership of the US (with Britain forming a part of this coalition) and the other under the leadership of the USSR. On the contrary, they strongly imply that the future war would be a war between one, or more than one, West-European imperialist power, a second world country if you like, on the one hand, and the USSR on the other. This, however, is most unlikely and improbable. It belongs to the realm of possibility, not to that of probability. Any aggression by the USSR against any West European country - say West Germany** - would only be the prelude to the outbreak of a Third World War ***, a war of unprecedented dimensions between the two coalitions of the imperialist, violent, predatory, reactionary bourgeoisie, "and 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

* There are no ifs and buts about it. The fact is that Britain is a part of the NATO Alliance and there are NATO bases in Britain. Is it conceivable that in a war between the USA and the USSR these bases would not become targets for attack by the USSR? It scarcely needs proof that it is not conceivable.

** A most likely target, unlike Britain.

*** Just as the occupation of Belgium by Germany in the First World War, and the occupation of Czechoslovakia and Poland (also by Germany) was in the Second World War.

**** Our emphasis.

WORLD PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION as the ONLY escape from the horrors of a world war". This is one of the chief and fundamental errors that the RCLB are making, whether they realise their error or not. In view of this error, it is not surprising that nowhere in their propaganda - either in this article or elsewhere - do they feel the need to prepare, let alone actually prepare, the British proletariat to face the probable inter-imperialist war between two imperialist coalitions with the slogan: "the proletariat should strive to convert the imperialist war into a civil war for socialism". Nowhere in their literature does one encounter a sustained and consistent campaign, nor in their other activities, directed to preparing the proletariat to face the likely inter-imperialist war between two coalitions of the predatory, violent and reactionary bourgeoisie with the slogan of civil war for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. There are, of course, ritual references to such a formula, but we are not speaking here of ritual incantations, designed to insure the RCLB against accusations of being only a plaything in the hands of the British bourgeoisie; we are speaking here of pursuing certain tactics, of preparing the proletariat for a real civil war for socialism in a probable real war between two imperialist coalitions. Of this we find nothing in the RCLB's literature.

What we do find in plentitude in their literature is that a war against a superpower is a just war "even if this war is waged by a Western European [the word 'imperialist' is here imperceptibly replaced by the much prettier expression 'Western European' - ACW] country"; that "if Britain was to be invaded by a superpower" we should "fight for a United Front [with our bourgeoisie - ACW] to repel the invader and wage a war of national liberation", and so on and so forth. Thus it is clear that the tactics of the RCLB to prepare the British proletariat for a war is to prepare it for a possible (but improbable) war between a "Western-European country" and the Soviet Union, and not for a probable war between the two world imperialist coalitions. This is not to say that their tactics would be correct if the probability of war between a "Western-European country" and the Soviet Union were to be as high as the RCLB wrongly imagine to be the case. No, not at all. Of this we shall speak later on. For the moment we are merely concerned to show that the comrades of the RCLB are ignoring the tasks of today and are preparing for the tasks of tomorrow; they are ignoring the probable inter-imperialist war and paying full attention to a POSSIBLE (but not PROBABLE) war between the Soviet Union and a "Western European country". And this is done by people who everywhere smell Trotskyism in their opponents.

(b) Notwithstanding their indignant protestations - which are really the protestations of a thief caught red-handed - the RCLB strongly imply (for even they shuddered at the consequence of their line and therefore did not, or could not, muster the necessary courage to say in so many plain words ^{expressly} what is already there by implication) that in the case of a conflict involving the USA and the USSR, they (the RCLB) would be in favour of being on the US side and fighting against the USSR. Here are a few quotations from their article to substantiate our accusation against the RCLB:

" A major difference between the Marxist and the dogmatist lines on the international situation is on the two superpowers - are the Soviet Union and the United States equal enemies*, or is the Soviet Union the more dangerous superpower and the most dangerous source of war? The dogmatists say the former / Note the imperceptible omission concerning what the non-dogmatists say - the implication here is clear - ACW / and in their arguments for this view revise Marxism."

We shall see later who it is that is revising Marxism. Continue the RCLB:

"Birch says 'the question of "which is the weaker USSR or USA?" inevitably leads to alliance with one of / sic / the other. Leaving aside the astounding idealism that to ask a question inevitably leads to a particular course of action, the implicit view here is that both superpowers are equally strong."

We shall now demonstrate that insofar as Birch's words relate to the line pursued by the RCLB, there is a material basis for Birch's accusation after all, for on page 7 of their article, the comrades of the RCLB have the following self-annihilatory confession:

"The revisionist Birch and those who push the 'left' opportunist line on the international situation, in not recognising that the Soviet Union is the more dangerous superpower and the most dangerous source of war, are playing the Soviet Union's game for it. Instead of leading the people of the world in dealing the primary blow at the most dangerous enemy, they try to get them to dissipate their forces by striking out equally in all directions and thus weaken the blow at the primary target. Brezhnev must be rubbing his hands in glee!"

Thus it turns out that Birch's "astounding idealism" is only the idealism of the RCLB, in that not only do they say things which have a certain meaning, but also believe, and what is most outrageous, expect others to believe, that they have said nothing of the kind. Ordinary people with ordinary logic may be forgiven for thinking, after having read the above-quoted remarks, that the RCLB would like to mobilise all those who can be mobilised (US imperialism, 'Western European countries') "in dealing the primary blow at the most dangerous enemy / the USSR /", instead of "dissipating / our / forces by striking out equally in all directions and thus weaken the blow at the primary target." We may be forgiven for thinking that having read such 'Marxist' pearls from the guardians of Marxism, Jimmy Carter must be "rubbing his hands with glee" and if not "revising" Marxism, at least revising his view of certain 'Marxists'.

"None of those peddling the view that both superpowers are equally dangerous actually does look at any facts, and all content themselves with abstractions and generalisations in the true spirit of dogmatism." (p. 4).

And elsewhere, on page 11 of their article, the comrades of the RCLB refer to the Soviet Union as the "headquarters of international reaction".

* Our emphasis - ACW

If the line of the RCLB were correct, it would be right and proper for the representatives of the revolutionary proletariat to work for the defeat of the Soviet Union in the event of a war between it and the USA. However, the line of the RCLB is incorrect, not to say dangerous and treacherous from the point of view of the proletariat, and the RCLB comrades have not given a single cogent, straightforward and honest argument in favour of this line. They have merely made dogmatic assertions - assertions which are typically hollow, empty and bereft of any meaning - and have indulged in mud-slinging accusations in the "rather a bourgeois style of throwing enough mud in the hope that some will stick. Well, the people of the world will see through this vulgar philistine style and see which line and which parties really represent their interests".

"THE SOVIET UNION IS THE MORE DANGEROUS SUPERPOWER AND THE MOST DANGEROUS SOURCE OF WAR"

Now let us look at the 'proofs' proffered by the RCLB in substantiation of their theses that "the Soviet Union is the more dangerous superpower and most dangerous source of war", and that we should be "leading*the people of the world in dealing the primary blow at the most dangerous enemy" instead of "dissipating" our forces "by striking out equally in all directions and thus weaken the blow at the primary target".

The proof they afford is simply to make the assertion that "latecomers to imperialism are the most dangerous source of war". Then they go on to quote some figures on the growth of Soviet military might and the Soviet expenditure on armaments. In the very next paragraph they make reference to the Soviet Union's activities in the Continent of Africa, etc., and ask the question "which superpower has occupied Angola? Which superpower attempted to invade Zaire? Which superpower is stirring up trouble in the Horn of Africa? ... "

For a Marxist such questions reveal the height of imbecility and failure to understand the nature of Soviet activity in Africa or anywhere else. Unless they are put in the proper context of imperialist rivalry, the law of uneven development of capitalism, and the striving of the newcomers to the "capitalist banqueting table when all the seats were occupied, but who introduced into the struggle new methods for developing capitalist production, improved techniques and superior organisation ..." for a redivision, they will remain the type of questions of which it is said that one fool can ask more than ten wise men can answer.

A Marxist would not only have asked the question: who are the latecomers?, but also the question: who is hogging the banqueting table now? To declare oneself in favour of those who on some pretext or other have hogged the banqueting table for a good couple of centuries, if not more, against the newcomers who wish to have their 'fair share', is at best to be on the side of the decrepit imperialists as against the dynamic newcomer, and at worst to be a lackey of the decrepit imperialist bourgeoisie of Western Europe under the leadership of the USA.

* With a line like this one would find that far from leading the people of the world one is rather following in the wake of one of the coalitions of the imperialist, predatory and violent bourgeoisie.

** See Appendix (1)

If the figures given by the RCLB, and the Soviet activities in Angola, Zaire, the Horn of Africa, etc., prove anything at all, they prove the truth contained in the statement "War is the continuation of policy". The Soviet Union has been pursuing an imperialist policy and its military activities are a continuation of that policy. This is inevitable under the system of capitalism. For capitalism knows no other means of dividing the world's riches and wealth among the various leading imperialist countries: when peaceful means fail - as they inevitably must in the end - war is the only way out, when the imperialists of the various countries declare: "Let us try conclusions". It is not just the newcomers that are responsible for the war, but also those who have been hogging the banqueting table and who occupy all the seats, refusing to budge an inch even though the law of uneven development of capitalism demands that a place be found for the newcomers, that they will not simply turn away by looking at the notice 'House Full'. In these circumstances a clash, and a most ferocious armed clash, is not only necessary from the point of view of capitalism, but inevitable. The fault does not lie in any single individual or any single country. The fault lies with the whole system of imperialism "and the only way out of this is by the overthrow of the rule of the capitalists and by a workers' revolution" (Lenin, *ibid.* p. 409).

The only other 'proof' offered by the RCLB comrades is in the form of two quotations, one from Comrade Stalin and the other one from the writings of Comrade Lenin. And these quotations appear just after the paragraph in which the above-mentioned questions concerning Soviet activities in Africa, etc., were asked. Let the comrades of the RCLB express themselves:

"All these facts may be most unpalatable but they are part of the basis in material reality of the line that the Soviet Union is the more dangerous superpower and the most dangerous source of war. Theoretically they confirm Stalin's view that the struggle for a redivision of the world among the imperialist great powers is '... a struggle waged with particular fury by new financial groups and powers seeking 'a place in the sun' against the old groups and powers, which cling tenaciously to what they have seized' * (Foundations of Leninism', Peking edition, page 5) and Lenin's that such powers are '... even more rapacious, even more predatory'."

"Such powers are even more predatory because of the UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM**. The Soviet Union is a LATECOMER to imperialism and in consequence found the world already largely divided among the existing great powers [Note the word 'powers' instead of 'power' - an obvious reference to "Western European countries", as they say - ACW], in particular the US superpower. It is therefore impelled to challenge the existing division of the world, and will inevitably

* As can be seen, there is in these remarks of Stalin not one word which indicates that the latecomers are "more dangerous and a most dangerous source of war". Stalin is here merely explaining the inevitability of imperialist wars as long as capitalism exists, for a redivision of the world.

** RCLB's emphasis.

use any means it is able, including an aggressive and predatory* war, to do so. Those who deny that the Soviet Union is the more dangerous superpower and the most dangerous source of war are objectively denying Lenin's teachings on imperialism and war."

To the RCLB comrades it "may be most unpalatable", but there is a "basis in material reality" for saying that they are engaged in a fraudulent distortion of the meaning of the quotations of Lenin's and Stalin's just given above. It may be "most unpalatable" to them, but they will not be able to show that "those who deny that the Soviet Union is the "more dangerous superpower and most dangerous source of war are objectively denying Lenin's teachings on imperialism and war". We challenge them to show to us where, when and which Lenin taught that the newcomers to the imperialist banqueting table were "more dangerous" and "the most dangerous source of war". We challenge them to show when, where and which Lenin taught that the imperialist powers already ensconced at the imperialist banqueting table were secondary enemies (not primary targets) and the newcomers the primary enemies. To ascribe this caricaturised Marxism to Lenin is to utter the most foul slander against a man who devoted a significant portion of his life to fighting exactly against such type of caricaturing of Marxism which was committed by the likes of Plekhanov and co., who, in the manner of the RCLB, were saying that the Hun was the most dangerous enemy and the most dangerous source of war.

The comrades of the RCLB indulge in fraudulent literary trickery by culling, in what they believe to be support of their erroneous theory, six words of Lenin's (then giving these six words a meaning which they do not bear) from a speech of his, every word of which speech is devoted to a refutation of the thesis put forward by the RCLB. In fact, to refute the RCLB one need^{ed} no more than simply make this pamphlet, entitled 'War and Revolution', freely available to thinking workers, especially to those who regard themselves as the revolutionary vanguard, but who are actually extremely ignorant of Marxist theory. One could not think of a better way of punishing the RCLB. Here we will do no more than give a few quotations from this very speech, which will restore the proper meaning to the six words snatched literally screaming out of their context by the RCLB. Poor old Lenin must turn in his grave at such vile violations committed against Leninism !

But before giving these quotations of Lenin's, we wish to draw the reader's attention to the disgusting distortion and substitution of words (and remember, there are only six words for the RCLB to exercise its not inconsiderable expertise at literary distortion on) indulged in by the

* It appears from this that in the event of a war between US imperialism and its allies and Soviet Social imperialism and its allies, that war would be a predatory war only on the side of the Soviet Union who, being a latecomer, would use any means, including an aggressive and predatory war, to effect a redivision of the world. Marxism, however, refuses to deal with the question of the war on the basis of who the aggressor and who the aggressed are, on the question of who fired the first shot, or, to put it in the vivid and popular language of Comrade Lenin, "the question of which of the two robbers was the first to draw the knife is of small account to us". But of this more anon.

RCLB. Whereas Lenin speaks of these newcomers to the imperialist banqueting table as "even more rapacious, even more predatory", the RCLB turn around and make him say: "They are even more dangerous and a most dangerous source of war". What is this if not daylight robbery committed against Leninism? What other name is there for such methods than deliberate literary distortion and literary fraud? And this from the very people who accuse their opponents of contenting themselves "with sly rhetoric and vague innuendo, hoping these will pass for concrete analysis". And, we repeat, comrades of the RCLB, such methods have "nothing to do with honest polemic between Marxists"; but are rather in the "bourgeois style of throwing enough mud in the hope that some will stick". And the felony of the RCLB comrades is compounded in that they are not only throwing enough mud in the hope that some will stick on their opponents, but also that they are engaged in such a lot of muck-raking that it entitles us to say that these are attempts at throwing enough mud in the hope that some will stick on Lenin as well. We are bound to say that the comrades of the RCLB are engaged, wittingly or unwittingly, in an exercise which aims at the revision of the fundamentals of Leninism. Only they have not the courage to do so openly, frankly, honestly, explicitly and clearly; instead they content themselves with "sly rhetoric and vague innuendo, hoping that these will pass for concrete analysis". We are sure that "the people of the world will see through this vulgar, philistine style and see which line and which parties truly represent their interests."

RCLB'S FOUL DISTORTIONS OF LENINISM.

Now to turn to the promised quotations. We warn the reader, however, to be patient with us, for the quotations are rather lengthy. But that is no fault of ours: the RCLB comrades, by tearing the six words out of their context, by giving them a meaning they do not bear, have so distorted them as to force us to quote Comrade Lenin extensively with a view to restoring the proper context and meaning to these words.

Comrade Lenin is substantiating the following thesis:

"War is a continuation of policy by other means. All wars are inseparable from the political systems that engender them. The policy which a given state, a given class within that state, pursued for a long time before the war is inevitably continued by that same class during the war, the form of action alone being changed." ('War and Revolution', Collected Works Vol 24)

He then goes on to demonstrate this thesis by reference to the revolutionary war waged by the revolutionary masses in France in 1792, against a united monarchist and reactionary Europe. He says:

"When the French revolutionary townspeople and revolutionary peasants overthrew the monarchy ... by revolutionary means and established a democratic republic - when they made short work of their monarch, and short work of their land owners, too, in revolutionary fashion - that policy of the revolutionary class was bound to shake all the rest of autocratic, tsarist, imperial and semi-feudal Europe to its foundations. And the inevitable

continuation of this policy of the victorious revolutionary class in France was the wars in which all the monarchist nations of Europe, forming their famous coalition, lined up against revolutionary France in a counter-revolutionary war." (p. 400, *ibid*).

"This example", continues Comrade Lenin, "to my mind is noteworthy in that it clearly demonstrates to us things which the bourgeois journalists are now always forgetting when they pander to the philistine prejudices and ignorance of the backward masses who do not understand this intimate economic and historical connection between every kind of war and the preceding policy of every country, EVERY CLASS* that before the war had achieved its ends by so-called 'peaceful' means. 'So-called', because the brute force required to ensure 'peaceful' rule in the colonies, for example, can hardly be called peaceful." (*Ibid*. p. 400).

As though having the likes of the RCLB** in mind, and turning to the inter-imperialist First World War, Comrade Lenin goes on to say:

"The thing is that if we want to know what the present war is about, we must first of all make a general survey of the policies of the European powers as a whole. We must not take this or that example, this or that particular case, which can easily be wrenched out of the context of social phenomena and which is worthless, because an opposite example can just as easily be cited. We must take the whole policy of the entire system of European states in their economic and political inter-relations if we are to understand how the present war steadily and inevitably grew out of this system." (*ibid*, p 401)

Having explained that the revolutionary war waged by the revolutionary masses of France at the close of the 18th Century against a united, monarchist and reactionary Europe was a continuation of the preceding policy of the victorious revolution in France, Comrade Lenin goes on to explain, by way of contrast, that the First World War was an inter-imperialist and reactionary war which too on its part was a continuation of the preceding reactionary and imperialist policies pursued by the two groups of imperialist predators. Here is how he expresses himself on this question:

"What we have at present is primarily two leagues, two groups of capitalist powers. We have before us all the world's greatest capitalist powers - Britain, France, America, and Germany*** - who for decades have doggedly pursued a policy of incessant economic rivalry aimed at achieving world supremacy, subjugating the small nations, and making threefold and tenfold profits on banking capital, which has

* Our emphasis, see note on p. 5 of this article.

** Who are past-masters at taking isolated examples out of the context of social phenomena.

*** Translated into today's terminology, Britain and Germany were the two superpowers of those days.

caught the whole world in the net of its influence. That is what Britain's and Germany's policies really amount to. I stress this fact. This fact can never be emphasised strongly enough, because if we forget this we shall never understand what this war is about and we shall then be easy game for any bourgeois publicist who tries to foist lying phrases on us.

"The real policies of the two groups of capitalist giants, Britain and Germany, who, with their respective allies, have taken the field against each other - policies which they were pursuing for decades before the war, should be studied and grasped in their entirety. If we did not do this we should not only be neglecting an essential requirement of scientific socialism and of all social science in general, ^{but} we should be unable to understand anything whatever about the present war...

"How can a war be accounted for without considering its bearing on the preceding policy of the given state, of the given system of states, the given classes? I repeat: this is a basic point which is constantly overlooked. Failure to understand it makes nine-tenths of all war discussions mere wrangling, so much verbiage. We say: if you have not studied the policies of both belligerent groups over a period of decades - so as to avoid accidental factors and the quoting of random examples - if you have not shown what bearing this war has on preceding policies, then you don't understand what this war is all about.

"These war policies show us just one thing - continuous economic rivalry between the world's two greatest giants, capitalist economies. On the one hand we have Britain, a country which owns the greater part of the globe, a country which ranks first in wealth, which has created this wealth not so much by the labour of its workers as by the exploitation of innumerable colonies, by the vast power of its banks which have developed at the head of all the others into an insignificantly small group of some four or five super-banks handling billions of rubles, and handling them in such a way that it can be said without exaggeration that there is not a patch of land in the world today on which this capital has not laid its heavy hand, not a patch of land which British capital has not enmeshed by a thousand threads. This capital grew to such dimensions by the turn of the century that its activities extended far beyond the borders of individual states and formed a group of giant banks possessed of fabulous wealth. Having begotten this tiny group of banks, it has caught the whole world in the net of its billions. This is the sum and substance of Britain's economic policy and of the economic policy of France, of which even French writers, some of them contributors to 'L'Humanite' a paper now controlled by ex-socialists (in fact, no less a man than Lysis, the well-known financial writer), stated several years before the war: 'France is a financial monarchy, France is a financial oligarchy, France is the world's money-lender'.

"On the other hand, opposed to this, mainly Anglo-French group, we have another group of capitalists, an even more rapacious, even more predatory* one, a group who came to the capitalist banqueting table when all the seats were occupied, but who introduced into the struggle new methods for

* These words, underlined by us, are the words torn out of their context by the RCLB -ACW.

developing capitalist production, improved techniques, and superior organisation, which turned the old capitalism, the capitalism of the free-competition age, into the capitalism of giant trusts, syndicates, and cartels. This group introduced the beginnings of state-controlled capitalist production, combining the colossal power of capitalism with the colossal power of the state into a single mechanism and bringing tens of millions of people within the single organisation of state capitalism. Here is economic history, here is diplomatic history, covering several decades, from which no one can get away. It is the one and only guide-post to a proper solution of the problem of war; it leads you to the conclusion that the present war, too, is the outcome of the policies of the classes who have come to grips in it, of the two supreme giants, who, long before the war, had caught the whole world, all countries, in the net of financial exploitation and economically divided the globe up among themselves. They were bound to clash, because a redivision of this supremacy, from the point of view of capitalism, had become inevitable.

"The old division was based on the fact that Britain, in the course of several centuries, had ruined her former competitors. A former competitor was Holland, which had dominated the whole world. Another was France, which had fought for supremacy for nearly a hundred years. After a series of protracted wars Britain was able, by virtue of her economic power, her merchant capital, to establish her unchallenged sway over the world. In 1871 a new predator appeared, a new capitalist power arose, which developed at an incomparably faster pace than Britain. That is a basic fact. You will not find a book on economic history that does not acknowledge this indisputable fact - the fact of Germany's faster development. This rapid development of capitalism in Germany was the development of a young strong predator, who appeared in the concert of European powers and said: 'You ruined Holland, you defeated France, you have helped yourself to half the world - now be good enough to let us have our fair share.' What does 'a fair share' mean? How is it to be determined in the capitalist world, in the world of banks? There power is determined by the number of banks, there power is determined in the way described by a mouthpiece of the American multimillionaires, which declared with typically American frankness and typically American cynicism: 'The war in Europe is being waged for world domination. To dominate the world two things are needed: dollars and banks. We have the dollars, we shall make the banks and we shall dominate the world.' This statement was made by a leading newspaper of the American multimillionaires. I must say, there is a thousand times more truth in this cynical statement of a blustering American multimillionaire than in thousands of articles by bourgeois liars who try to make out that this war is being waged for national interests, on national issues, and utter similar glaringly patent lies which dismiss history completely and take an isolated example like the case of the German beast of prey who attacked Belgium. The case is undoubtedly a real one. This group of predators did attack Belgium with brutal ferocity, but it did the same thing the other group did yesterday by other means and is doing today to other nations". (ibid, pp. 402-5).

From the above lengthy quotation it is perfectly clear that Comrade Lenin is emphasising the following important conclusions:

(a) That the First World War was a continuation of the real policies of the two groups of capitalist giants - Britain and Germany-who, with their respective allies, had taken to the field against each other, policies which they were pursuing for decades before the war.

(b) That these policies were imperialist and predatory on BOTH sides, policies of "incessant economic rivalry aimed at achieving world supremacy, subjugating the small nations, and making three-fold and ten-fold profits on banking capital", which had got the whole world in the net of its influence.

(c) That the two supreme giants, the two predators, were bound to clash on the basis of, and because of, the law of uneven development of capitalism, which had brought on the scene "another group of capitalists, an even more rapacious, even more predatory one, the group who came to the capitalist banqueting table when all the seats were occupied ...", namely, the German group of capitalists. "They were bound to clash, because re-division of this supremacy, from the point of view of capitalism, had become inevitable."

(d) That the war on both sides was predatory, reactionary and an imperialist war.

There is not as much as a hint in this article of Lenin's as to suggest that the German group of capitalists were more dangerous. The words "even more rapacious, even more predatory" do not imply any qualitative difference between the British group of predators and the German group of predators. They merely describe the state of affairs whereby Germany, owing to her uneven economic development, had spurted ahead of Britain economically and had become a mighty military power. But she possessed an incomparably smaller portion of the colonies, etc. Britain on the other hand had lagged behind economically, and yet possessed an incomparably larger share of colonial possessions and of financial plunder all around the world. This division was based on the relative strength of the parties, which strength had long been consigned to the dustbin of history. In these circumstances it was not at all surprising that the new group was more rapacious and more predatory and bereft of table manners, while the old group - the group of decrepit predators, revelling at the banqueting table - could afford to appear gentle and well-mannered. Had the decrepit group of predators been willing to concede to the young group of predators the latter's 'fair share', there would have been no need for a clash. No group of predators, however, more predatory or less, more rapacious or less, is ever willing to concede to the other any seat at the banqueting table, so it is inevitable that a clash should take place. And this is precisely what Comrade Lenin is explaining* in the above-quoted remarks which the RCLB have so characteristically distorted so as to give them a meaning which is the opposite of what their author intended.

* In fact the Leninist thesis of the inevitability of war under imperialism would be a complete nonsense if we had to ascribe any other meaning to the above-quoted remarks.

There is not even a hint in the article to suggest that the German group of rapacious predators were more dangerous & a greater source of war. Just the opposite! Had Lenin believed, as did Plekhanov and the various other social-chauvinists and social-patriots, that the German group of predators was a greater danger and a greater source of war, he too, in the fashion of the RCLB, would have put forward the proposition: 'Let us lead the people of the world in dealing the primary blow at the most dangerous enemy, namely, Germany, rather than try to get them to dissipate their forces by striking out equally in all directions and thus weakening the blow at the primary target'. In fact Lenin did not put forward such an absurd proposition, for the kind of caricaturised Marxism practised by the RCLB was completely alien to Comrade Lenin. He therefore correctly advised the proletariat of BOTH the belligerent coalitions to strive to turn the imperialist war into a civil war for socialism, or, if it pleases the RCLB, he advised them "to dissipate their forces by striking out equally in all directions ... "

So as to leave no-one in doubt, he continues:

" ... this war is the continuation of policy of annexations, that is, a policy of conquest, of capitalist robbery on the part of BOTH groups involved in the war. Obviously, the question of which of these two robbers was the first to draw the knife is of small account to us."

And further :

"The present war is the continuation of the policy of conquest, of the shooting down of whole nationalities, of unbelievable atrocities committed by the Germans and the British in Africa, and by the British and the Russians in Persia - which of them committed most it is difficult to say."

And if all that is not clear to the RCLB comrades, if they still insist after all that has been said above that an "even more predatory, even more rapacious" imperialist power is a greater danger and a greater source of war, thus making the latter a primary target for our blows, let them ponder over the following remarks of Comrade Lenin's taken from the same article as the six words quoted (or, more correctly, misquoted) by the RCLB:

"This war is an inevitable outgrowth of super-capitalism, especially banking capital, which resulted in some four banks in Berlin and five or six in London dominating the whole world, appropriating the world's funds, reinforcing their financial policy by armed force, and finally clashing in a savage armed conflict because they had come to the end of their free tether in the matter of conquests. One or the other side had to relinquish its colonies. Such questions are not settled voluntarily in this world of capitalists. This issue could only be settled by war. That is why it is absurd to blame one or other crowned brigand. They are all the same, these crowned brigands. That is why it is equally absurd to blame the capitalists of one or another country. All they are to blame for is for having introduced such a system. But this has been done in full keeping with the law, which is safeguarded by all the forces

of a civilised state. 'I am fully within my rights, I am a buyer of shares. All the law courts, all the police, the whole standing army and all the navies in the world are safeguarding my sacred right to these shares'. Who's to blame for banks being set up which handle hundreds of millions of rubles, for these banks casting their nets of plunder over the whole world, and for their being locked in mortal combat? Find the culprit if you can!* The blame lies with half a century of capitalist development, and the only way out of this is by the overthrow of the rule of the capitalists and by a workers' revolution." (Our emphases - ACW) ('War & Revolution')

In view of the foregoing, all that we can say is that the Soviet Union has come to occupy the position today which was occupied by German imperialism at the time of the First World War. We can say, applying the Leninist thesis concerning the law of uneven development of capitalism, that the Soviet Union has spurred ahead of the other imperialist powers and that it has grown into a mighty military power. It has now arrived at the capitalist banqueting table, when all the seats are occupied, and it is addressing those already at the banqueting table in the following rude manner: "Be kind enough to let us have our fair share". It is in this sense, and in this sense alone, that it can be described as being "even more predatory, even more rapacious". However, the decrepit capitalist powers who have hitherto been sumptuously banqueting, and have every intention of carrying on doing so in the future, refuse to entertain the unreasonable and rude requests of the young rapacious predator. Is it surprising, in view of this, that a clash between the two has become inevitable for the redivision of the seats at the capitalist banqueting table? For they have reached the end of their free tether. Peaceful solution does not seem to offer a way out. And it is in this context that we must see the struggle going on between the two imperialist coalitions - in the Horn of Africa, in Southern Africa, and indeed elsewhere. We must declare ^{in mind} that both the coalitions have imperialist predatory interests, and not the liberation of the peoples of these regions under the cloak of which they carry on their 'peaceful' and not so peaceful rivalry. In these circumstances for us to side with one as against the other would mean that we had sunk to the position of stupid philistines and ignorant yokels, and had begun to act as servile flunkeys in the service of one or the other of the imperialist coalitions.

If we were to follow the RCLB line, we would have to advise people everywhere to fight against the Soviet Union as being "the most dangerous source of war", as being the "primary target", and as being "the headquarters of international reaction". We ask the comrades of the RCLB to just try and do this by advising say, the people of Zimbabwe or Azania, to fight against the USSR as being the "more dangerous super-power and most dangerous source of war", and as being "the headquarters of international reaction" and therefore the "primary target". In fact, the RCLB say this in so many words on page 7:

* Obviously, what proved impossible for Lenin to achieve has now been achieved by the RCLB. They have found the culprit, but in doing so they have deserted Leninism and have joined hands with one of the coalitions of the imperialist, predatory, violent and reactionary bourgeoisie.

"The revisionist Birch and those who push the 'left' opportunist line on the international situation, in not recognising that the Soviet Union is the more dangerous superpower and the most dangerous source of war, are playing the Soviet Union's game for it. Instead of leading the people of the WORLD in dealing the primary blow at the most dangerous enemy, they try to get them to dissipate /weaken the blow at the primary target. Brezhnev must be rubbing his hands with glee ! ... "

In view of this we may marvel at the innocent indignation and outraged protestations of the RCLB against Birch when they say:

"This overall view is distorted by Birch as calling for an 'alliance' with the United States against the Soviet Union. Others have said 'they claim that the US is allegedly no longer warmongering' and that this line calls '... for unity with one superpower against another'. These are vile slanders ! ". (p 5)

In view of the foregoing, let the reader judge whether anyone is indulging in vile slanders in accusing the RCLB of wanting "unity with one superpower against another". One thing or the other. Either the Soviet Union is the headquarters of international reaction and /primary target - in which case it is right and proper for revolutionaries throughout the world to make an alliance with even US imperialism to strike at the main target. Or the Soviet Union is NOT the primary target, in which case the whole of the RCLB thesis falls to the ground like the crashing of a house about one's ears.

Any attempt on the part of the RCLB to advise say, the people of Zimbabwe or Azania, to fight against the USSR as being the "more dangerous superpower" and the "primary target", etc. would be met with derision and laughter*. For the peoples of these two countries have been, and are still, fighting against US imperialism and their agents, the local fascist regimes. The USSR, not out of any desire to liberate the peoples of Southern Africa, but out of imperialist rivalry and in order to undermine its imperialist rivals, is even prepared to supply arms to some of those fighting against Anglo-American imperialism. It is not the first time that such a thing has taken place. Here is how Comrade Lenin put this point by reference to the 7 years' war between Britain and France:

"Example: Britain and France fought the Seven Years' War for the possession of colonies. In other words, they waged an imperialist war (which is possible on the basis of slavery and primitive capitalism as well as on the basis of modern highly developed capitalism). France suffered defeat and lost some of her colonies. Several years later there began the national liberation war of the North American states against Britain alone. France and Spain, then in possession of some parts of the present United States, concluded a friendship treaty with the States in rebellion against Britain. This they did out of hostility to Britain, i.e., in their own imperialist interests. French troops fought the British

*And its interesting to npte that the RCLB don't give such advice to the Zimbabwean people and are forced by reality to spare themselves the humiliation of being met with derision and laughter -- at least on this one occasion. We shall merely add that in so doing the RCLB join the "revisionist Birch" and the ultra-lefts in getting the people of the world "to dissipate their forces ... and thus weaken the blow at the primary target". Brezhnev must be rubbing his hands with glee!

on the side of the American forces. What we have here is a national liberation war in which imperialist rivalry is an auxiliary element, one that has no serious importance. This is the very opposite to what we see in the war of 1914-16 (the national element in the Austro-Serbian War is of no serious importance compared with the all-determining element of imperialist rivalry)." (Lenin, 'The Junius Pamphlet', C W Vol22, p. 311).

Having put forward their absurd, not to say most reactionary*, thesis, namely, that the USSR is the primary target, the RCLB, as though being frightened of its own thesis, begins not only to retrace its steps, but to take it all back, as it were, by quoting the following important and correct proposition from the 'People's Daily' editorial of 1 November 1977:

"Undoubtedly the people of each particular region can decide which superpower or imperialist country poses the immediate threat to them according to their own specific conditions."

This proposition is correct, and it is undoubtedly right and proper for the people of each particular region to decide which imperialist country poses the immediate threat to them according to their own specific conditions. It is precisely in accordance with this correct proposition that the Communist Party of China has correctly decided that Soviet Social imperialism poses the immediate threat to China. It is precisely in accordance with this correct proposition that the peoples of Southern Africa have correctly decided that Anglo-American imperialism poses the immediate threat to them. It is precisely in accordance with this correct proposition that the Communist Party of China may correctly have good relations, and in some circumstances may even make an alliance, with those who oppose that superpower, to wit the Soviet Union, which to them poses the immediate threat, with the USA. It is precisely in accordance with this correct proposition that the peoples of Southern Africa and the national liberation movements there are prepared to accept material assistance from the USSR, for, to them, Anglo-American imperialism poses the immediate threat. In so doing the Communist Party of China and the national-liberation movements in Southern Africa are acting in concert against the two superpowers and weakening them. In so doing they are acting in accordance with the following important and correct proposition, a proposition which was mechanically understood and applied by the RCLB, of Comrade Mao Tsetung's:

"The Communist Party opposes all imperialism, but we make a distinction between Japanese imperialism which is now committing aggression against China and the imperialist powers which are not doing so now, between German and Italian imperialism which are allies of Japan and have recognised 'Manchukuo' and British and US imperialism which are opposed to Japan, and between the Britain and the United States of yesterday which followed a Munich policy in the Far East and undermined China's resistance to Japan, and the Britain and the United States of today which have abandoned this policy and are now in favour of China's resistance" (Mao Tsetung 'On Policy', Selected Works, Vol.2, p. 443).

* Reactionary because it requires of the proletariat that it should join the other imperialist coalition headed by the US.

WHO IS THE PRIMARY ENEMY FOR US IN BRITAIN ?

As ever, we must come to the question of Britain and ask ourselves: who is the primary enemy for us? The answer given to this question puts one in either the bourgeois camp or the proletarian camp. The bourgeoisie, taking their class position, and from the point of view of their class, correctly and legitimately answer the question thus: the USSR is the main enemy. This is typified by the speeches of all bourgeois politicians, in particular by those of Margaret Thatcher, over which the RCLB wax so eloquent. The revolutionary proletariat, however, and its representatives can only come to the following answer to this question, namely, that British monopoly capitalism in particular, and Anglo-American imperialism in general, are its primary enemies, for the class that rules here is an imperialist class and the next stage of social advance in Britain is that of socialist revolution. Any other answer given by a representative of the revolutionary proletariat "is the height of absurdity and is most reactionary"; and it puts the person giving such an answer decidedly in the imperialist camp and makes him a flunkey of Anglo-American imperialism. Of this, however, more anon, in the next section.

This is the only way to apply correctly the tactics of Comrade Mao Tsetung in the above-quoted remarks of his. This is the only dialectical materialist application of his injunctions, unlike the mechanical-materialist assassination of these injunctions by the RCLB - all in the name of carrying out these injunctions !! Comrade Mao Tsetung was a great Marxist-Leninist and his brilliant Marxist-Leninist propositions shall continue to serve as shining beacons to all revolutionaries all over the world. Any attempts on the part of the RCLB or any other would-be bigwigs to distort the teachings of Comrade Mao Tsetung are doomed to failure.

We cannot help remarking here that the RCLB are becoming rather adept at distorting the teachings of not only the founders of scientific socialism - Marx and Engels - but also of their great followers. Neither Lenin nor Stalin nor Mao Tsetung are safe. In the hands of the RCLB each one suffers the same fate, to wit, is distorted. The RCLB are living proof of the following remarks of Comrade Lenin, which remarks the RCLB, being unaware of their applicability to them, throw in the face of Birch and other opponents of theirs:

"The Dialectics of history were such that the theoretical victory of Marxism obliged its enemies to disguise themselves as Marxists".
(Lenin and the Struggle Against Revisionism' FLPH Peking, p. 1).

To conclude this section:(1)the RCLB are preparing the British proletariat - that is, if they are preparing it at all - for a possible (but unlikely) war between the Soviet Union on the one hand and a "west European country" on the other hand. On the other hand, they are NOT preparing the British proletariat for a likely war, namely, the inter-imperialist war between the two imperialist coalitions - the one under the leadership of the USSR, and the other headed by the USA (Britain forming part of the latter).

(2) Even in the event of a war between the two imperialist coalitions as referred to in (1) above, one is not sure whether the RCLB slogan would to convert the imperialist war into a civil war for socialism or to side with

the coalition headed by US imperialism (of which coalition our bourgeoisie would be a member) against "the headquarters of international reaction", that is "leading the people of the world in dealing the primary blow at the most dangerous enemy ..." to wit, against the coalition headed by the USSR.

Thus it can be seen, the British proletariat, not to mention the reader of their article, is left completely in the dark and in the doldrums as to what his attitude ought to be in the event of such a war breaking out. Allons donc !!

The RCLB comrades ought to make up their minds as to whether they would really be for the defeat of our 'own' bourgeoisie if it took us into such an imperialist war, or whether they would be on the side of Western imperialism, headed by US imperialism, to thwart the "attempts of the Soviet Union, the headquarters of international reaction, to achieve world hegemony". For if the RCLB believes in its own theses that the Soviet Union is "the headquarters of international reaction", that it is "more dangerous and the most dangerous source of war", that it is the "primary enemy", etc. then there is only one course that is open to it, namely, it (the RCLB) should declare that in the event of a war between the two imperialist coalitions, the RCLB would be in favour of the US imperialist coalition for the purpose of "dealing the primary blow at the most dangerous enemy", to wit, Soviet social imperialism. The RCLB leadership has, it is clear from statements in the present article, as well as in some others, come down in favour of the US imperialist coalition. But it dare not say so openly and clearly, for it is afraid, and afraid justifiably, that such social chauvinism on its part would not be swallowed even by all the members of the RCLB - and this is saying something - let alone by the rest of the Marxist-Leninist movement. Hence the attempts to hide the true position and stance of the leadership of the RCLB; hence the constant divergence between its apparent and its real intention, between its word and its deed; hence the ritual references to the formula "we would be for the defeat of our own bourgeoisie if it took us into such an imperialist war", and hence the irreconcilable contradictoriness in the various statements of the RCLB. Their whole argument (for lack of a better expression) is overflowing with the most unacceptable and glaring contradictions. The comrades of the RCLB stroll in and out of these contradictions with an imperturbable calmness of spirit that is truly worthy of a better cause.

But the more the RCLB comrades try to hide their real stance, the more stupidly contradictory they become. Thus, for instance, in order to hide the fact that they stand for an alliance with US imperialism, that they fight against the hegemonism of only one of the two superpowers, namely, the Soviet Union, the RCLB comrades are obliged to put forward the demand that US bases be removed from Britain. However, the removal of US bases from Britain in no way makes it easier for Britain to resist Soviet attack on it. On the contrary, the removal of US bases from Britain and the rest

of Western Europe is tantamount to an invitation to the Soviet Union to attack Western Europe. The result? By this demand for the removal of US bases, the RCLB, far from "leading the people of the world in dealing the primary blow at the most dangerous enemy/i.e., the Soviet Union - ACW7" are actually helping the self-same "most dangerous enemy".

Had the comrades of the RCLB been a bit more courageous, they would have written in the fashion of their fellow social-chauvinists from Germany. In order to show the similarity of the social-chauvinism of the RCLB with that of so-called 'Marxist-Leninists' of Germany, we reproduce here a translation of a leaflet issued by 'Die Neue Welt', the organ of the "Central Committee of the Marxist-Leninists of Germany"* on the occasion of President Carter's visit to the Federal Republic in July 1978. While noting the similarity of the chauvinism of these two organisations, the reader is bound to be pleasantly surprised by the candour, honesty and courage of the German social-chauvinists, just as he is bound to be repelled by the hypocrisy, deceit and pusillanimity of our home-spun social chauvinists of the RCLB. Here, then, is what the German social chauvinists say in their leaflet:

"GERMAN MAOISTS** GREET PRESIDENT CARTER !

FOR THE ALLIANCE OF EUROPE, CHINA AND ALSO THE USA AGAINST THE SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM OF THE USSR, THE CHIEF ENEMY OF ALL PEOPLES, 14th July 1978.

"President Carter is visiting the Federal Republic at the start of the Bonn World Economic summit. His visit to Frankfurt and Rome, US and NATO units, particularly his inspection of the Berlin Wall with Federal Chancellor Schmidt, is a political demonstration of the presence of US troops and of US interests in Europe.

"Whereas we took part in protest actions during Brezhnev's visit, (we are against this new Hitler) we applaud the visit of Carter today, in spite of our criticisms of various aspects of American policy. Dealings with Carter can strengthen Europe's position - dealings with Brezhnev are either self-deception or betrayal.

"In the past, we Marxist-Leninists have struggled against the USA, particularly against its aggressive policies towards Vietnam. Today, while Soviet social-imperialism is on the offensive, establishing social-fascist dictatorships like those in the GDR and Czechoslovakia, regimes which put a Franco-type or Salazar-type fascism in the shade, we are campaigning for the defence of the independence and democracy of all the countries of the world, particularly those in Europe, of Germany, against Soviet hegemony.

"Carter comes as the representative of the No 2 superpower, which today merely attempts to defend its sphere of influence, in contrast to the expanding Soviet superpower which is striving to divide the world anew and is following in Hitler's footsteps.

* Quoted from 'Finsbury Communist', No 164, September 1978.

** Comrade Mao Tse-tung is reputed to have said that he cannot be held responsible for the actions of all those who call themselves 'Maoists'.

"In the face of the increasing threat to Western Europe, US foreign policy has a key role to play and the question is: resistance or capitulation in the face of worldwide social-imperialist expansion. For Europe, which is divided, and whose eastern part is used by the Soviet Union as an aggressive base, the Carter visit draws attention to the following essential demands: -

"American strategic atomic weapons must form and must remain a defensive shield for Western Europe.

"NATO must above all become an effective defensive instrument for Western Europe against the Soviet Union's superiority in conventional weapons. For this reason the Neutron Bomb must be built and the weapons of the NATO partners must be standardised.

"Any agreement between the superpowers (e.g. SALT) must safeguard Western European interests.

"The USA must contribute to the frustration of the Soviet policies of encirclement on the periphery of Europe, in the Near East, in Africa and correspondingly must underwrite the independence of threatened countries, e.g., Turkey, Egypt and Zaire.

"The US must at least tolerate, and better support, the policies Europe has in relation to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy supply and its working in this connection with the countries of the Third World.

"The USA dare not fail to consider the effect of the dollar crisis on world trade but must try to reach a solution which takes into account the common interests of all countries.

"In the interests of the unity and independence of all countries and against the forward march of the Soviet Union, the USA must give Korea its unity, must stop Israel's aggression and force it to pull out of the occupied territories, and must carry out the terms of the Shanghai Agreement.

"US policy cannot be European, but can help Europe. Europe must rely on its own strength*, must mobilise its own resources, and must seek allies. To rely on the USA, or to bow to the USSR's detente policy, will not lead to European unity, nor can Western European democracy and independence be thus defended."

* Having stated above that Europe must rely on the USA, that "American strategic atomic weapons must form and must remain a defensive shield for Western Europe", and that "NATO must above all become an effective defensive instrument for Western Europe against the Soviet Union's superiority in conventional weapons", in a fashion typical of the social-chauvinists of the RCLB, the German social-chauvinists, by way of an attempt to provide a screen for this social chauvinism, go on to make this ritual statement about Europe relying on its own strength.

And even on the question of the removal of US bases, if one delves deeply into the reasons behind this rather half-hearted demand of the RCLB, one finds the RCLB comrades are making this demand not in order to fight against US hegemonism, but because they do not trust the US to defend our national independence. Here is how they express themselves in their paper 'Class Struggle' (August 1978, Vol.2, no. 13):

"US imperialism does not care about British independence. It is concerned only for its own interests, its own profits, its own spheres of influence. It opposes Soviet aggression because it WANTS [our emphasis - ACW] to dominate Europe itself."

And further on:

"US imperialism is on the defensive, but there is no reason to believe it will act any other way but as a barbaric and treacherous superpower. It must not be relied on to safeguard the independence of European nations. In its rivalry with the Soviet Union, the United States will hand over countries it considers dispensable to appease Soviet expansionism just as the British and French imperialists sacrificed Czechoslovakia and Austria to appease Nazi Germany."

The phoney nature of RCLB's fight against US hegemonism is evident from their remarks quoted just above. The reader cannot have failed to notice the very apologetic way in which the comrades of the RCLB speak of the already-existing US hegemony over Western Europe. When the RCLB speak of US imperialism not caring about "British independence" and opposing "Soviet aggression only because it WANTS to dominate Europe itself", they are doing no more than acting as a screen to cover the nakedness of US domination over Western Europe ever since the end of the Second World War. The RCLB comrades do not seem to be capable of realising that US imperialism "opposes Soviet aggression" not "only because it wants to dominate Europe itself" but also because - and this is much more important - it does not want its already-existing domination over Western Europe challenged. US imperialism has a very large stake in Western Europe and has every intention of protecting that stake with

all the might at its disposal. And the protection of its selfish interests constitutes the guarantee that it will side with the bourgeoisie of Western European countries in opposing Soviet aggression. And the RCLB, in playing down the significance of the selfish interests of US imperialism in Western Europe, are merely engaged in a cover-up operation designed to hide the domination by one of the two superpowers, US imperialism, since the Second World War in Western Europe, which in turn is designed to 'prove' their thesis that the Soviet Union is the "headquarters of international reaction" and that we should be leading the people of the world in directing the main blow at this primary target.

THE RCLB'S CALL FOR A WEST-EUROPEAN SUPERPOWER.

Well, if the US cannot be trusted to safeguard our national independence, who can be? The RCLB comrades answer thus:

"Whilst only a people's war can GUARANTEE independence, we must demand now that the European countries stop appeasement and prepare an adequate co-ordinated defence" ('Class Struggle', Vol 2 No 13 p 9).*

Put in plain and simple language, which is comprehensible and devoid of euphemism and subterfuges, what the RCLB comrades are demanding is the creation of a third superpower - a West-European superpower. They are not happy with the fact that their 'own' beloved bourgeoisie and that of other Western European countries no longer rule the waves, are no longer as powerful as are the United States and the 'Soviet' bourgeoisie. So they want the European bourgeoisie to pool its resources and build a powerful third superpower which can be equal to, if not better than, the other two superpowers. This is the essence and the sum total of the RCLB's vociferations about the defence of national independence. It is not the defence of national independence but the restoration of the imperialist glory, the resurrection of an all-powerful imperialist Europe through the creation of a third imperialist superpower, that the RCLB stand for; and they seek to hide this true position by the use of deceptive phrases about national defence and even about the need to "fight tooth and nail against British imperialist aggression against other countries ... only by fighting all imperialism can we build genuine unity against the superpowers". True! But how can "we" build unity against the superpowers when, as shown above, some of "us", to wit the RCLB, and others like them, stand for the creation of a third West-European superpower, albeit under the euphemistic expression of preparing an "adequate co-ordinated defence" for Europe. And how can "we" fight "tooth and nail against British imperialist aggression against other countries" when some of "us" are forever standing for an alliance with our 'own' bourgeoisie and are forever striving to strengthen 'our' state machinery, i.e., 'our' armed forces? These strengthened defences will be used not only to "safeguard our national independence" against the superpowers, but also to keep "law and order at home", that is, to suppress the working class at home, and to keep "law and order" in the colonies and neo-colonies, namely, to suppress the national liberation movements abroad.

* See Appendix (3), Note 1.

The RCLB, however, in typical petty-bourgeois style, want to compartmentalise these inseparable functions and aspects of "our" "national defence forces". They accept, in the style of petty-bourgeois socialism, the premises of things but not their consequences. The RCLB, who brand everyone of their opponents as Trotskyite, are actually, without probably even realising it, putting forward the Trotskyist slogan of a United States of Europe, albeit without using that clear expression. The RCLB use deceptive expressions such as: "we must demand that the European countries ... prepare an adequate co-ordinated defence". And what would this United Europe, with its "adequate co-ordinated defence", after which the RCLB pants as the hart pants after clear water, be?

It would be an imperialist superpower for the suppression of proletarian revolution in Western Europe and for the intensified exploitation of the working class; it would be a formidable force for the purposes of oppressing even further and extracting superprofits from the already oppressed and super-exploited peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Such a united Europe is bound to make all attempts to attack and exterminate the movements for national liberation and socialism in the vast continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America. As Comrade Lenin quite correctly pointed out:

"The United States of Europe under the conditions of capitalism is either impossible or reactionary. Certainly, it is possible for temporary agreements to be concluded between capitalists and between states. From this point of view it is also possible to create the United States of Europe, as an arrangement for the European capitalists ..., but what for? Solely for the joint suppression of socialism in Europe. To create the United States of Europe under the conditions of capitalism means to organise reaction." ('On the United States of Europe Slogan').*

It is only a pity that the 'Leninist' RCLB have "forgotten" the above teachings of Leninism. And yet they imagine that they are anti-imperialists, that they are engaged in preparing "the people's forces for socialist revolution", that they "fight tooth and nail against British imperialist aggression against other countries", that they "support the struggle of the Patriotic Front in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) against British imperialism", and that "only by fighting all imperialism can we build genuine unity against the superpowers" !

Perhaps the RCLB comrades want to do all these things. Their policy - their political line - however, leads in a direction entirely the opposite of what they perhaps desire. In this connection we cannot help recalling the following remark - a remark which is completely applicable to the RCLB comrades - of Plekhanov, spoken in relation to the empirio-criticists (followers of the idealist and reactionary philosophy of Mach):

"Some of these hard-working people even call and sincerely consider themselves enemies of the bourgeoisie. Such are in Russia A Bogdanov and A Lunacharsky. But in the best of cases one can only say of such people that their heart is in violent discord with their head: their head works for the benefit of that very class against

* And further: "A United States of Europe under capitalism is tantamount to an agreement on the partition of the colonies" (Lenin).

which their heart is indignant." (Foreword to a Collection of Articles under the Title 'From Defence to Attack', 1910).

Comrades of the RCLB, forgive our frankness in pointing out to you the following truth: your heart is in violent discord with your head: your head works for the benefit of that very class against which your heart is indignant. We shall add only this: what you are preaching today and waxing eloquent over as though you had discovered a new America, the bourgeoisie of Western-European countries has been seeking to put into practice for the last three decades. And that precisely is the significance of the European Economic Community. The European bourgeoisie has been doing its best for nearly 30 years to create a United Europe whose prime object is the creation of yet another - a European - superpower,* with its own ambitions and pretensions to hegemony and domination, just like those of the US and the USSR. Are we only to fight against superpower hegemonism if it's a foreign superpower rather than a superpower of our very own?

The RCLB comrades, however, having adopted a social-chauvinist position, are of a different opinion. Like the social-chauvinists that they are, they argue thus: the British bourgeoisie is the best of them all, the second best is the West-European bourgeoisie; next to it comes the US bourgeoisie; and worst of all are the bourgeoisie which opposes the Anglo-American-European bourgeoisie.

That is the quintessence of their argument.

Let us now turn to the other possibility (not probability). Let us suppose that the next war will be (and it is not likely) not between the two imperialist coalitions, as presumed above, but between Britain (or another Western European country) on the one hand and the USSR on the other.

*It has yet to be explained to us by the RCLB how the emergence of a third superpower - a European superpower - would assist the proletariat in its struggle for socialism, any more than the existence of several imperialist powers (e.g. Britain, France and Germany) did at the beginning of the First World War. The proletariat benefitted only in one country, namely, in Russia, and solely because its leader, the Bolshevik Party, took advantage of the war and, putting into effect the slogan: 'Convert the Imperialist War into a Civil War for Socialism', overthrew its imperialist bourgeoisie and established the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletariat of the imperialist countries ought to take its inspiration from this shining example, rather than memoan the loss of glory of the West-European bourgeoisie and rather than advocate 'national defence' in an imperialist war.

WAR BETWEEN BRITISH IMPERIALISM ON THE ONE HAND AND SOVIET SOCIAL IMPERIALISM ON THE OTHER.

The RCLB state that "A WAR AGAINST A SUPERPOWER IS A JUST WAR ! ", no matter which country (an oppressed colonial country on the one hand or an imperialist country such as Britain on the other) wages such a war against a superpower. In order to ward off the inevitable accusations of "distorting", "misquoting", "quoting out of context", the pearls of wisdom put out by the RCLB, we reproduce here in full their entire argument on this question. Here is what they state on pages 11-12 of their article:

"A WAR AGAINST A SUPERPOWER IS A JUST WAR

"In history there have been numerous wars which, in spite of all the horrors, atrocities, distress and suffering that inevitably accompany all wars, were progressive, i.e., benefitted the development of mankind by helping to destroy the exceptionally harmful and reactionary institutions (for example, autocracy or serfdom), the most barbarous despotism in Europe (Turkish and Russian)' Lenin - "Socialism and War". Reprinted in "Lenin on War and Peace", Peking edition, p.4/5)

"A war waged by a western European country in defence of national independence against the Soviet Union would be the type described by Lenin above: i.e., a just and progressive war. It would be a just war because it would be a war directed against the attempts of the Soviet Union, the headquarters of international reaction, to achieve world hegemony. Stalin pointed out that it is correct to support those national movements which '... tend to weaken, to overthrow imperialism ...' ("Foundations of Leninism", Peking ed. p.74). Although the countries of Western Europe are themselves imperialist, they would, in fighting for national independence against the superpowers, be, willy-nilly and irrespective of their subjective wishes, fighting against the MOST CONCENTRATED FORM OF IMPERIALISM, and thereby helping to bring about the final and complete collapse of imperialism.

"It is quite dogmatic, in the current international situation, to say that a second world imperialist power cannot fight a just war. By way of analogy we would point out that Marx and Engels in the 1840's supported the national movement of the Poles and Hungarians, even though that movement was in favour of capitalism. They did this because those movements were directed against the headquarters of reaction, Tsarism.

"Today, such is the concentration of imperialism residing in the superpowers, that it is almost entirely the superpowers who are keeping the edifice of imperialism intact. ONLY the two superpowers are capable of struggling for world hegemony. In these circumstances if Britain were to be invaded by a superpower should we fight for a united front to repel the invader and wage a war of national independence? Or should we try to fight both the superpowers [sic]* and our 'own' bourgeoisie.

* See Appendix (3), Note 2.

"The latter is the viewpoint of the 'left' opportunist line. The headquarters of this line says that it is 'anti-Marxist' to unite with a weaker imperialism against a superpower and says of the second world that '... it is true that the countries of this 'world' have definite contradictions with the two superpowers, but they are contradictions of an inter-imperialist character'. It is true that the contradictions between the first and second world countries are of an imperialist nature, but this is missing the whole point. What we must do is to establish which are primary and which are secondary enemies, deal the main blow against the main enemy and, if possible, use the contradictions between our enemies in order to effect a TEMPORARY alliance with the secondary enemy to defeat the main enemy. Was it anti-Marxist for the proletariat to unite with the bourgeoisie in Britain in the great anti-fascist war of 1941-45? Was it anti-Marxist for the CPC to advocate the temporary setting aside of differences with the United States and Britain to concentrate on the defeat of Japan? JUDGING FROM PRACTICE it was definitely not anti-Marxist. In this period Hitlerite fascism was defeated and one third of the world became socialist!

"Birch says we must turn a war with the Soviet Union into a 'civil war'. What he is saying is that we must fight BOTH the headquarters of international reaction AND a second-rate bourgeoisie which would be opposed to it. Such a line is the grossest kind of dogmatism and metaphysics. It exactly resembles the view of those Trotskyites in Europe in the anti-fascist war who called on the workers and people to fight both the fascists and that section of the bourgeoisie who were prepared to fight the fascists. Small wonder that the French resistance treated these people in the same way that they treated OPEN collaborators and quislings!

"This line, if implemented, would lead to disastrous defeat for the working class, to the subjugation of western Europe by the Soviet Union, to the enslavement of many third world countries by the Soviet Union and thereby immeasurably strengthen international reaction. As Engels observed of earlier 'Leftism' 'the socialist movement in Europe would be kaput for twenty years'" (RCLB'S emphasis throughout).

HOW THE RCLB OBLITERATE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN A NATIONAL LIBERATION WAR AND AN IMPERIALIST WAR - WAR IS A CONTINUATION OF POLICY.

The chief error that the RCLB have committed in the above-quoted remarks is to confuse an imperialist war with a national-liberation war, that is, they have confused a war between two imperialist countries with a war between an imperialist country on the one hand and an oppressed country on the other. The question, then, is: what is the substance of an imperialist war, and what, on the other hand, is the substance of a national-liberation war against imperialism? War, to repeat after Comrade Lenin, is the continuation of policy. Therefore, to characterise the substance of a war it is absolutely necessary for us thoroughly to examine the policy pursued by the belligerents prior to the outbreak of war, the

policy which led to and brought about the war. Here is how Comrade Lenin formulates this question:

"How, then, can we disclose and define the 'substance' of a war? War is the continuation of policy. Consequently, we must examine the policy pursued prior to the war, the policy that led to and brought about the war. If it was an imperialist policy, i.e., one designed to safeguard the interests of finance capital and rob and oppress colonies and foreign countries, then the war stemming from that policy is imperialist. If it was a national liberation policy, i.e., one expressive of the mass movement against national oppression, then the war stemming from that policy is a war of national liberation.

"The philistine does not realise that war is 'the continuation of policy', and consequently limits himself to the formula that 'the enemy has attacked us', 'the enemy has invaded my country', without stopping to think WHAT ISSUES are at stake in the war, WHICH classes are waging it, and with WHAT political objects. Kievsky stoops right down to the level of such a philistine when he declares that Belgium has been occupied by the Germans, and hence, from the point of view of self-determination, the 'Belgian social-patriots are right', or: the Germans have occupied part of France, hence, 'Guesde can be satisfied', for 'what is involved is territory populated by his nation' (and not by an alien nation).

"For the philistine the important thing is WHERE the armies stand, who is winning AT THE MOMENT. For a Marxist the important thing is WHAT ISSUES are at stake in THIS war, during which first one, then the other army may be on top." (Lenin, 'Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism, pp 9-10).

Thus it is clear that in the event of a war between the USSR (a superpower) and a "western European country", say Britain, to disclose and define the substance of such a war, the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist would have to examine the policy pursued prior to the war, the policy that led to and brought about such a war. He would have to ask himself the cardinal question: was the policy pursued by both of the warring parties an imperialist policy, i.e., "one designed to safeguard the interests of finance capital and rob and oppress colonies* and foreign countries? Or was it a national-liberation policy, i.e., one expressive of the mass movement against national oppression" on the one side, and imperialist policy on the other?

Having posed such a question, the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist could only come to one conclusion, namely, that the policy pursued prior to such a war by both the warring parties (the USSR and Britain) was an imperialist policy designed to safeguard the interests of finance capital and rob and oppress colonies and foreign countries, and that, therefore, the war stemming from that policy could not but be an imperialist war. The Soviet Union for nearly a decade and a half has been pursuing an imperialist policy and it has become one of the two mightiest imperialist powers both militarily and economically. It wishes to have its "fair share" of robbing and oppressing colonies, neo-colonies and foreign countries. Britain, on

* Neo-colonies today.

the other hand has been pursuing an imperialist policy for a good hundred years, and the object of that policy has been to rob and plunder other nations; and its policy has been to safeguard the interests of British finance capital and to retain the age-old robbery and oppression of colonies and foreign countries that it has been able to perpetrate. Therefore war on the part of Britain too would be an imperialist war stemming from an imperialist policy over a long period of time. In other words, it would not be a national-liberation war stemming from a national-liberation policy, expressive of the mass movement against national oppression. There is no national-liberation movement in Britain if only because Britain is not nationally oppressed. Thus it is clear that a possible war (and we must repeat, for it can never be over-emphasised, not a probable war) between Soviet Social imperialism on the one hand and British imperialism on the other would be an inter-imperialist war in which the slogan of the British proletariat (as indeed of the Soviet proletariat) could only be: convert the imperialist war into a civil war for socialism.

The RCLB comrades, on the other hand, refuse to make such an analysis of such a possible war. Like the philistines that they are, they do not realise, or - what amounts to the same thing - refuse to realise, that the war is the continuation of policy, and consequently the RCLB limit themselves to the formula that "the enemy has attacked us", 'the enemy has invaded my country', without stopping to think WHAT ISSUES are at stake in the war, WHICH classes are waging it, and with WHAT political objects." (Lenin, 'A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism', p. 10). The RCLB comrades completely forget about the issues at stake in such a war, the classes waging such a war and the political objects pursued by those classes in such a war, and consider the whole question in typical philistine fashion from a territorial point of view, and the only important thing for them is "WHERE the armies stand, who is winning AT THE MOMENT".

Had the RCLB comrades pondered over the class nature of such a war, the issues at stake in such a war and the political objects pursued by the two sides, they could not but come to the conclusion that whereas Soviet Social imperialism would be fighting to deprive British imperialism of the loot that the latter is able to extract from the oppressed and super-exploited peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, British imperialism, on the other hand, would be fighting to safeguard the self-same loot for itself. That would be the purpose of such a war on the part of Britain, not the overthrow of alien oppression. Britain, far from being an oppressed nation itself, is itself an oppressor nation.* If anyone does not believe us, let him ask, for instance, the peoples of Southern Africa. The Soviet Union too

* Whether the RCLB like it or not " ... imperialism is the epoch in which the division of nations into oppressors and oppressed is essential and typical, and it is quite impossible to draw any distinction between reactionary and revolutionary nations in Europe" (Lenin, 'On the Peace Programme' Vol 22 Collected Works p. 165).

Thus it can be seen how futile and anti-Leninist are the attempts of the RCLB to present Britain and other "western European countries" as being revolutionary nations who would be fighting a just war against the "headquarters of international reaction".

would be fighting an imperialist war designed to, as said above, safeguard the interests of Soviet bureaucrat finance capital and to rob and oppress colonies. Its purpose in waging such a war would not be to bring Britain under Russian military oppression and subjugation.

Lenin, in dealing with a similar situation arising out of the First World War, makes the following important analysis:

"What is the present war being fought over? The answer is given in our resolution (based on the policy the belligerent powers pursued for decades prior to the war). England, France and Russia are fighting to keep the colonies they have seized, to be able to rob Turkey, etc. Germany is fighting to take over these colonies and to be able herself to rob Turkey, etc. Let us suppose even that the Germans take Paris or St. Petersburg. Would that change the nature of the present war? Not at all. The Germans' purpose - and more important, the policy that would bring it to realisation if they were to win - is to seize the colonies, establish domination over Turkey, annex areas populated by other nations, for instance, Poland, etc. It is definitely not to bring the French or the Russians under foreign domination. The real essence of the present war is not national but imperialist. In other words, it is not being fought to enable one side to overthrow national oppression, which the other side is trying to maintain. It is a war between two groups of oppressors, between two freebooters over the division of their booty, over who shall rob Turkey and the colonies.

"In short: a war BETWEEN imperialist Great Powers (i.e., powers that oppress a whole number of nations and enmesh them in dependence on finance capital, etc.), or IN ALLIANCE with the Great Powers, is an imperialist war. Such is the war of 1914-16. And in THIS war 'defence of the fatherland' is a deception, an attempt to justify the war". ('A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism', p. 10).

The RCLB may object that Britain is not really a Great Power.

First of all, although Britain is not as powerful as are the USSR and the USA, she is nevertheless a Great Power. She is in fact one of the five or six topmost powers in the world militarily as well as economically*. Secondly, even in the unlikely and improbable event (and we are here really having to fight on the imaginary terrain of RCLB's choosing!) of poor little old Britain fighting a war against Soviet Social imperialism, the former would be fighting IN ALLIANCE with the other superpower, namely, the USA.

Since the Second World War, the various "western European countries" have been partners, albeit junior partners, of the USA in extracting superprofits from, and in oppressing and robbing, the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America. And such partnership is not likely to be broken up in the event of a war between a "western European country" on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other. The contrary would be the case, if only because of the gigantic economic and military stake that US imperialism has in all such countries. And once again we are bound to remark that such a war between Britain and the USSR would be no more than opening shots in the war between the USSR on the one hand and the USA on the other, that is, between the forces of the Warsaw Pact on the one side and those of NATO on the other. And such a

* See Appendix 2.

war, even according to the RCLB, might qualify as an imperialist war.

The RCLB's attempts to read into the type of war under discussion a historical meaning which it does not possess, bring to our minds the following remarks of Comrade Lenin's:

"We are constantly witnessing attempts, especially on the part of the capitalist press - whether monarchist or republican - to read into the present war an historical meaning which it does not possess. For example, no device is more frequently resorted to in the French Republic than that of presenting this war on France's part as a continuation and counterpart of the wars of the Great French Revolution of 1792. No device for hoodwinking the French masses, the French workers and the workers of all countries is more widespread than that of applying to our epoch the 'jargon' of that other epoch and some of its watchwords, or the attempt to present matters as though now, too, republican France is defending her liberty against the monarchy. One 'minor' fact overlooked is that then, in 1792, war was waged in France by a revolutionary class, which had carried out an unparalleled revolution and displayed unmatched heroism in utterly destroying the French monarchy and rising against a united monarchist Europe with the sole and single aim of carrying on its revolutionary struggle." ('War and Revolution', Lenin, Vol. 24 Collected Works, page 401).

In trying to present a war between British imperialism and Soviet Social imperialism as though it was on a par with a war between, say, Viet Nam and US imperialism, or between British imperialism and the Zimbabwean people, is to be guilty of reading a historical meaning into the said war which it does not possess, is to be guilty of resorting to the device of presenting an imperialist war as a war of national liberation, is to be guilty of obliterating all distinction between imperialist wars and national liberation wars, in a word, to be guilty of obliterating all distinctions between just and unjust wars. The RCLB have overlooked one "minor" fact, namely, that whereas the people of Viet Nam, etc., were fighting to destroy imperialism, British imperialism, on the other hand, would be fighting the type of war under discussion for just the opposite purpose, namely, to preserve imperialism, in particular British imperialism.

IN THE 'WESTERN EUROPEAN' COUNTRIES THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT IS A THING OF THE IRREVOCABLE PAST.

In order to distinguish a national war from an imperialist war, Leninism demands that "we must distinguish between the apparent and the real,

* This "minor" fact is constantly ignored by the RCLB too. Hence their attempts to equate the national movement of the 1840s of the Poles and Hungarians with a war between two imperialist countries such as Britain and the USSR. Whereas the Polish and the Hungarian national movements were aimed at destroying feudalism, serfdom, aristocracy and all medievalism, thereby ushering in an era of national progress and a cultured, politically free fatherland, the imperialist war that we are discussing would be fought for the sole purpose of preserving capitalism through a new division of the world.

between appearance and substance, between the word and the deed" (Lenin 'A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism', p.9). And further, while stating "in a GENUINELY national war the words 'defence of the fatherland' are not a deception AND WE ARE NOT OPPOSED TO IT", ^{and that} such (genuinely national) wars took place 'especially' in 1789-1871 ...", Comrade Lenin goes on to say of "the advanced capitalist countries, above all Germany, France, England", the following:-

"In THESE countries, which hitherto have been in the van of mankind, particularly in 1789-1871, the process of forming national states has been consummated. In THESE countries the national movement is a thing of an irrevocable past, and it would be an absurd reactionary utopia to try to revive it. The national movement of the French, English, Germans has long been completed. In THESE countries history's next step is a different one: liberated nations have become transformed into oppressor nations, into nations of imperialist rapine, nations that are going through the 'eve of the collapse of capitalism'" (Ibid, p. 17).

And further, contrasting the advanced capitalist countries such as Germany, France, England, etc., with the countries of Eastern Europe and the colonies and semi-colonies, Comrade Lenin continues:

"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 progressive, 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.

"The position is different in Eastern Europe. As far as the Ukrainians and Byelorussians, for instance, are concerned, only a Martian dreamer could deny that the national movement has not yet been consummated there, that the awakening of the masses to the full use of their mother tongue and literature (and this is an absolute condition and concomitant of the full development of capitalism, of the full penetration of exchange to the very last peasant family) is STILL going on there. The 'fatherland' is historically not YET quite a dead letter there. There the 'defence of the fatherland' can STILL be defence of democracy, of one's native language, of political liberty against oppressor nations, against medievalism, whereas the English, French, Germans and Italians lie when they speak of defending their fatherland in the present war, because actually what they are defending is NOT their native language, NOT their right to national development, but their rights as slave-holders, their colonies, the foreign 'spheres of influence' of their finance capital, etc.

"In the semi-colonies and colonies the national movement is, historically, still younger than in Eastern Europe." (Ibid. p.18) 7

In view of what has been said above, it is quite clear that in "Western European countries" the national movement is a thing of the distant past, that "History's next step here is not the 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", that in these countries "liberated nations have become transformed into oppressor nations, into nations of imperialist rapine, nations that are going through the 'eve of the collapse of capitalism'". That, therefore, the attempts of the RCLB to roll back the wheel of history are nothing more than attempts to read into the type of war under discussion a historical meaning which it cannot possibly possess. The RCLB reveal an abysmal lack of understanding of Marxism-Leninism when they compare the Poland of the 1840s with the "Western European countries", i.e., the Western imperialist countries, of today. They say:

"By way of analogy, we would point out that Marx and Engels in the 1840s supported the national movement of the Poles and Hungarians, even though that movement was in favour of capitalism." (p. 11).

The RCLB comrades have here overlooked one "minor" fact, namely, that in the 1840s the national movement of the Poles and Hungarians had not yet been consummated, that these peoples were only just waking to the full use of their mother tongue and literature, that the fatherland was historically not yet quite a dead letter there, that there in those days the defence of the fatherland was still the defence of democracy, the defence of the native tongue, defence of political liberty against an oppressor nation and against medievalism.

"The epoch of ^{capitalist} imperialism", says Lenin, "is one of ripe and rotten-ripe capitalism, which is about to collapse, and which is mature enough to make way for socialism. The period between 1789 and 1871 was one of progressive capitalism, when the overthrow of feudalism and absolutism, and liberation from the foreign yoke were on history's agenda. 'Defence of the fatherland', i.e., defence against oppression, was permissible on these grounds, and on these ALONE. The term would be applicable even now in a war AGAINST the imperialist Great Powers*, but it would be absurd to apply it to a war BETWEEN the imperialist Great Powers ..." ('Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International', Vol 22 Collected Works, p. 109).

None of the conditions that existed in the case of the national movement of the Poles and of the Hungarians in the 1840s can be satisfied in the present Western European countries which are not

* We have no doubt that the RCLB would try to equate the expression 'Great Power' with the expression 'superpower'. Such an attempt, however, would be completely futile, for if a 'great power' were the same as a superpower, there would be absolutely no justification for coining the expression 'superpower'. The truth is that countries such as Britain, France and Germany are still Great Powers, though not superpowers. In any case, the RCLB could hardly be justified in making such an attempt in view of the fact that they have correctly used the expression 'great powers' to include countries such as Britain.

fighting in defence of their mother tongue, in defence of liberty and against medievalism and alien oppression. The Western European countries have become transformed into oppressor nations, into nations of imperialist rapine, nations that are going through the eve of the collapse of capitalism. And the RCLB's attempts to whip up sympathy for these nations of imperialist rapine which are on the eve of the collapse of imperialism are bound to meet with disgust and revulsion on the part of any class-conscious proletarian.

In an attempted substantiation of their erroneous, not to say reactionary, thesis, and wielding the heaviest of guns, the RCLB blast off thus:

"Although the countries of Western Europe are themselves imperialist, they would, in fighting for national independence against the superpowers, be, willy-nilly, and irrespective of their subjective wishes, fighting against the MOST CONCENTRATED FORM of imperialism, and thereby helping to bring about the final and complete collapse of imperialism".

One fails to understand why the victory of "western European" (second world, that is) countries over "a superpower" would of itself bring about "the final and complete collapse of imperialism", unless there was the revolutionary proletariat in these countries to take advantage of such a war and to convert such a war into a civil war for socialism. However, such a course of action, as we already know, is, under the wise leadership of the RCLB and its sister organisations elsewhere, barred to the Western European proletariat, whose job, according to the RCLB, would be to unite with its 'own' bourgeoisie to fight a "just" war "for national independence against the superpowers". The result would be that the Western European countries would then, having been victorious in the battlefield, ^{themselves become} the "most concentrated form of imperialism", and the Russian ruling classes, having been defeated in the battlefield and having thus emerged the weaker ^{would} (with the aid of the Russian RCLB, to wit, the CPSU) be exhorting the Russian proletariat to fight against ~~war against~~ the "most concentrated form of imperialism", namely, the Western European countries ! And so on ad infinitum. Thus we move in a vicious circle. The RCLB could not have devised a better game of ping pong had they been giving thought to the matter. And in any case, what right would the proletariat of a Western European country have, in the event of a war between "a superpower" and its 'own' bourgeoisie, to demand that the proletariat of the superpower country fight with the slogan "convert the imperialist war into a civil war for socialism" when it itself is siding with its 'own' bourgeoisie ?

THE SOCIAL-CHAUVINISM OF THE RCLB

That, however, is not all. The RCLB are actually not fighting against the hegemonism of the superpowers. They are actually, whether they like it or not, whether they are conscious of it or not, fighting for the interests of one imperialist coalition, namely, the one which is a part of the NATO alliance, under the leadership of the USA, against the other coalition which is a part of the Warsaw Pact, under the leadership of the USSR. For constantly and almost unconsciously they revert to this theme in their article. Here is just one example of it:

"It [a war waged by a western European country] would be a just war because it would be a war directed against the attempts of the Soviet Union, the headquarters of international reaction, to achieve world hegemony."

The lesson is clear: that is, only the Soviet Union, and not the two superpowers, is the headquarters of international reaction; and that only the world hegemony of the Soviet Union is bad, whereas the hegemony of US imperialism and its NATO partners is all right. This is precisely what constitutes the social chauvinism of the RCLB, for social chauvinism, as Lenin correctly pointed out, is "in practice a defence of the privileges, prerogatives, robberies and violations of 'one's own' (or any other) imperialist bourgeoisie" and is a "total betrayal of all socialist conviction" - a total betrayal of Marxism-Leninism. (Lenin: 'Socialism and War', Little Lenin Library edition, pp. 16-17).

ABSURDLY CONTRADICTIONARY STATEMENTS OF THE RCLB TO COVER UP THEIR RENEGACY FROM SOCIALISM.

The RCLB comrades go on to state that in the event of Britain being "invaded by a superpower" (what they really mean is the Soviet Union, not 'a' superpower) we should "fight for a united front to repel the invader and wage a war of national independence", for it would be 'left' opportunism not to unite "with a weaker imperialism against a superpower" and instead to "try to fight both the superpowers [sic, see note 2, Appendix 3] and our 'own' bourgeoisie". As usual, when unable to put forward any Marxist-Leninist argument in favour of their theses, the RCLB comrades turn for help to their Aunt Sally, namely, Birch:

"Birch says we must turn a war with the Soviet Union into a civil war. What he is saying is that we must fight both the headquarters of international reaction and a second-rate bourgeoisie which would be opposed to it. Such a line is the grossest kind of dogmatism and metaphysics." (p. 12).

If it is the "grossest kind of dogmatism and metaphysics" to fight against "the headquarters of international reaction [i.e., Soviet social imperialism] and a second rate bourgeoisie", would it not be an even greater "kind of dogmatism and metaphysics" to fight against "the headquarters of international reaction", namely, Soviet social imperialism, "a second rate bourgeoisie", and on top of that the other superpower, the USA? And it is precisely this kind of "dogmatism and metaphysics" that we are invited to commit, and in our view correctly, by the RCLB when, on page 5 of their article, they state: "We would be for the defeat of our own bourgeoisie if* it took us into such an imperialist war".

*There are no ifs and buts about it. The USA maintains military bases in Britain, and not just Britain alone. In the event of a war between the superpowers (a very likely event) it would be childishly stupid to think that 'our' bourgeoisie would stand on the sidelines. It would be dragged by its hair into such a war, and if the RCLB really mean what they say (which is very doubtful) they ought to be preparing the British proletariat by imparting to them the knowledge and conscious^{ness} that the next war is likely to be an inter-imperialist war between the two imperialist coalitions and that our slogan for such a war would be to work for the conversion of the imperialist war into a civil war for socialism.

Thus it turns out that every time the RCLB accuse their cousin-brother Birch of dogmatism and metaphysics, it is merely to cover their own renegacy from socialism by giving utterance to the most absurdly contradictory statements.

THE WAR OF "1941-45"

The final weapon in the arsenal of the RCLB is their allusion to the "1941-45" war. They ask:

"Was it anti-Marxist for the proletariat to unite with the bourgeoisie in Britain in the great anti-fascist war of 1941-5?"

It is most probably known even to the RCLB comrades that the Second World War started not in 1941, but in 1939. Why did they therefore not say "Was it anti-Marxist for the proletariat to unite with the bourgeoisie in Britain in the great anti-fascist war of 1939-45"? Had they posed the question like that, their glaring error would have been apparent even to themselves: the proletariat in Britain, and its representative at the time, that is, the Communist Party of Great Britain, correctly regarded the war in 1939 as an inter-imperialist war, for both Germany and Britain were fighting for robbing colonies and oppressing other countries and not for national independence, etc. Britain had not started a war against fascism and in defence of national liberation, but in defence of its colonies, its imperialist plunder and robbery. No class conscious worker could fail to recognise that. And the leaders of the CPGB at the time were put in prison for calling a spade a spade.

It was not until after the then-Socialist Soviet Union was attacked by the Hitlerite fascists that the class character of the war changed. Likewise, war which starts as an inter-imperialist war may undergo a change in its class character, for instance, if one of the two coalitions were to attack, say, China. In that event all socialists would be ready to fight on the side of that coalition which, making an alliance with socialist China, was fighting against the other imperialist coalition. That indeed would be to fight in defence and for the advance of socialism. And in that case it would be legitimate to make an alliance not only with "a second-rate bourgeoisie", but even with a first-rate bourgeoisie - i.e., with one of the superpowers.

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ROSA LUXEMBURG

Thus it can be seen that either being unable to completely rid themselves of the right opportunist environment engendered in an imperialist country like Britain, or in a "plan 'to outwit history', to outwit the philistines", the comrades of the RCLB are attempting to oppose a possible (but not probable) inter-imperialist war between the USSR and a "western European country", say Britain, with a war of national independence; they are making the mistake of trying to drag a national programme into a non-national war. And in so doing, they are following not in the footsteps of Comrade Lenin, but in those of Rosa Luxemburg.

In this context we wish to reproduce a rather lengthy extract from Comrade Lenin's 'The Junius Pamphlet':

"Another fallacious argument is advanced by Junius on the question of defence of the fatherland. This is a cardinal political question during an imperialist war... ; the proletariat is opposed to defence of the fatherland in this imperialist war BECAUSE of its predatory, slave-owning, reactionary character, BECAUSE it is possible and necessary to oppose to it (and to strive to convert it into) civil war for socialism. Junius, however, while brilliantly exposing the imperialist character of the present war as distinct from a national war, makes the very strange mistake of trying to drag a national programme into the PRESENT, NON-national, war. It sounds almost incredible, but there it is.

"The official Social-Democrats ... in their servility to the bourgeoisie ... have been particularly assiduous in repeating this 'invasion' argument. Kautsky ... continues to use this 'argument' ! To refute it, Junius quotes extremely instructive examples from history, which prove that 'invasion and class struggle are not contradictory in bourgeois history, as official legend has it, but that one is the means and the expression of the other'. For example, the Bourbons in France invoked foreign invaders against the Jacobins; the bourgeoisie in 1871 invoked foreign invaders against the Commune. In his 'Civil War in France', Marx wrote:

'The highest heroic effort of which old society is still capable is national war; and this is now proved to be a mere governmental humbug, intended to defer the struggle of classes, and to be thrown aside as soon as that class struggle bursts out into civil war.'

'The classical example for all times,' says Junius, referring to 1793, 'is the Great French Revolution.' From all this, he draws the following conclusion: 'The century of experience thus proves that it is not a state of siege, but relentless class struggle, which arouses the self-respect, the heroism and the moral strength of the mass of the people, and serves as the country's best protection and defence against the external enemy.'

"Junius's practical conclusion is this:

'Yes, it is the duty of the Social-Democrats to defend their country during a great historical crisis. But the grave guilt that rests upon the Social-Democratic Reichstag group consists in their having given ^{the} lie to their own solemn declaration, made on August 4, 1914, "In the hour of danger we will not leave our fatherland unprotected". They DID leave the fatherland unprotected in the hour of its greatest peril. For their first duty to the fatherland in that hour was to show the fatherland what was really behind the present imperialist war; to sweep away the web of patriotic and diplomatic lies covering up this encroachment on the fatherland; to proclaim loudly and clearly that both victory and defeat in the present war are equally fatal

for the German people; to resist to the last the throttling of the fatherland due to the state of siege; to proclaim the necessity of immediately arming the people*and of allowing the people to decide the question of war and peace; resolutely to demand a permanent session of the people's representatives for the whole duration of the war in order to guarantee vigilant control over the government by the people's representatives by the people; to demand the immediate abolition of all restrictions on political rights, for only a free people can successfully defend its country; and finally, to oppose the imperialist war programme, which is to preserve Austria and Turkey, i.e., perpetuate reaction in Europe and in Germany, with the old, truly national programme of the patriots and democrats of 1848, the programme of Marx, Engels and Lassalle - the slogan of a united, Great German Republic. This is the banner that should have been unfurled before the country, which would have been a truly national banner of liberation, which would have been in accord with the best traditions of Germany and with the international class policy of the proletariat ... Hence, the grave dilemma - the interests of the fatherland or the international solidarity of the proletariat - the tragic conflict which promoted our parliamentarians to side, "with a heavy heart", with the imperialist war, is purely imaginary, it is a bourgeois nationalist fiction. On the contrary, there is complete harmony between the interests of the country and the interests of the proletarian International, both in time of war and in time of peace; both war and peace demand the most energetic development of the class struggle, the most determined fight for the Social-Democratic programme."

Had we not known from Lenin that the above remarks (quoted by Lenin) were written by Junius (i.e., by Rosa Luxemburg), we might have justifiably come to the conclusion that they had been written by the RCLB comrades, such is the striking similarity between their views and those of Rosa Luxemburg on this question. The central theme of the views

* Just like the RCLB who complain, in 'Class Struggle' August 1978, Vol 2 No. 13, that " ... the ruling class in Britain is scared of the people. It dare not arm the working class and people whom it exploits and oppresses. The British imperialists can never build a people's army, it would be arming its own grave-diggers! That is why we need to build a strong and genuine revolutionary communist Party that can and will prepare and mobilise the people to protect national independence from the superpowers, whilst struggling for socialist revolution in Britain." The last bit about "struggling for socialist revolution in Britain" is added for good measure to dupe the simple simons of this world. The revolutionary communist Party that the RCLB have in mind, and that they are endeavouring to build, has already renounced social revolution, for the RCLB want a "people's army" not for proletarian revolution in Britain but for defending, in alliance with the British bourgeoisie, national independence, which, they believe, the British bourgeoisie is incapable of defending left to itself. And the defence of the national independence of imperialist Britain can only be the defence of its imperialist ruling class. And such a task cannot be christened revolutionary even if it is performed by the RCLB's beloved 'people's army'. In view of this - the mission assigned to it by the RCLB - there is no reason for the bourgeoisie to fear such an army as its grave-diggers.

expressed by Rosa Luxemburg and of the views expressed by the RCLB comrades in their article, which is the subject of our criticism, is the suggestion that an imperialist war should be opposed with a national programme, the only difference being that the formulation of the RCLB is even more opportunist than that of Rosa Luxemburg, for the RCLB programme is that we should "fight for a united front [i.e., with our 'own' bourgeoisie] to repel the invader and wage a war of national independence". In doing so, the RCLB are urging the British proletariat, in the fashion of Rosa Luxemburg, "to turn its face to the past and not to the future!" Our answer to this reactionary attempt of the RCLB to roll back the wheel of history is the same as was the answer of Comrade Lenin to the above quoted remarks of Rosa Luxemburg. We shall let Comrade Lenin speak:

"This is how Junius argues. The fallacy of his argument is strikingly evident, and since the tacit and avowed lackeys of tsarism, Plekhanov and Chkhenkeli, and perhaps even Martov and Chkheidze, may gloatingly seize upon Junius's words, not for the purpose of establishing theoretical truth, but for the purpose of wriggling, covering up their tracks and throwing dust into the eyes of the workers, we must in greater detail elucidate the THEORETICAL sources of Junius's error.

"He suggests that the imperialist war should be 'opposed' with a national programme. He urges the advanced class to turn its face to the past and not to the future! In France, in Germany, and in the whole of Europe it was a BOURGEOIS-democratic revolution that, OBJECTIVELY, was on the order of the day in 1793 and 1848. Corresponding to this OBJECTIVE historical situation was the 'truly national', i.e. the national BOURGEOIS programme of the then existing democracy; in 1793 this programme was carried out by the most revolutionary elements of the bourgeoisie and the plebeians, and in 1848 it was proclaimed by Marx in the name of the whole of progressive democracy. OBJECTIVELY, the feudal and dynastic wars were then opposed by revolutionary-democratic wars, by wars for national liberation. This was the content of the historical tasks of that epoch.

"At the present time, the OBJECTIVE situation in the biggest advanced states of Europe is different. Progress, if we leave out for the moment the possibility of temporary steps backward, can be made only in the direction of SOCIALIST society, only in the direction of the SOCIALIST REVOLUTION. From the standpoint of progress, from the standpoint of the progressive classes, the imperialist bourgeois war, the war of highly developed capitalism, can, OBJECTIVELY, be opposed only with a war AGAINST the bourgeoisie, i.e., primarily civil war for power between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; for UNLESS such a war is waged, serious progress is IMPOSSIBLE; this may be followed - only under certain special conditions - by a war to defend the socialist state against bourgeois states. That is why the Bolsheviki (fortunately, very few, and quickly handed over by us to the 'Prizyv' group) who were ready to adopt the point of view of conditional defence, i.e.,

defence of the fatherland on condition that there was a victorious revolution and the victory of a republic in Russia, were true to the LETTER of Bolshevism, but betrayed its SPIRIT; for being drawn into the imperialist war of the leading European powers, Russia would ALSO be waging an imperialist war, even under a republican form of government !

"In saying that the class struggle is the best means of defence against invasion, Junius applies Marxist dialectics only half way, taking one step on the right road and immediately deviating from it. Marxist dialectics call for a concrete analysis of each specific historical situation. It is true that class struggle is the best means of defence against invasion BOTH when the bourgeoisie is overthrowing feudalism, and when the proletariat is overthrowing the bourgeoisie. Precisely because it is true with regard to EVERY form of class oppression, it is TOO GENERAL, and therefore INADEQUATE in the present SPECIFIC case. Civil war against the bourgeoisie is ALSO a form of class struggle, and only this form of class struggle would have saved Europe (the whole of Europe, not only one country) from the peril of invasion. The 'Great German Republic', had it existed in 1914-16, would ALSO have waged an IMPERIALIST war.

"Junius comes very close to the correct solution of the problem and to the correct slogan: civil war against the bourgeoisie for socialism; but, as if afraid to speak the whole truth, he turned BACK, to the fantasy of a 'national war' in 1914, 1915 and 1916. If we examine the question not from the theoretical angle but from the purely practical one, Junius's error remains just as evident. The whole of bourgeois society, all classes in Germany, including the peasantry, were IN FAVOUR of war (in all probability THE SAME was the case in Russia - at least a majority of the well-to-do and middle peasantry and a very considerable portion of the poor peasants were evidently under the spell of bourgeois imperialism). The bourgeoisie was armed to the teeth. Under such circumstances to 'proclaim' the programme of a republic, a permanent parliament, election of officers by the people (the 'armed nation', etc., would have meant, IN PRACTICE, 'PROCLAIMING' A REVOLUTION (with the WRONG revolutionary programme!)

"In the same breath Junius quite rightly says that a revolution cannot be 'made'. Revolution was on the order of the day in the 1914-16 period, it was hidden in the depths of the war, was EMERGING out of the war. This should have been 'PROCLAIMED' in the name of the revolutionary class, and ITS programme should have been fearlessly and fully announced, socialism is impossible in the time of war without civil war* against the arch-reactionary, criminal bourgeoisie, which condemns the people to untold disaster."

TRANSFORMATION OF AN IMPERIALIST WAR INTO A NATIONAL WAR AND VICE VERSA.

Another question that arises is: is it possible for an imperialist war to be transformed into a national war, and for a national war to be transformed into an imperialist war? The answer to this

* See Appendix 3, Note(3)

question is that such a possibility undoubtedly exists. Such a possibility of transformation of an imperialist war into a national war is very often used by opportunists, and the RCLB presents a typical example of such type of opportunism, to oppose an imperialist war with a national programme, just as the possibility of the transformation of a national war into an inter-imperialist war is used by bourgeois liberalism to oppose all national revolutionary wars against imperialism. However, it would be the height of trickery to obliterate the difference between an imperialist war and a national war on the grounds that one might develop into the other. The opportunists of the RCLB-type may feel inclined to quote the following remarks from Comrade Lenin, erroneously thinking that these remarks substantiate their social-chauvinist and capitulationist position. Here is how Comrade Lenin speaks of the possibility of the transformation of a national war into an imperialist war:

"... That all dividing lines, both in nature and society, are conventional and dynamic, and that EVERY phenomenon might, under certain conditions, be transformed into its opposite, is, of course, a basic proposition of Marxist dialectics. A national war MIGHT be transformed into an imperialist war AND VICE VERSA. Here is an example: the wars of the Great French Revolution began as national wars and indeed were such. They were revolutionary wars - the defence of the great revolution against a coalition of counter-revolutionary monarchies. But when Napoleon founded the French Empire and subjugated a number of big, viable and long-established national European states, these national wars of the French became imperialist wars and IN TURN led to wars of national liberation AGAINST Napoleonic imperialism.

"Only a sophist can disregard the difference between an imperialist 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. But we remain dialecticians and we combat sophistry not by denying the possibility of all transformations in general, but by analysing the GIVEN phenomenon in its concrete setting and development.

"Transformation of the present imperialist war of 1914-16 into a national war is highly improbable, for the class that represents PROGRESSIVE development is the proletariat which is objectively striving to transform it into a civil war against the bourgeoisie. Also this: there is no very considerable difference between the forces of the two coalitions, and international finance capital has created a reactionary bourgeoisie everywhere. But such a transformation should NOT be proclaimed IMPOSSIBLE: IF the EUROPEAN proletariat remains impotent, say, for twenty years; IF the present war ENDS in victories like Napoleon's and in the subjugation of a number 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. That is improbable. But NOT impossible, for it is undialectical, unscientific and theoretically wrong to regard the course of world history as smooth and always in a forward direction, without occasional gigantic leaps back." ('The Junius Pamphlet', Vol. 22 Collected Works, pages 309-310).

We too, following Lenin, admit to the possibility of the transformation of a national war into an imperialist war and vice versa. For instance, the war of national liberation of the peoples of Southern Africa contains the possibility of the two imperialist coalitions, each under the leadership of a superpower, colliding with each other in an armed clash, thus transforming a war of national liberation into an inter-imperialist war. But only a sophist and a renegade to the cause of liberation would, on grounds that a national liberation war might develop into an imperialist war, oppose the national liberation struggles of the peoples of Southern Africa.

Equally, a war that starts out as an inter-imperialist war contains the possibility of its transformation into a national war, if the conditions such as the ones set out by Lenin in the above-quoted remarks of his are satisfied, namely, if the war under discussion "ENDS in victories like Napoleon's and in the subjugation of a number of viable national states; if the transition to socialism ... is held up ... by a war".* However, only a sophist and a renegade to

* If there is any approximation in the present-day world to the conditions referred to by Lenin in his above-quoted remarks to the conditions under which a national war in Europe becomes a possibility, this is more likely to occur in Eastern Europe vis-a-vis the Soviet Union.

From the middle of 1941, that is, after Hitlerite Germany's attack on the then Socialist Soviet Union, the Second World War acquired the character of an anti-fascist war. The Soviet Union, the USA, Britain and France fought together against fascist Germany. The peoples of Eastern Europe were liberated by the Red Army from the fascist yoke. The peoples of Eastern Europe greeted - and greeted rightly - the Red Army as its true liberator and a genuine friend. This created a tremendous fund of goodwill and affection for the Soviet Union in the countries of Eastern Europe in which, one after the other, People's Democracies came to be established. The Soviet Union maintained its forces in the People's Democracies to help the latter defend themselves against Western imperialism headed by US imperialism. All this, however, changed when the Soviet Union changed its colour on the usurpation of supreme power in the Soviet Party and State structure by the revisionist Khrushchevite gang which, through a number of intermediate stages, blossomed into a gang of imperialist free-booters and turned the Soviet Union, from being once the bastion of Socialism, into a social-imperialist (socialist in words and imperialist in deeds) country. With this, the Soviet forces in the various Eastern European countries became, from being

[Note continues on next page]

the cause of the proletariat would, on the grounds of the possibility of such an inter-imperialist war being transformed into a national war, oppose the imperialist war with a national programme - a programme of united front with one's 'own' bourgeoisie to repel the invader and for national independence.

There is yet another way in which an imperialist war may be transformed into a war of national liberation - and this is in the following way: a war starts as an imperialist war, involving a Western-European country, among others, and the proletariat of the Western-European country concerned, putting into effect the slogan 'Convert the imperialist war into a civil war for socialism', comes to power. In these circumstances, from that time on - that is, from the time of the proletariat coming to power - the proletariat cannot but adopt a 'defencist' attitude, it cannot but put forward the slogan: 'Defend the motherland against imperialist aggressors'. We shall then all be defenders of the fatherland and would not mind holding the hands of even the RCLB comrades. And it is exactly this type of transformation, that we should be preparing for, which is beyond the contemplation of the RCLB comrades.

SOME RANDOM PROFUNDITIES OF THE RCLB

Having dealt with the most important points of contention at the present moment with the RCLB, we wish to comment, albeit very briefly, on some of the rather richly 'profound' statements made by them in their article.

" ... THE MAIN ENEMY IN COUNTRIES LIKE IRAN IS THE EXTERNAL ENEMY OF IMPERIALISM", or, HOW THE RCLB OPPOSE THE STRUGGLE FOR NEW DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTIONS IN THE COUNTRIES OF ASIA, AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA.

Whereas the social-chauvinist line propagated by the CPBML refuses to recognise the revolutionary significance and anti-imperialist nature of the national-liberation struggles, refuses to recognise that such struggles are a component part of the struggle for world socialist revolution, the right opportunist line propagated by the

[Note continues from previous page]

at one time the protectors of socialism and the liberators of the peoples of Eastern Europe, armies of occupation on behalf of Soviet Social imperialism. Thus, liberated nations became subjugated nations and the liberating Soviet Union became the subjugating Soviet Union. Thus in Eastern Europe the conditions are maturing for a great national war on the part of the peoples of Eastern Europe against subjugation by Soviet Social imperialism. As far as Western Europe is concerned, the US, the ally of European countries during the Second World War, after that war emerging as the strongest imperialist power, established its hegemony over all the existing imperialist countries, including the countries of Western Europe. If the RCLB were really honest in believing that the need of the hour is to defend Britain's national independence, they would be engaged in rousing the British people against US imperialism, rather than distracting attention from the self-same superpower in the name of directing one's blows at the "primary target".

To act as do the RCLB means that one has become a social chauvinist by being recruited, wittingly or unwittingly, into the service of one of the two imperialist coalitions.

...on the other hand, completely obliterates the internal class differentiation and class struggles within the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America; it lumps together, as though they were equal in every respect, the different classes and the rôles played by these classes in these countries; it lumps together the different countries belonging to the third world. Here are a few examples of this right opportunist line of theirs: on page 16 of their article they say:

"It is the social-imperialists who try to split the ranks of the third world countries by labelling some as 'progressive' and others as 'reactionary'".

Having made this statement, the RCLB, in a typically "elusive and inconsequential style" (of which style they are accusing Brother Birch) go on to say:

"Some third world countries are reactionary"... !!*"

The RCLB have a safeguard against every contingency. They are truly like the man who talks a great deal but says nothing. They continue:

"... but this is determined not by their social system, ... but by their capitulation to foreign imperialism. As we have said ALL third world countries are exploited and oppressed by imperialism. To take the subordinate and particular aspect (that some of them are reactionary) and propagate that as the main aspect ... is to play into the hands of the Soviet Union".

With remorseless banality, the RCLB go on to utter the following 'annihilatory', that is of themselves, profundity.

"... It is also true that the internal enemies like the Shah of Iran, who is in the main an agent of imperialism must be fought against, but again* this must in no way blind us to the fact that the main enemy in countries like Iran is the external enemy of imperialism, not domestic reaction."

Such 'Marxist' sermons, told in a "pious parson's" style, are bound to bring tears to the eyes of the faithful, but they are bound to generate more heat than light. We are not, however, interested in generating heat: enlightenment is more the need of the hour. With this in mind, we wish to say the following: Countries like Iran are at the stage of the new democratic revolution. In fighting for the new democratic revolution, the working class leading the peasantry (for there is no other way of achieving the new democratic revolution) confronts the forces of feudalism. Therefore, the main contradiction is, in these countries, between the masses of the people (including the national bourgeoisie) against feudalism and the comprador bourgeoisie and their imperialist backers.

In these circumstances to say "that the main enemy in countries like Iran is the external enemy of imperialism, not domestic reaction" is to lose sight of the fundamental tasks of the democratic revolution. In these circumstances the internal contradiction - the struggle against feudalism and the comprador bourgeoisie - is the primary one,

* "But again" we must point out that Lenin quite correctly described this sort of "elusive and inconsequential" manner of arguing ("but again" pardon the hyperbole) in the following terms: "On the one hand, we cannot but admit, on the other hand, it must be confessed..." (Lenin: 'Materialism and Empirio-Criticism').

whereas the struggle against imperialism which carries on its oppression not by war, but by political and economic means, is a secondary one. The only circumstances in which the contradiction with imperialism (the external contradiction if it pleases the RCLB) becomes the primary one is when imperialism resorts to oppression by war. Here is how Comrade Mao Tsetung, that profoundly revolutionary thinker and giant of a Marxist-Leninist, expresses himself on this question:

"In a semi-colonial country such as China, the relationship between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions presents a complicated picture.

"When imperialism launches a war of aggression against such a country, all its various classes, except for some traitors, can temporarily unite in a national war against imperialism. At such a time, the contradiction between imperialism and the country concerned becomes the principal contradiction, while all the contradictions among the various classes within the country (including what was the principal contradiction*, between the feudal system and the great masses of the people) are temporarily relegated to a secondary and subordinate position. So it was in China in the Opium War of 1840, the Sino-Japanese war of 1894 and the Yi Ho Tuan War of 1900, and so it is now in the present Sino-Japanese War.

"But in another situation, the contradictions change position. When imperialism carries on its oppression not by war, but by milder means -- political, economic and cultural -- the ruling classes in semi-colonial countries capitulate to imperialism and the two form an alliance for the joint oppression of the masses of the people. At such a time, the masses often resort to civil war against the alliance of imperialism and the feudal classes, while imperialism often employs indirect methods rather than direct action in helping the reactionaries in the semi-colonial countries to oppress the people, and thus the internal contradictions become particularly sharp. This is what happened in China in the Revolutionary War of 1911, the Revolutionary War of 1924-27, and the ten years of Agrarian Revolutionary War after 1927. Wars among the various reactionary ruling groups in the semi-colonial countries, e.g., the wars among the warlords in China, fall into the same category.

"When a revolutionary civil war develops to the point of threatening the very existence of imperialism and its running dogs, the domestic reactionaries, imperialism often adopts other methods in order to maintain its rule; it either tries to split the revolutionary front from within or sends armed forces to help the domestic reactionaries directly. At such a time, foreign imperialism and domestic reaction stand quite openly at one pole while the masses of the people stand at the other pole, thus forming the principal contradiction which determines or influences the development of the other contradictions. The

*Let the RCLB ponder over this formulation.

assistance given by various capitalist countries to the Russian reactionaries after the October Revolution is an example of armed intervention. Chiang Kai-Sheks's betrayal in 1927 is an example of splitting the revolutionary front.

"But whatever happens, there is no doubt at all that at every stage in the development of a process, there is only one principal contradiction which plays the leading role." (Mao Tsetung 'On Contradiction' Peking 1965 edition, pp. 41-43).

Apply these brilliant ideas to a country like Iran and you get the following results: Iran at the present time is not being occupied by any imperialist power; imperialism is carrying on its oppression of the Iranian people in alliance with the Shah of Iran by milder indirect economic, political and cultural means. Therefore the internal contradiction between the masses of the Iranian people on the one hand and feudalism, with the Shah of Iran at its head, is the principal contradiction; or, what amounts to the same thing, the "main enemy" in Iran is not the external enemy of imperialism but the "domestic reaction" headed by the Shah. Whoever, on the pretext of the external enemy of imperialism being the main enemy, refuses to support the revolutionary struggle of the Iranian masses aimed at overthrowing feudalism, is actually standing in the way of the Iranian revolution, and is helping not only the Shah, but also the external enemy*.

If, on the other hand, Iran, for instance, were to become the target of aggression by either US imperialism or Soviet Social imperialism, in these circumstances it is not only possible but probable that the internal contradiction may temporarily be relegated to a secondary place while the majority of the Iranian people, except for a few traitors, wage a united struggle against the external enemy. In a situation like this, the contradiction with imperialism becomes the principal contradiction, or, if the RCLB like, the external enemy of imperialism becomes the main enemy.

Yet a third possibility exists, namely, that the struggle of the Iranian people for a new democratic revolution reaches such a level of intensity that the internal feudal forces find themselves incapable of dealing with the situation and are compelled by the force of circumstances to invite the military forces of its imperialist backers, say that of the United States of America, to help them stem the tide of the revolutionary struggle of the masses for a democratic revolution. In such circumstances the people of Iran would be compelled to fight both against US imperialism and the feudal regime headed by the Shah.

Thus it can be seen that with Marxism things are quite different from what they are with the RCLB. The RCLB comrades should try to learn the revolutionary essence of the teachings of Comrade Mao Tsetung, rather than repeat various phrases from his writing such as "principal contradiction" and so on and so forth which they have learnt by rote but never understood. Unlike the RCLB, Comrade Mao Tsetung gives concrete answers to concrete questions. The RCLB

*Everything that is happening on the Iranian political scene these days proves the correctness of these remarks.

comrades, on the other hand, notwithstanding their constant attempts to stick labels of Trotskyism on other people's foreheads, are constantly acting in a typically Trotskyist fashion, that is, general answers to general questions, general answers to specific questions, and never a specific answer to a specific question.

Equally it is clear from the above-cited quotation from Comrade Mao Tsetung that reactionary regimes often capitulate to imperialism, and when they do that, the revolutionaries in those countries have no choice but to point out to the people within their own countries the capitulation of the ruling classes to foreign imperialism. And if this annoys the RCLB because it splits the ranks of the third world countries by labelling some as progressive and others as reactionary, then, so be it. As they themselves admit, "some third world countries ARE reactionary". What label would one use to describe such countries as Israel, Chile, Indonesia, the Ethiopia of Colonel Mengistu, the Zaire of Mobutu, except to say that they are reactionary? Would one, for instance, be opposed to the revolutionary movements in these countries aimed at the overthrow of these regimes and of their imperialist backers on the pretext that it would cause a split in the ranks of the third world countries? It scarcely needs proof that any 'Marxist-Leninist' who took such a stand would make himself a laughing stock.

Soviet Social imperialism must be fought against; its pernicious use of Marxist phraseology and socialist demagoguery must be exposed. To do this is one thing. But out of a desire to do this to be moved to adopt the position according to which in countries like Iran the external enemy of imperialism, not domestic reaction, becomes the main enemy, is to indulge in a witting or unwitting distortion of all reality and a violation of the fundamental teachings of Marxism-Leninism.

Incidentally, it is quite wrong for the RCLB to say that "What all third world countries have in common ... is that they are exploited and oppressed by imperialism, and are therefore objectively capable of playing a progressive role against imperialism and the superpowers." Two points can be made in regard to this formulation.

First of all, not all the "third world countries" are oppressed and exploited by imperialism, for instance China, who regards herself as a third world country, having achieved socialist revolution, is no longer exploited and oppressed by imperialism, for if it were otherwise, it would be tantamount to saying that the Chinese Communist Party is allowing imperialism to exploit and oppress the Chinese people. Such an accusation, no matter how far removed from the wishes and consciousness of the RCLB, is the one contained in the above formulation and is an absurd accusation.

Secondly, capability is not necessarily actuality. And therefore, though it is true that the "third world countries" are today the main force advancing the cause of the world revolution, it is not all the third world countries that are doing so. The movement proceeds in zigzags with a number of counter-currents going

against the main current.

Having said that, one must make a distinction between the governments and the peoples, and here it would be true to say that the struggles of the peoples of "ALL third world countries" for new democratic (and socialist revolution in some cases) against domestic reaction and against imperialism are today the main force advancing the cause of world revolution.

RCLB'S RIGHT OPPORTUNIST SOCIAL-CHAUVINIST LINE ON IMPERIALISM - OR, HOW THE RCLB ARE FRIGHTENED TO TELL THE BRITISH WORKING CLASS "THE TRUTH ABOUT BRITISH IMPERIALISM."

While accusing the CPBML of consistently propagating "a right opportunist social-chauvinist line on imperialism, of being 'afraid' to tell the British working class the truth about British imperialism", of having "no faith in the British working class" and of thinking that "it has to lie to the working class to gain its leadership", the RCLB comrades go on to commit the same sins by propagating, as they have done all along, "a right opportunist social-chauvinist line on imperialism, particularly on British imperialism," for they say that "the British imperialists and a SMALL number of people benefit from the imperialist oppression of the third world" (p. 19). (Capital letters denote our emphasis - ACW). The whole point, however, is - and this is a point which is constantly being ignored by the RCLB - that not just the British imperialists and "a SMALL number of people" benefit from imperialist oppression of the third world. It is the entire population of the imperialist countries which benefits from such oppression and robbery of the third world. The extent to which each section of the population benefits, the manner in which the division of this robbery and loot takes place, is arguable. Obviously some sections benefit more than others do - the lion's share going to the ruling classes. That the entire population benefits to some extent is not a point on which genuine Marxist-Leninists can disagree. This phenomenon of the entire population benefitting to some extent or another was noted by Marx and Engels a long while ago: in a letter to Marx dated 1858, Engels complains in the following terms:

"... The English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat ALONGSIDE the bourgeoisie."

Continues Engels by way of an explanation of this phenomenon:

"For a nation* which exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable."

* Do the RCLB know that a nation includes all the classes, including the proletariat, of a given nation?

And further, in a letter to Kautsky dated 12 September 1882, Engels makes the following observation:

"You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general. There is no workers' party here, THERE ARE ONLY CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL-RADICALS, AND THE WORKERS GAILY SHARE THE FEAST OF ENGLAND'S MONOPOLY OF THE WORLD MARKET AND THE COLONIES."

And this phenomenon of the English workers gaily sharing the feast of England's monopoly of the world market, their resultant 'bourgeoisification', naturally led to the pursuit of bourgeois respectability - "the most repulsive thing" - on their part. On 7 December 1889, Engels wrote to Sorge:

"The most repulsive thing here [in England] is the bourgeois 'respectability' which has grown deep into the bones of the workers... Even Tom Mann, whom I regard as the best of the lot, is fond of mentioning that he will be lunching with the Lord Mayor."

The disappearance of England's "industrial monopoly", far from leading to the disappearance of all monopoly, led to a situation whereby "a handful of wealthy countries ... have developed monopoly to vast proportions, they obtain SUPERPROFITS running into hundreds, if not thousands, of millions, they ride on the backs of hundreds and hundreds of millions of people in other countries and fight among themselves for the division of the particularly rich, particularly fat and particularly easy spoils." (Lenin, 'Imperialism and the Split in Socialism').

It is all this that causes Lenin to speak of the "workers of England corrupted by imperialist profits" ('Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution' Vol 6 Selected Works p.75); it is all this that causes him to make the following penetrating observation:

"Only the proletarian class which maintains the whole of society can perform the social revolution. But with the growth of colonialism, the European proletarian is partly placed in the position when it is not his labour, but the labour of the near-slaves in the colonies that maintains the whole of society. The British bourgeoisie, for example, derives more profit from the tens and hundreds of millions of inhabitants of India and other colonies than from the British workers. That being so, in certain countries there is created the material and economic basis for infecting the proletariat with colonial chauvinism." (Lenin: 'The Stuttgart International Socialist Congress').

Since Lenin's days a handful of countries have developed monopoly to even greater proportions; notwithstanding the process of

* Had Engels not himself emphasised these words they would still deserve to be emphasised.

decolonisation - and turning former colonies into neo-colonies - they obtain superprofits running into hundreds of millions of pounds; they ride on the backs of hundreds and hundreds of millions of people in other countries - and they "fight among themselves for the particularly rich, particularly fat and particularly easy spoils."

The RCLB itself gives quite a few useful figures* in the June issue of their journal 'Revolution', and yet typically it refuses to take note of the conclusions that flow from these figures. They accept the premises of the present system but not its 'harmful' consequences.

The RCLB comrades, getting terribly shirty about the CPBML, being outraged by the CPBML's fear of telling the British working class the truth about imperialist plunder, and believing that they (the RCLB comrades) do tell the British working class the whole truth, go on to deliver the following self-destructive and self-annihilatory accusation against the CPBML:

"The CPBML has no faith in the British working class and thinks it has to lie to the working class to gain its leadership. It is afraid that if it tells the truth about British imperialism - that the British imperialists and a small number of people BENEFIT from imperialist oppression of the third world - it will receive no support. In doing this it serves only the bourgeoisie who deny the existence of imperialist oppression". (p. 19).

So ignorant or arrogant are the RCLB comrades, they do not even have an inkling that this accusation might justly be levelled against them. For it is a downright lie, and an unpardonable one at that, to say that apart from the British imperialists only "a small number of people BENEFIT from the imperialist plunder of the third world". The whole truth is that the entire population of the imperialist countries benefits from the imperialist plunder of the third world, including even the black immigrants who have migrated into this country and are doing the dirtiest and the lowest-paid jobs. It is precisely for this reason that Lenin speaks of

"...The advanced countries have been creating their culture by the opportunity they have of living at the expense of billions of oppressed people ... the capitalists of these countries obtain a great deal more than they would have been able to in the shape of profits resulting from the robbery of the workers in their own countries." ('Speech to the Second Congress of the Communist International' Volume 3, Selected Works, p.449).

It is precisely because of this that the revolutionary struggle in Western Europe has been at such an ebb since the end of the Second World War, for if only "a small number of people" - that is, apart from the imperialists - benefit from imperialist plunder, things would be quite different. It is arguable, and it is justifiable to say, that the benefits from the imperialist plunder and oppression of the third world accrue unevenly to different sections of the population.

* See Appendix 2, infra.

True the lion's share goes to the ruling class. True that a much larger share goes to the consciously bribed labour aristocracy. But that is not all. The entire population of the big imperialist countries "gaily shares" in the feast of imperialist monopoly profits. That is precisely why the bourgeoisie, through the labour aristocrats, is able to get support among the ordinary working people. And so is created a bond between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the working class through the efforts of the conscious traitors to the cause of the working class, namely, the labour aristocrats. It is quite absurd of the RCLB comrades to believe that the English worker can only be corrupted by the BBC and never by a pound note - no matter how indirectly that 'pound note' finds its way into his pocket.

When we say this, when we utter this truth, does it mean that we give up all hope of the British proletariat rising in revolution against the British bourgeoisie? No, not at all. On the contrary. We believe that the British proletariat is destined to overthrow the British bourgeoisie, but it will only do so if it sees a reason good enough for making such a revolution. Precisely because of this it is our duty to defend the LONG-TERM INTERESTS of the proletariat and to make it aware of these long-term interests which will flow and which will be ensured by the rout of imperialism, rather than defend the TEMPORARY INTERESTS of the working class, the temporary benefits that it undoubtedly gets by being the working class of an imperialist country. It is high time that the RCLB stopped putting out the racist propaganda* - and it really is racist, and there is no other word for it - that the working class has struggled for it, for struggle gets you nothing where there is nothing to give away, as is shown by the lack of success in strike action during the periods of depression in capitalist countries.

In saying what we have said above, we have invented nothing new. We have merely pointed to the existence of a phenomenon which Engels noted in 1858, that is, a whole 120 years ago !!! Has the time not come for those who call themselves Marxists and Leninists, and who swear by Marx, Engels, Lenin, etc., to start telling the British working class the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth? The RCLB is so "afraid" that if it tells the truth about British imperialism, that if it tells the working class that it benefits from imperialist plunder of the third world, it will receive no support, so it dare not tell this truth to the working class. Thus it turns out that what they accuse the CPBML of is the very disease that the RCLB comrades themselves suffer from acutely. And their accusation of the CPBML - a perfectly justified accusation - here does the diversionary trick of diverting attention from their own opportunist position.

The RCLB comrades cannot be unaware of the truth, for they themselves say that "Britain is a developed industrial country which FORCES third world countries to sell it raw materials cheaply, and which it FORCES to buy manufactured goods dearly. In the VERY FIRST PLACE Britain became an industrial nation on the basis of wealth accumu-

* For it implies that the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America are incapable of struggling for a higher standard of living. The truth is just the opposite; they struggle with guns in their hands.

lated in the running of a bloody empire built on colonial exploitation, slavery and wars of conquest. All this Birch despicably covers up as 'THE BASIS OF OUR CULTURAL IDENTITY AND MATERIAL WELFARE'" (p. 19, RCLB's emphasis throughout).

Why are the RCLB comrades, in typically Birchite fashion, afraid to tell the truth about British imperialism to the working class? Why do they hide the fact from the working class that it too benefits from the imperialist exploitation of the third world countries? Why do the RCLB comrades think that "it has to lie to the working class to gain its leadership"?

Thus it is clear that it is not only Birch's statements that are "a monstrous and disgusting attempt to cover up imperialist relations of exploitation and oppression which exist between Britain and the third world countries", but also those of the RCLB; it is not only Birch who "despicably covers up" "all this" (imperialist relations of exploitation and oppression between Britain and third world countries) as "the basis of our cultural identity and material welfare", but also the RCLB comrades, who in essence repeat after Birch, although in different form, the same "opportunist social-chauvinist line on imperialism, particularly on British imperialism". Here, for instance, is how they 'explain' why there was the October Revolution in Russia and not in Britain and why the "focus of the revolutionary movement has shifted from the developed capitalist countries, to the third world":

"... the working class of the developed capitalist countries, although they too are exploited and oppressed by imperialism, have a higher cultural level than these of the east, are ideologically and politically led by the agents of the bourgeoisie and are therefore ... not yet in general possessed of revolutionary consciousness."

What is this if not a despicable cover-up of imperialism in general and of British imperialism in particular? For, according to this formulation of the RCLB, the higher the cultural level, the lower the revolutionary consciousness. The conclusion? If you want a socialist revolution in the West, you must bring down the cultural level of the European proletariat!

Apart from the "generally higher cultural level of the working class in the West", the RCLB explain that there is yet another reason for the European proletariat not being "ACTUALLY the most revolutionary at this time", namely, "the strength of the opportunists in the working class movement in the West." And, well may we ask the RCLB, what is the reason for the "strength of the opportunists in the working class movement in the West"? The RCLB answer: "The generally higher cultural level of the working class in the West". Thus, once again, in the company of the RCLB we move in a vicious circle.

It is not just a question of higher or lower cultural level, it is the fact that:

"... the advanced countries have been creating their culture by the opportunity they have of living at the expense of billions of oppressed people ... the capitalists of these countries obtain a great deal more than they would have been able to in the shape of profits resulting from the robbery of the workers in their own countries". (Lenin, 'Speech to the Second Congress of the Communist International', Vol 3 Selected Works, p. 449).

The RCLB comrades themselves cite this quotation without stopping to think that it applies to them just as much as it applies to Birch; the only difference is that whereas Birch refuses to recognise imperialist plunder and robbery of the third world altogether, the RCLB comrades recognise it in words, but go on to make apologies for it in practice.* The RCLB say on p. 24 of their article that:

"imperialism, by internationalising capital and its consequent receipt of superprofits, has been able to postpone the inevitable socialist revolution in the West for decades. Superprofits and other means of imperialist robbery have prolonged the economic life of capitalism and also enabled the imperialist bourgeoisie to FOSTER OPPORTUNISM." (RCLB's emphasis).

What does this mean? It means simply that it is imperialist superprofits which have enabled the imperialist bourgeoisie to foster opportunism in the working class and to postpone the socialist revolution in this country, and not the generally higher cultural level of the working class in the West. That being the case, why are the RCLB afraid to tell this truth to the British working class? Why are they engaged in a cover-up of imperialist relations between Britain and third world countries under the shield of the higher cultural level of the working class in the West? Here again, unfortunately for the RCLB, Birch is the pace-setter for them, as in other respects. It is not enough to condemn Birch; it is more important to repudiate and to refuse to follow the opportunist and social-chauvinist line propagated by Birch.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, it must be asked how it was possible for the RCLB to be peddling the social-chauvinist rubbish that they have been peddling for quite some time. The answer, in our view, is three-fold:

1. They have not been able to rid themselves of right opportunism, which is engendered daily, hourly and on a large scale in an imperialist country such as Britain; they have not been able to rid themselves of the social-chauvinism of their mother organisation, the Communist Federation of Britain, despite the change of name.

* This is precisely what they do in their article.

All of this goes to prove that a change in nomenclature is not sufficient to change the essence of things - or, as old Shakespeare would have had it, "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet". The CFB rechristened as RCLB remains the CFB for all that - full of the same opportunist prejudices. And, as Lenin established long ago, there is a definite connection between opportunism and social-chauvinism. There is only a short step from opportunism to social-chauvinism. Is it, therefore, surprising that the CFB (disguised under the label of RCLB), which for years practised opportunism, should have adopted a social-chauvinist position?

2. In view of the imperialist nature of British society and the prevailing and predominant opportunism in the working-class movement (for which there is a material basis), it is extremely hard for revolutionaries to carry on with revolutionary work. Being unable to cope with the tasks, and being itself under the influence of the imperialist prejudices, albeit unconsciously, the RCLB want "to begin to carry out the revolutionary programme from the end that is 'more suitable', 'more popular' and 'more acceptable' to the PETTY BOURGEOISIE. It is something like a plan to 'outwit history', to outwit the philistines." (See op. cit. p. 309). They seem to say: Surely nobody would oppose the defence of the fatherland! And they are right, alas. Nobody, with a few honourable exceptions, such is the spell of capitalist imperialism on the minds of the working masses, let alone the pettybourgeoisie, actually does oppose this slogan. So at least the RCLB have found themselves in the thick of the masses, not to say with the "stupid philistines and ignorant yokels".* They can happily march hand in hand with Margaret Thatcher, Jim Callaghan and even the leadership of the National Front (for nobody in this country would be more opposed to the Soviet Social imperialists than the National Front). Unity indeed!

Such are the monstrous results of the RCLB's Menshevik line on the question under discussion. Such are the disgusting results of the RCLB's overwhelming desire to swim with the tide.

The RCLB comrades fail to realise that the need of the hour is for the Marxist-Leninists to be able to "Resist 'mass' intoxication" and to be able to swim against the tide rather than "to 'wish to remain' with the masses, i.e., to succumb to the general epidemic". Here is how Comrade Lenin expresses himself on this question:

"Is it not more worthy of internationalists at this moment to be able to resist 'mass' intoxication than to 'wish to remain' with the masses, i.e., to succumb to the general epidemic? Have we not seen how the chauvinists in all the belligerent countries of Europe justified themselves by the wish to 'remain with the masses'? Is it not essential to be able for 'a while' to remain in a minority against the 'mass' intoxications? Is it not the work of the

* Comrades of the RCLB, note that this expression is Lenin's before you begin to howl at us for being 'arrogant', etc.

propagandists which at the present moment is the main factor in CLEARING the proletarian line of defencist and petty-bourgeois 'mass' intoxication? It was just this fusion of the masses, proletarian and non-proletarian, without distinction of class differences among those masses, that formed one of the conditions for the defencist epidemic. To speak with contempt of a 'group of propagandists' advocating a PROLETARIAN line is, we think, not altogether becoming." ('Letters on Tactics', Vol. 6, Selected Works, page 44).

3. The RCLB's disgusting habit of mechanically applying and mechanically reciting everything that appears in the 'Peking Review' and, in so doing, not only bringing shame on themselves, but also on the Communist Party of China. They should try to understand, rather than in their typically microphone style simply broadcast every statement in 'Peking Review' - which brings us to the question of the position of the Communist Party of China.

THE POSITION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA.

Our understanding of the Communist Party of China's position is the following:

1. The Communist Party of China (CPC) correctly realises that the two imperialist coalitions are, notwithstanding the facade of detente, and under the cover of detente, preparing for a Third World War and are re-arming themselves frantically on a gigantic scale*; that the true content of the spirit of Helsinki is the spirit of war, just as prior to the Second World War, the true content of the spirit of Locarno was the spirit of war.
2. That such a war, if it cannot be prevented, must be delayed, and the Communist Party of China is doing all within its power to delay the outbreak of such a war by exposing the war preparations and war policies of the two imperialist coalitions.
3. If indeed such a war breaks out (it would be more correct to say, WHEN it breaks out), it is the attempt of the CPC - a perfectly legitimate and correct attempt - to ensure that such a war would be fought between the imperialist coalitions alone, and should not involve China. It is the attempt of Western imperialism to ensure that the war be between the USSR on the one hand and China on the other, just as before the Second World War it was the attempt of Anglo-American-French imperialism to cause the war to be between Hitlerite Germany and the then Socialist Soviet Union. The Western imperialists are trying to turn the Soviet Union in the direction of China, just as Western imperialism tried to turn Hitlerite Germany to the East in the direction of the USSR. The Chinese comrades, on the other hand, are

*See Appendix 1

doing their level best, and rightly so, to make sure that if indeed there must be a war, then it must be between the imperialist coalitions, and China must be left unscathed by such a war, just as prior to the Second World War, it was Stalin's triumph that he managed to ensure that the war broke out between Hitlerite Germany and Britain, rather than between Hitlerite Germany and the Soviet Union.

4. And, finally, insofar as under the prevailing conditions of international relations, the biggest danger to the safety of China comes from Soviet Social imperialism, the Chinese quite correctly single out the Soviet Union as the chief target of their campaign. This too is legitimate and correct. And it is the duty of every revolutionary to expose the Russian designs on China and the threat that it presents to China.

None of the above, however, in any way makes it imperative for revolutionaries, in parrot fashion, in their propaganda aimed at the working masses in their own countries, to mechanically repeat everything said by the CPC. The RCLB, however, do so out of a doubly opportunist motive:

(a) being unable to work out and put forward a revolutionary programme for their own country, they want to secure some revolutionary credentials vicariously. They are revolutionary (this is their implicit argument) because they put out (albeit mechanically) the statements of a Party whose revolutionary credentials have been proven by the history of the Chinese revolution;

(b) finding their cousin-brothers, namely the Birchite opportunists, in trouble, the RCLB comrades are eager to step into the shoes of the CPBML. And no revolutionary proletarian can fail to be disgusted by the revolting opportunism of the RCLB and its hankering after getting the seal of approval and revolutionary credentials, not because of its revolutionary work in Britain, but because of its vicarious revolutionism. We have no doubt that in the end the RCLB will suffer an even more ignominious fate than that which has befallen their much-discredited cousins of the CPBML.

We are firmly of the view that:

"There is one, and only one, kind of internationalism in deed: working wholeheartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle IN ONE'S OWN COUNTRY, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy and material aid) such, and ONLY SUCH, A STRUGGLE and such a line in EVERY country without exception." ('Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution', Lenin, Vol. 6 Selected Works, p.63).

We are of the opinion that, so far as is known to us, the leadership of the RCLB is conscious of the fact that it is putting forward an opportunist and social-chauvinist line, and in doing so, this leadership is motivated by a desire for personal gain and nothing else. This leadership represents the privileged strata of bought-off and bribed workers who are conscious of this bribery and are

indistinguishable from the average petty bourgeois.

As for the other few cadres in that organisation, we are unable to vouch for them. Some, who are used to introducing philistine morality into political matters, will object and say that surely the views put forward by the RCLB are held by its leadership very sincerely. Our answer to that is:

"Sincerity is contagious, and a sincere scared philistine is capable of temporarily transforming even a revolutionary into a philistine." (Lenin, Vol 6 Selected Works, p.255).

It is our duty to expose the opportunism and philistinism of the RCLB, particularly in view of the fact that the RCLB is very keen to unite every Marxist-Leninist individual and organisation in this country under its banner. In view of the social-chauvinism of the RCLB, such unity would only be unity with social chauvinism and opportunism:

"Unity with the social-chauvinists means unity with one's 'own' national bourgeoisie, which exploits other nations; it means splitting the international proletariat". (Lenin, 'Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International', Vol. 22 Collected Works, p.113).

It is our duty to expose the unity-mongering of the RCLB for what it really is, namely splitting even further the Marxist-Leninist movement in this country by introducing into it social chauvinist, class-conciliatory, ideology. The RCLB is acting as a purveyor of bourgeois ideology in the Marxist-Leninist movement and, with unity on its lips, it is causing splits everywhere.

Engels must have had the likes of the RCLB in mind when he made the following well-known remark :

"One must not allow oneself to be misled by the cry for 'unity'. Those who have this word most often on their lips are the ones who cause most of the discord, just as at present the ... Bakuninists ..., who have provoked all the splits, clamour for nothing so much as for unity. These unity fanatics are either narrow-minded people who want to stir everything into one non-descript brew, which, the moment it is left to settle, throws up the differences again but in much sharper contrast because they will then be all in one pot ... - or else they are people who unconsciously ... or consciously want to adulterate the movement. It is for this reason, that the biggest sectarians and the biggest brawlers and rogues shout loudest for unity at certain times. Nobody in our lifetime has given us more trouble and has caused more quarrels than the shouters for unity." (Engels to A. Bebel, 20 June 1873, quoted from 'Karl Marx Frederick Engels Selected Letters, Foreign Languages Press Peking edition, p. 54).

With these words of Engels', we bring this document of ours to a close. It is intended to be a contribution to the debate on the very important

questions that it deals with, and to bringing about real unity among the Marxist-Leninists by repudiating and refuting the anti-Marxist-Leninist line propagated by the RCLB and others like them. Real unity can only come about on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, not otherwise. No doubt the unenlightened and prejudiced minds would accuse the ACW of indulging in uncomradely polemic. The ACW has over the years got used to such accusations and will not be deterred by them from defending the interests of the working class by advancing the propositions of Marxism-Leninism. With Marx we exclaim:

"Every opinion based on scientific criticism I welcome. As to the prejudices of so-called public opinion, to which I have never made concessions now as aforetime the maxim of the great Florentine is mine:

"Segui il tuo corso, e lascia dir le genti" (K. Marx, Preface to the First German Edition of Volume 1 of 'Capital').

It is, however, to be hoped that only a minority in the Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain are such unenlightened philistines, and that this contribution of ours shall receive its due consideration. If that takes place, we have no doubt that the social-chauvinist line propagated by the RCLB shall be defeated and a basis will be laid for real unity among Marxist-Leninists - if not on all questions, at least on the questions which are the subject matter of this pamphlet.

We add by way of a concluding remark that it has not been easy for us to bring out this pamphlet. It has taken us a great deal of study and research, and the views presented in this pamphlet - no matter how they may be judged and how little they conform to the interested prejudices of the ruling classes and their agents in the working-class movement - are the outcome of this painstaking and conscientious and honest research carried on over a whole year into the questions concerned. That is why we have not pronounced ourselves earlier on these questions whose crucial importance to the working-class movement no-one will deny. We did not approach these questions in order to vindicate our prejudices: our aim throughout has been to carry out the following behest of Marx:

"At the entrance to science as at the entrance to hell, the demand must be made:

"Qui si convien lasciare ogni sospetto

Ogni viltà convien che qui sia morta" ** (Marx, Preface to 'Critique of Political Economy').

Time will be the judge.

LONG LIVE MARXISM-LENINISM AND PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM !!

DOWN WITH IMPERIALISM AND ALL ITS LACKEYS !!

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES AND NATIONS OF THE WORLD, UNITE !!

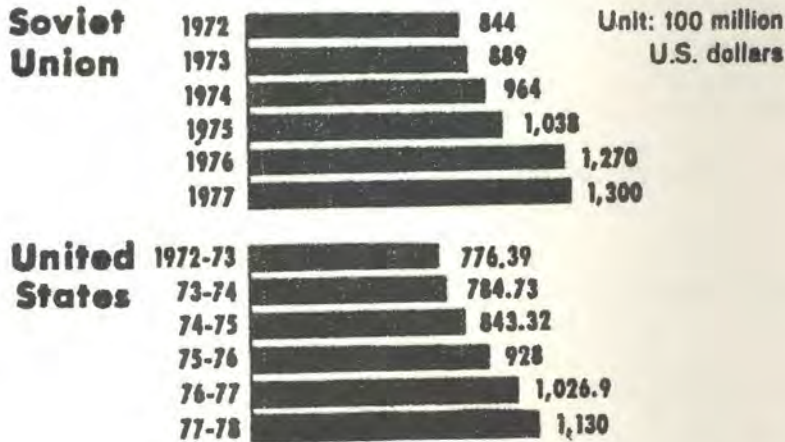
Association of Communist Workers
August 1978

* Translated: 'Follow the road you have chosen, no matter what people say.'

** Translated (from Dante's Divine Comedy): 'Here must all distrust be left; All cowardice must here be dead.'



GROWING MILITARY EXPENDITURES



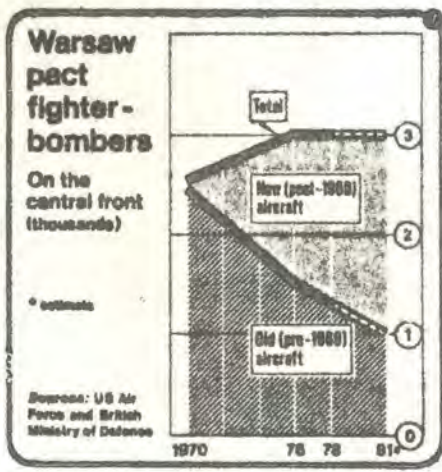
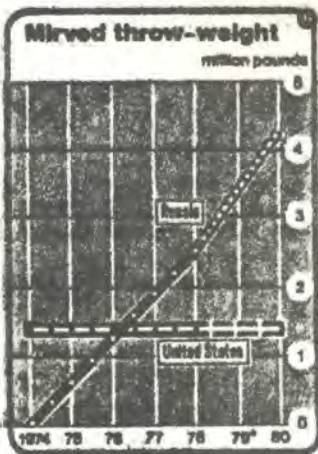
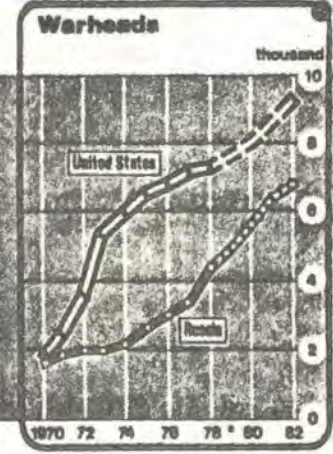
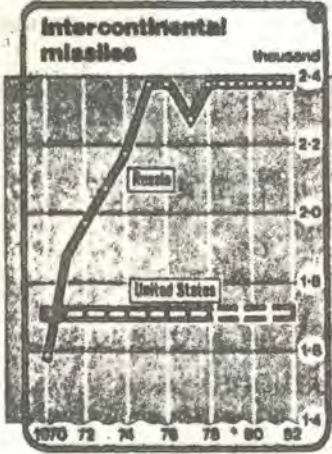
From 'Peking Review' No 24, 16 June 1978.

SOVIET-U.S. STRATEGIC ARMS RACE

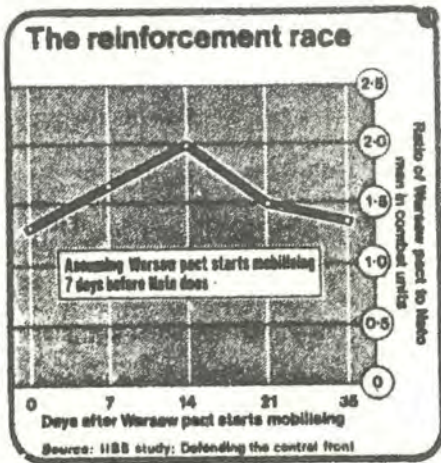
		1963 *	1969 *	1970	1971	1972 *	1973	1974 *	1975	1976	1977
ICBMs 	U.S.S.R.	90	1028	1299	1513	1527	1527	1575	1618	1527	1477
	U.S.A.	424	1054	1054	1054	1054	1054	1054	1054	1054	1054
Submarine-launched missiles 	U.S.S.R.	107	196	304	448	500	628	720	784	845	909
	U.S.A.	224	656	656	656	656	656	656	656	656	656
Long-distance bombers 	U.S.S.R.	190	145	145	145	140	140	140	135	135	135
	U.S.A.	630	560	556	505	455	422	437	432	387	373

* Here 1963 refers to the time before the signing of the partial nuclear test ban treaty.
 1969, before the U.S.-Soviet SALT talks began.
 1972, when the provisional agreement on certain measures for limiting strategic offensive weapons was signed.
 1974, before the U.S.-Soviet joint statement on limiting strategic offensive weapons was published.

From 'Peking Review' No 25, 23 June 1978.



From 'The Economist', 9 September 1978.



From 'The Economist', 9 September 1978.

The Balance of Forces in Central Europe

	NATO Countries*	Warsaw Pact Countries	Relative strength NATO: Warsaw Pact
TOTAL SOLDIERS			1:1.2
SOLDIERS IN FIGHTING UNITS			1:1.2
MAIN BATTLE TANKS			1:2.7
ARTILLERY			1:2.5
FIXED-WING TACTICAL AIRCRAFT			1:2.4

*Including French forces in the Federal Republic of Germany

From 'The Financial Times', 27 June 1978.

The information contained in the diagrams reproduced above is indicative of two things:

Firstly, that notwithstanding the honeyed talk indulged in by them, the two imperialist coalitions - one under the leadership of the USA and the other one under the leadership of the USSR - are engaged in a furious and frantic preparation for war. The more they talk of peace, the more they accompany this talk with preparations for a Third World War. In fact, their propaganda about detente and peace is designed merely to hide their war preparations and deceive and hoodwink the peoples of the world into thinking that peace is around the corner.

It is, therefore, our duty to expose the fraudulent talk about peace and arouse ordinary people against the war preparation of the two superpowers, in the conventional as well as the nuclear armament field.

Secondly, that the law of uneven development of capitalism is inexorably marching forward. The USSR, a latecomer to the imperialist banqueting table, has through a most circuitous route (from socialism through restoration of capitalism to social-imperialism) not only caught up with the other imperialist coalition, but is actually in the process of overtaking its rivals. It is challenging those who have been securely ensconced at the banqueting table for quite some time now. In these circumstances it is hardly surprising that, in the ultimate analysis, the two imperialist coalitions cannot but clash. Each side has world domination as its aim, and such matters cannot be decided peacefully.

In view of this, it is the duty of proletarian revolutionaries to expose the imperialist predatory aims of BOTH these imperialist coalitions and to prepare the working class for a civil war for the overthrow of imperialism in the event of the two imperialist coalitions plunging the world for the third time this century into a new, unparalleled and unimaginable holocaust. It is not our job to hold a brief for either of these two imperialist coalitions.

The RCLB give, as pointed out, some useful figures, some of which we reproduce below. The RCLB's purpose in producing these figures has been merely to show one aspect, namely, to prove the declining strength of British imperialism relative to that of other imperialisms, in particular to that of American imperialism.

All this has been done with a view to 'proving' that because of its declining strength, Britain takes up "a less reactionary position than previously". All this in turn is done with a view to justifying the social chauvinism of the RCLB, according to which in the event of war between a "West European country" and "a" superpower, the war on the part of the "West European country" concerned would be a just war, and that the proletariat of the ^{Western} European country concerned should take the position of fighting for national independence.

However, the RCLB in the same breath and in the same article state that "Britain is a particularly big international exploiter", and that "Britain in general plays a reactionary role in the world", and that we should "have no illusions* that the imperialist nature of Britain has changed" (Remarks in quotation marks are from 'Revolution' June 1978, p. 18).

The RCLB appear to be completely unperturbed by the glaring contradiction between these statements on the one hand and their thesis of Britain fighting a just war against "a" superpower on the other.

If Britain is a big international exploiter, if Britain plays a generally reactionary role in world affairs and if Britain is an imperialist country, is it not correct, then, to draw the conclusion that in going to war the purpose of the ruling class in Britain would be to carry out the same imperialist, reactionary policies? This in no way is affected by who was the first to start ^{the war}, as is clear from our article. The RCLB should realise that the social character of a war is determined "not by the good intentions, but by the class character of the government that wages the war, by the connection between the class represented by this government and the imperialist finance capital ... , by the real and actual policy which that class is pursuing." (Lenin, 'Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution', Vol 6, Selected Works, p. 47).

Notwithstanding the futile attempts of the RCLB to prove the contrary, the overall picture that we get of Britain is that it is one of the half dozen biggest international exploiters, that it is one of the half dozen biggest vident, imperialist and predatory powers.

The RCLB quite correctly introduce the figures by stating that:

* The RCLB obviously have not yet lost their sense of humour!

"One of the most characteristic features of imperialism is the export of capital - as Lenin said:

"Typical of the old capitalism, when free competition had undivided sway, was the export of GOODS. Typical of the latest stage of capitalism when monopolies rule, is the export of capital'.

(*'Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism'*, Peking ed., p.72. Emphasis in the original.)

"In 1914, when Britain was the biggest 'great' power, it easily outstripped it [sic] rivals in this respect.

"Table I

"Capital invested abroad by the 'great' powers in 1914
(In millions of francs)

<u>Britain</u>	<u>France</u>	<u>Germany</u>
75-100	60	44

"Source: Lenin, *'Imperialism'*, Peking ed., p 74."

(All quoted from June 1978 *'Revolution'*, page 18).

The RCLB then go on to say "Today, this is no longer the case", and they also state a few lines earlier that Britain is "no longer a great power". The purpose of these assertions is to soften the British proletariat towards British imperialism.

Here is Table 2, also quoted from the RCLB journal referred to above:

Table 2

Net Foreign Assets of Various Imperialist Powers in 1977

<u>USA</u>	<u>UK</u>	<u>FGR</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>France</u>	<u>Canada</u>	<u>Italy</u>
120,630	85,512	32,603	1,234	6304	3704	1832

Source: International Monetary Fund *'Statistics'* 1977.

Having given this Table, the RCLB correctly state that "Britain has now clearly been outstripped by the USA, but remains the second biggest imperialist power in terms of foreign assets". Then follow a few lines plus Table 3, the purpose of which is once again to bring tears to our eyes for poor old British imperialism and to seek to minimise the significance of the fact that Britain "remains the second biggest imperialist power in terms of foreign assets".

Here is Table 3:

Table 3

Flow of resources from developed countries to developing countries (1975)
(in millions of US dollars).

<u>USA</u>	<u>FGR</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>UK</u>	<u>France</u>
15,684	4,024	2,905	2,264	1,905

Source: UN 1976 Statistical Year Book

Of course, nobody would want to deny that British imperialism is in decline, but the point is, does the fact of that decline make it a progressive force? The RCLB then go on to once again correctly emphasise "the great importance to the British imperialist bourgeoisie of superprofits from imperialist exploitation of the oppressed people and nations ... Over the past twenty years the proportion of such profit to the whole has remained pretty constant. The lesson for us is that fighting such exploitation has not diminished in importance, if we are serious about the socialist revolution in Britain". (Op. cit., p.19).

In the case of war between Britain and "a" superpower, these sources of superprofits from the imperialist exploitation of the oppressed peoples and nations would be the subject of the dispute, which is what would make such a war an imperialist war, and if we are really serious about a socialist revolution in Britain, we should be preparing the proletariat with the slogan: 'Convert the imperialist war into a civil war for the overthrow of imperialism', rather than deceiving them and inspiring them with hopes that cannot be realised to the effect that their problems will come nearer to solution if they fight for 'national independence'. Such hopes retard their mental enlightenment and indirectly reconcile them to the continuation of an imperialist war with the deceptive slogan of fighting for 'national independence'.

Table 4

Profits of British Imperialism from Investments at Home and Abroad
(in millions of pounds)

	<u>1958</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1976</u>
1.	4137	5177	5325	6595	7058	8464	9681	12320	18219	24342
2.	612	586	659	785	793	947	1253	1444	2746	3306
3.	14.7	11.2	12.3	11.9	11.2	11.2	12.9	11.7	15.0	13.59

Notes: 1 = Gross profits from investments in Britain
2 = Net profits from investment abroad
3 = Profits from investment abroad as a percentage of domestic profits.

Source: National Income and Expenditure 1966-76 (HMSO)

Table 5

British Net Investment in Various Regions in 1975*
(in millions of pounds)

<u>W. Europe</u>	<u>N. America</u>	<u>Africa</u>	<u>S. Africa</u>	<u>Latin America</u>	<u>Middle East</u>	<u>Other Asia</u>	<u>Aust</u>
201.3	307.7	133.7	152.7	107.1	3.1	46.9	119.7

Source: Business Monitor

Table 6

Trade of Major Imperialist Powers, Jan- March 1976
(in million US dollars)

	World		OECD countries		Developing Countries	
	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports
USA	27530	26993	15032	15818	11752	9124
Japan	14753	14395	5726	6701	8180	6303
FGR	19950	23413	14559	17419	4242	3876
UK	13602	11502	8940	7676	3492	3076
France	15424	13561	10645	9378	4164	3283
Italy	9596	8001	6189	5639	2824	1661

Source: OECD Summary of Trade

If one takes into account unequal trading relationships persisting between the imperialist countries and the super-exploited peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, one cannot help coming to the conclusion, on the basis of the above figures quoted by the RCLB itself, that Britain is one of the half dozen topmost imperialist plunderers and robbers. And it would appear that the RCLB are in agreement with this conclusion of ours, for they state just after Table 6:

"The general picture from all this economic analysis is of an imperialist power, though not a superpower, which makes immense profits out of its imperialist plunder of third world and other countries." (Op. cit. p. 20).

* What is meant is 'British Investment in Various Regions in the course of 1975'. The table refers to new investment only.

However, this turns out to be only a seeming agreement for, first of all, according to the RCLB, this reactionary role of Britain is in relation to the the "third world" alone, i.e., the moment Britain is confronting "a" superpower, Britain, being weaker than the superpower concerned, automatically becomes progressive. This is not Marxism, but some kind of primitive Christianity according to which we are to look after the interests of weaker imperialisms as against stronger ones. On the basis of these crude principles of primitive Christianity, we are invited by the RCLB to be on the side of the underdog, namely, British imperialism. Blessed are the meek.

We thank the RCLB for the invitation, but regretfully we must decline, for we are against all imperialisms, and what we want is an end to the system of imperialism and not to come to the rescue of our 'own', be it weaker or stronger than its rival imperialisms. We leave such rescue attempts to the horde of social chauvinists typified by the RCLB.

APPENDIX 3

Note 1.

The same sort of idea is expressed by the RCLB on p. 10 of their article, 'Birch No Longer Part of the Marxist-Leninist Movement!', where they state:
" ... when the British and other European governments struggle to build up defence forces independent of the US, should we be opposed or indifferent to this? Or should we support it? The former course helps the superpowers by driving the second world countries into their arms. The latter course drives a wedge between the superpowers and the second world and EXPANDS THE UNITED FRONT". (RCLB's emphasis).

Note 2.

What the RCLB mean to ask is whether we should try to fight both the Soviet Union and our 'own' bourgeoisie. Hence the world 'superpowers' is incorrect. It should be 'superpower', namely, the Soviet Union. The whole tenor of the RCLB's article under discussion proves the correctness of this assertion of ours.

Note 3.

Our opponents might level the accusation against us that by taking the stand we are taking we are risking Britain's defeat in a possible war. We answer this accusation in the following words of Lenin's:

"(1) Is 'revolutionary intervention' possible without the risk of defeat? (2) Is it possible to scourge the bourgeoisie and the government of one's own country without taking that risk? (3) Have we not always asserted, and does not historical experience of reactionary wars prove, that defeats help the cause of the revolutionary class?" (Note by Lenin in 'The Junius Pamphlet', Vol 22 Collected Works pp. 318-319).

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