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COMMENTS ON THE POLITICAL LINE OF THE ZIMBABWE CAMPAIGN OF 1978

The contribution by comrades of the RCL to the Zimbabwe campaign were excellent both materially and ideologically. In the campaign which ran from the beginning of April to 9th December 1978, over £5,000 was collected and a landrover was successfully sent to the liberation war against British imperialism and its agents. Quite large quantities of clothes and blankets were also collected. Much propaganda and agitation was distributed against British imperialism giving a Communist lead in solidarity with an oppressed people when workers and ordinary people in Britain were otherwise subject to unchallenged imperialist and chauvinist propaganda.

All these things must be affirmed as positive, even though we would not repeat the campaign in the same form and even though there were some mistakes in the campaign as well as some more serious errors associated with the ultra-left idealism promoted by the anti-League faction. These positive and negative factors have been difficult to untangle. In addition comrades voted for the campaign for a number of different reasons which similarly are difficult to separate analytically. These factors provide some explanation (but not excuse) for the delay in drawing up a systematic discussion document attempting to sum up the campaign.

There is probably a fairly widespread consensus among comrades now that the campaign was marred by subjectivist and commandist leadership from Redfern and that in an ultra-left way it over-estimated what comrades could be called on to do on Zimbabwe without harming other aspects of work and Party building. In a similar ultra-leftist way it over-estimated the degree we could run ahead of the mass of the workers without damaging the close ties we were striving to build up. However the most important question on which we must shine light is to criticise the ultra-left political line of the campaign.

The Development of RCL Policy on the International Struggle

In order to understand and criticise the ultra-left political line of the campaign in which the principal target of our fight on the international front was made British imperialism, not hegemonism, it is necessary to trace the steps by which our understanding of our contribution to the three worlds strategy grew from the founding Congress of the RCLB.

At the founding Congress, on the basis of the theory of the three worlds (as generally interpreted at that time) the RCL adopted the formula in Section B4 of the Manifesto that "The international working class and oppressed peoples of the world must resolutely unite, and in so doing, must build the broadest possible united front against imperialism, especially the hegemonism of the two superpowers".

In implementing this united front section B8 described both superpowers as the main enemy of the peoples of the world but the Soviet Union as the more dangerous.

Sections B11, 12, 13, and 14 tried to describe the particular position of Britain in relation to this "broadest possible united front against imperialism, especially the hegemonism of the two superpowers". They said:

"The Revolutionary Communist League will fight for Britain to be independent of superpower hegemonism as one important aspect of the struggle for socialist revolution. The League must therefore lead the working class of Britain always to strengthen its unity with the exploited and oppressed peoples and nations of the third world in the common fight against imperialism especially the hegemonism of the two superpowers.

"In particular the Revolutionary Communist League will oppose all acts of British imperialist exploitation and oppression of other nations such as those of Ireland and southern Africa. The revolutionary peoples of these countries are the class brothers and sisters of the British working class in the fight against the common enemy, the superpowers and the British imperialist bourgeoisie."

Section 13 continued:

"In the interests of the international working class and the oppressed peoples and nations of the world, the Revolutionary Communist League will also struggle to make the British imperialist bourgeoisie line up with the countries of the third world in the broad international united front against imperialism, especially the hegemonism of the two superpowers, as far as this is possible. Inevitably however the British imperialist bourgeoisie will be a very vacillating member of

of the united front and we must in no way rely on it. Because of its imperialist class nature it will try to exploit the third world countries as much as it is able, and will play a treacherous role in the struggle against the superpowers. The British imperialist bourgeoisie can be forced towards more consistent participation in the broad united front only if the oppressed peoples and nations and the British working class firmly struggle against its imperialist nature".

Although the handling of the concepts is at times clumsy and probably unnecessarily lengthy in these passages, there is little doubt that serious attempts were made to emphasise the degree it was necessary for us to struggle against British imperialism in the course of doing what we could to build a broadest possible international united front" against imperialism especially the hegemonism of the two superpowers".

There was general agreement that in practice if we were talking about the broadest possible united front the united front should be seen particularly as being aimed against hegemonism. Accordingly, because of difficulties in defining our tasks clearly under the definition agreed, and because of the obvious correctness of China's initiatives towards second world countries, soon after the congress we readily adopted a different formula which was becoming more standard in the international Communist movement.

At the second CC meeting held in October 1977 the formula on the united front was amended by passing the following resolution unanimously:

"We support the struggle to form the broadest possible united front against the hegemonism of the two superpowers, Soviet social-imperialism and US imperialism, and their policies of aggression and war".

This resolution is a correct resolution. It was adopted relatively readily by comrades. During the preparation of the Manifesto we had become very aware of the illogicality and clumsiness of talking about a "broadest possible" international united front which was directed against all imperialism instead of narrowing the target at the main bastions of imperialism and world reaction, the two superpowers.

In view of the confusion the anti-League faction caused by muddling up some correct points and incorrect points in criticising the Manifesto comrades should note that the formula in the Manifesto of the broadest possible united front against imperialism especially the hegemonism of the two superpowers is a leftist not a rightist deviation. It is "leftist" because it fails to draw sufficient distinction between major and secondary imperialist enemies and fails really to strive to build the broadest possible united front against the biggest and most dangerous enemies of the international working class. From the point of view of this key strategic formula for the international struggle the Manifesto as adopted in July 1977 makes a leftist error in handling the question of the second world imperialist countries.

The revised formula adopted in October of the same year corrects this. However the decision was taken in October without due regard to where this left our policy towards imperialism in general (as well as colonialism). This was objectively a rightist error. With hindsight we can see two answers should be given to this important question.

1. As well as building the broadest possible united front against superpower hegemonism we must also support another united front of great importance even though it is not as broad - the united front against imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism. This second united front has the people and countries of the third world as its core. The political rise of the third world is closely related to the growing maturity of this united front as seen in international meetings such as the Organization of African Unity, OPEC, the "Group of 77", the Non-Aligned Movement, ASEAN the "African Caribbean & Pacific Countries", the Arab League etc.

In talking of an international united front we do not mean a specific organization with clearly defined members but a broad movement which manifests itself in different activities and different ways. It is a movement based on the material interests of the participants in opposing imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism

- something which they grasp with varying degrees of clarity, although the general trend is for the issues to become clearer with each year. There is therefore no inconsistency in talking at one and the same time of building the broadest possible united front against the hegemonism of the two superpowers and the broad international united front against imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism. These two broad fronts overlap to a considerable degree because they reflect merely different aspects of the material interests of the international working class and the people (particularly the oppressed peoples and nations) of the world. Indeed the existence of the broad international united front against imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism is a major reason why the peoples and countries of the third world are the main force in the broadest possible united front against the hegemonism of the two superpowers.

We should therefore have specifically committed ourselves to support this second international united front - against imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism at the same time as the CC quite correctly in October 1977 redefined the broadest possible international united front as being against the hegemonism of the superpowers.

The second way of avoiding the rightist one-sidedness of adopting the October 1977 resolution on its own is by re-emphasising explicitly the need to struggle particularly firmly against British imperialism in the course of building the broadest possible international united front. This principle is already contained in the Manifesto but it should have been explicitly reaffirmed in October 1977 at the same time as the international united front was redefined. As one of the most reactionary of the second world imperialist powers Britain inevitably is slow to unite with third world countries on a just basis, <sup>against hegemonism</sup> and is ready to tail behind the US and to appease the Soviet Union. Therefore if the Communists in Britain are to do what they can to force Britain to take a more progressive stand internationally it must inevitably involve a large amount of struggle with British imperialism.

This then summarises the strengths and weaknesses of the RCL policy as it had developed up to October 1977. Inevitably our understanding of the theory of the three worlds and the tasks it required of us had gone through a zig-zag course from the one sided to the less one-sided (but inevitably still showing features of one-sidedness). The Oct 77 CC resolution corrected a leftist one sidedness on the broadest possible international united front but opened the door to a rightist one sidedness of relatively neglecting the task of struggling against British imperialism.

This lengthy introduction is necessary because the Zimbabwe campaign was closely related to the continuing development of our understanding of our international responsibilities. In summing up its political line it is important to see it in this context, if we are to learn systematic lessons.

Thus the next major policy minute following the CC meeting in October 1977 is the minute of the (then) Standing Committee of January 1978 -

"6.7.1 There has been a rightist tendency in propaganda and practice to underestimate British imperialism abroad. To discuss at CC3.

6.7.2 Propose to start solidarity work linked with industrial work and fund-raising for Zanu. For CC3".

It can be seen that the Zimbabwe campaign was to a large degree envisaged as being a corrective for the alleged error. What were the rights or wrongs of this charge?

#### The Record of Struggle against British imperialism.

Although there were weaknesses in Class Struggle's attacks on British imperialism during 1977 it should be seen in the context of a fundamental opposition to British imperialism established from its first issue.

The first issue of Class Struggle, in June 1976 contains an article "Zimbabwe Will Be Free" hitting British imperialism. The second line of the editorial "Introducing Class Struggle" states, "British imperialism, wounding and limping, still throws its weight around, tries to oppress and exploit countries like Ireland, the Arab countries, Southern Africa, and Iceland".

This record was maintained throughout 1976. The second issue, in July, contained articles on Ireland, Iceland and Azania all exposing British imperialism. The third

issue in August, contained an article "Unite to Smash Racism" making strong agitation-al and propaganda points exposing the links between racism and imperialism.

Issue number 4 included another article attacking British imperialism for its oppression in Ireland. The fifth issue, in October 1976 again contained an article supporting the Zimbabwean struggle and exposing British imperialism. In the same issue it carried a substantial article entitled "New Spirit of Defiance in Azania" once again exposing British imperialism.

The November issue yet again contained a major article on Zimbabwe hitting British imperialism and the December issue yet again contained a substantial article exposing the manoeuvres of British imperialism in Ireland.

Every month then of 1976 from its first issue of publication in June, Class Struggle hit British imperialism internationally while also hitting it domestically and playing a vanguard role in exposing the hegemonic nature of Soviet social imperialism. This was the period soon after the rectification movement in the old CFB, in which a national democratic centralist organization was being built.

Although increasingly serious study was being given to the three worlds theory, in the main the policy line of CS consisted largely of hitting a number of key enemies and supporting a number of key trends in a militant manner rather than laying bare the relationship between these in a way that was also more scientific. The themes come over strongly: opposition to Soviet social imperialism and to British imperialism abroad, friendship for the Peoples Republic of China and Albania and for the Third World.

The People's Daily pamphlet on the Three Worlds Theory was not published till almost a year later (November 1977) and our attempts at that time to link up these different struggles in a coherent strategy were rudimentary. One significant attempt however was made in an article in the second issue of CS in July 1976, entitled "UNCTAD: Third World Unity Grows". This article about imperialist exploitation of the third world was in addition to the issues such as Ireland, Zimbabwe, Azania and Iceland in which British imperialism's oppressor role could be exposed. In a world in which Britain had in the main lost its strength to maintain direct colonies under normal circumstances, and in which its imperialist exploitation was increasingly taking subtler neo-colonial forms, it was thought important to educate workers in solidarity with the oppressed peoples and nations on this matter. At the same time an attempt was made to show how the superpowers were the main bastions of this neo-colonial imperialist system and that Britain, although a very reactionary imperialist power is also declining in strength and necessarily vacillates to some extent. Workers in Britain should oppose exploitation of third world countries and instead demand that Britain defends its independence against the superpowers. The article attempted to implement such an approach in this way :-

"The British government ... sided with the US superpower against the third world because the British capitalists are still exploiting the third world. As the superpowers grow and the third world unites, the British imperialists don't know what to do. They plunder other countries, but they are scared of the strength of the superpowers, and of the growing strength and unity of the third world. This forced Britain to waver in its position at the conference and it started saying it was willing to "talk about" a common fund for commodities - as the third world had demanded. The working people of Britain have no interest in exploiting other countries. The bosses will never stand up firmly to the superpowers. British workers must force the British government to protect independence and oppose the superpowers".

With the beginning of 1977 attempts were further made to link these different international aspects together more coherently at a time when the CFB and the CUA were moving towards unity and the structure of the Manifesto was starting to be hammered out.

The January issue starts with a 1½ page review of 1976 as a year of struggle. This article concentrates exclusively on the rise of the third world and exposure of the superpowers internationally. This international section is dealt with from the point of view of an abstract observer and no responsibility is accepted that within the context of the three worlds strategy we have a particular responsibility to fight British imperialism internationally. The only reference to imperialism is a rather formalistic sentence:

"The struggles against superpower hegemony, imperialism and racism are burning ever fiercer and brighter."

By contrast the blows against the British ruling class, although militant, were delivered exclusively in the national section.

Clearly this article makes rightist errors of neglecting our particular responsibility to struggle against British imperialism abroad. At the same time in the January issue there is also a very good article running to almost the same length of 1½ pages on Zimbabwe exposing and attacking British and US imperialism, saying among other things,

"British imperialism already has vast investments in Zimbabwe, and has no intention of giving them up to the people of Zimbabwe. Among the 300 British companies within Zimbabwe are British Steel, British Leyland, ICI, Metal Box, GKN, Schweppes, BOC, Dunlop, GEC, Tate & Lyle, Plessey and Unilever".

How much the errors of the lead article can be attributed to the technical challenge of summarising international developments in 1977 in 500 words when a number of other things than British imperialism seemed important to emphasize on a world scale is not clear. However it must be said that the article does not grasp our particular contribution of struggling against British imperialism internationally. In this the article is a warning of patchy coverage of this question in 1977 at the same time as CS in a very principled and far sighted manner correctly directed its main blow internationally at exposing the hegemonistic nature of Soviet social imperialism.

In February 1977 CS contained an article on fishing, effectively showing the imperialist nature of the British government and contrasting its bullying of the Icelandic people with its appeasement of the Soviet Union on fishing, thereby again educating concretely on the three worlds strategy.

The March 78 issue contained a short agitational piece of ¼ page exposing Soviet sanctions-busting on Zimbabwe but without attacking British imperialism. This is not in itself wrong because if too many concepts are included in an agitational piece it lose its impact as agitation. However there was no ~~other~~ attack on British imperialism internationally in that issue.

The April issue contained a major article against Soviet fishing in European waters. In the section subtitled "Third World led Struggle for 200 Mile Limit" the opportunity was taken of exposing British imperialism's vacillating imperialist nature:

"Throughout the struggle, Britain, like most of the smaller capitalist powers, vacillated, arguing first one way, and then another. This was because Britain wanted to continue to plunder the resources of countries like Iceland, but at the same time was worried about the increasing Soviet exploitation of British waters. When Iceland declared its 200 mile fishing limit, the Labour government sent in gun boats to help British trawlers fish illegally. The Icelandic people heroically defended their just demands and won. It was struggles like this that mean that Britain and other West European countries had to protect their own fishing grounds".

All this was consciously written as a concrete illustration of the three worlds theory.

In the same issue there is a major article against the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The fundamental position of this article is one of fraternal solidarity with the Irish people although British imperialism should have been denounced more decisively than it was.

The May 1977 issue of CS had a major article with two paragraphs specifically against US and British imperialism in Southern Africa in the context of the overall theme, "African Peoples Oppose Superpower Aggression". In Workers Notebook a  $\frac{1}{2}$  page was devoted to exposing how the imperialist countries, especially the two superpowers carry on neo-colonialist exploitation. An article on Mrs. Thatcher's visit to China stated "Thatcher's opposition to social imperialism and her internal policies are two different matters" and pointed out "she supports the bosses' continued exploitation and oppression of workers in Britain and the people of the third world".

The June issue had a  $1\frac{1}{2}$  page article on the international summit meeting entitled "London Summit: US Retreats" and in this the vacillating dual nature of the minor imperialist countries of the second world like Britain was brought out in the context of the three worlds strategy. An agitational article on Zimbabwe giving facts on the progress of the liberation struggle lead up to the main point in the form of a quote by Mugabe that "Strangers are barred entry into our home whether by the front door or the back door", with the conclusion that "This was a clear warning to both superpowers to stop meddling". Thus the most important point was seen as the threat of superpower contention interfering with the rising liberation struggle against the racist colonial regime. At this time Britain was purportedly not directly involved in Zimbabwe. Also the fact that British imperialism was not automatically mentioned in an agitational article is not always automatically incorrect as agitational articles can only carry a limited number of concepts. Nevertheless this article shows a relative neglect of our particular responsibility in relation to British imperialism and lack of thought on how to hit British imperialism on the question of Zimbabwe within the context of the three worlds strategy. In the same June issue another article on racism took the opportunity of drawing the link between racism and British imperialism.

The July issue carried an extremely sharp  $\frac{1}{2}$  page article denouncing British imperialism in the course of rebuffing the attacks on Amin. It may even be thought to have been rather dogmatic in refusing to concede any criticisms of Amin, but the overall thrust was certainly very correct. A short agitational article in Workers Notebook reported on the progress in the liberation war in Zimbabwe. In this case it would be arbitrary to criticise it for not mentioning British imperialism as it was purely agitational. Another longer piece in the same column linked the history of British imperialist activity in northern Ireland and in Oman. A full page article on the back again supported the third world economic struggle against imperialist exploitation and criticised British imperialism in the course of directing the main blow against the superpowers.

This was the last issue of Class Struggle published by the CFB.

Class Struggle reappeared in August 1977 with the first issue of volume 21 triumphantly announcing the founding of the RCLB. A three page interview with the then secretary of the RCL made a substantial improvement in handling the particular question of British imperialism internationally than in the review of the year published in January. This may have been helped by the greater space and the question and answer type format which permitted complex questions to be explained in a direct and not too convoluted a way.

But in the main the improvement was probably the result of the extensive discussion that had gone into the drawing up of section B of the Manifesto.

The interview stated clearly:

"In between the first and third world is the second world of second rate imperialist countries like Britain. They try to continue to exploit the peoples of the third world but they are running into more and more resistance. But at the same time they are also partly oppressed themselves by the superpowers".

It went on :

"We will make sure that all workers in Britain understand their best friends are the oppressed peoples and nations of the world. And although we will never rely on our own bourgeoisie we will struggle to make the British government take a better stand internationally and line up more with the third world in the struggle against the superpowers. In order to do this we must fight British imperialism particularly strongly".

The question was asked by the editor: "As you say, the two superpowers are the main enemy of the peoples of the world. Does this mean we should unite with our bosses against <sup>them</sup> instead of fighting for the socialist revolution?" and the reply came:

"Definitely not! Our main enemy in Britain is the British monopoly capitalist bourgeoisie and we will over-throw it by socialist revolution. But we must link our fight with the fight of the international working class and oppressed peoples against the superpowers, because the superpowers are the main enemies of the people of the world.... One part of that work is to fight against and expose the reactionary, international line of the British ruling class of appeasing Soviet social-imperialism, relying on US imperialism and continuing to try to oppress and exploit the oppressed peoples and nations of the world. Fighting against this, like the fight against all the other reactionary acts of the bourgeoisie helps to educate the working class and the working people and carry the socialist revolution forward. But if we also actually manage to force the government to take a better stand internationally this weakens the superpowers and cuts back their sphere of activity. If so, so much the better !"

The question of British imperialism was again handled explicitly in the reply on opportunism:

"Opportunism is especially strong in imperialist countries like Britain because the bourgeoisie uses the superprofits it gets from imperialist exploitation to bribe and soften up a section of the working class and working people".

The same August issue of CS contained two articles on Zimbabwe. One, on Mugabe's visit to China made propaganda points hitting US and British imperialism as well as social imperialism. The other 2/3 page, is an agitational article about further advances in the liberation war. This does not specifically mention British imperialism by name but ends by saying that the victory of the liberation struggles in Southern Africa "will be a victory for the oppressed people throughout the world and a further set of nails in the coffin of imperialism. WORKERS AND OPPRESSED OF THE WORLD UNITE ! "

The paper also contained articles attacking Soviet social imperialism in preparation for the Czechoslovakia demonstration and an article on womens emancipation in Albania. All in all this founding issue of the RCL's Class Struggle has strong coverage internationally not only in terms\*of the particular position of Britain within that general situation.

The September 1977 issue had 1/2 page article "British Imperialism Out of Ireland" in an international section concentrating mainly on reporting <sup>the</sup> success of the 11th Congress of the CPC and commemorating the anniversary of Mao's death. In addition there was coverage of the Czechoslovakia demonstration.

October saw 1/2 page about the struggle at the Belfast engineering firm of Mackie in the context of fighting British imperialism. There was a short, purely agitational item, in W.N. on black workers in South Africa.

The November issue contained a half-page article on the struggle of the Azanian people which was purely agitational and did not refer to British imperialism or the superpowers.

The December issue contained no items hitting British imperialism. The January 1978 issue ran a militant 1/2 page article on the "Heroic Struggle of Azanian People" which hit US and British imperialism hard and stated among other things: "British imperialism's colossal profits obtained abroad are soaked in the blood of the heroic struggles of the black people".

It was after the publication of this issue that the January 1978 (then) Standing Committee passed the resolution "There has been a rightist tendency in propaganda and practice to underestimate British imperialism abroad". The survey given above of articles in CS in 1977 show there was some truth to this view although the tendency was not as serious as the anti-League faction later made out.

\* of the general situation but also in terms

The summing up of 1976 in the January 1977 issue was definitely in error in not directing any blows at British imperialism in its international aspect. On the other hand the interview with the then national secretary in August was very clear on this matter. It must be admitted that some of the coverage of British imperialism in articles during the year was patchy. On the other hand any organization that could publish the article on Amin in the July issue slaughtering British imperialism on a tricky subject cannot reasonably be described as having deep errors of social chauvinism.

Redfern made a particularly telling point of two articles on southern Africa which did not refer to British imperialism. In at least one case the criticism is correct. On the other hand the manner of Redfern's criticisms was a dogmatist one that treated the omission as self-evidently a political crime. This type of dogmatist and rigid thinking is similar to the thinking in the early months of Class Struggle that every article had to end with a statement that the central task in Britain today is to rebuild the revolutionary Communist party. This ultra-left dogmatist approach fails to educate people, and in fact drives them away from a revolutionary position.

After the overthrow of the anti-League faction CS has on one or two occasions published agitational items about southern Africa which do not name British imperialism (for example the article in Vol 3 no 2, March 22nd 1979) because this may attract a reader's attention so that his or her understanding can be consolidated by a fuller propaganda article in a later issue.

It is hard to excuse the omission of any reference to British imperialism in the article on Zimbabwe in June 1977 and the article on southern Africa in November 1977. On the other hand it would be arbitrary to criticise its omission from the agitational article on Zimbabwe in August 1977, particularly since this article was accompanied by a propaganda article in the same issue hitting British imperialism.

There is no magic answer to this contradiction. We must carry out our most important tasks and guard against the rightist error of ignoring our particular responsibility to oppose British imperialist oppression of other peoples, and the "leftist" error of treating this as a dogmatic fetish. Comrades must form their own opinions on each case according to the concrete circumstances.

In this review of coverage in CS it is also necessary to point out that for reasons of brevity we have summarised the position only concerning international articles about British imperialist oppression. This inevitably has a danger of accepting the terms of the anti-League factions's distortions of proletarian internationalism whereby they implied it consists overwhelmingly or even exclusively of solidarity with the peoples oppressed by your own imperialist ruling class. In fact CS carried much more international material than has been listed. Some of this displayed the courageous spirit of proletarian internationalism in supporting socialist China during a difficult period and in hitting particularly hard at the most dangerous enemy of the international working class - the Soviet Union. At this time, apart from New Age, we were the only force in the "left" in Britain giving this vital leadership. Another example is that in some of the later 1977 issues of CS which were weak in hitting British imperialism this is partly because of the space and attention courageously allocated at that time to promoting solidarity with the struggle of Kampuchea.

The fact that there was some weakness in exercising our particular concrete responsibility internationally to hit British imperialism's exploitation and oppression of other peoples cannot obscure the fact that CS was quite correct to judge its international coverage first and foremost in terms of the basic interests of the international proletariat as a whole and to strive to apply the strategy of the three worlds, even if there were some errors in doing so at first.

A difficult question which needs more thought is the relative balance of how to criticise British imperialism in the context of the three worlds theory. On the one hand British imperialism still attempts to exploit and oppress the third world; on the other it is servile to and appeases the first world.

We are opposed to both aspects and should hit both aspects. The anti-League faction however tended to regard opposing British imperialism internationally as consisting overwhelmingly of the first aspect only and had difficulty seeing that appeasement is inevitably and essentially the product of the imperialist nature of a second-rate imperialist power, whose class nature prevents it relying on the people. The standing committee resolution already quoted speaks of "under-estimating British imperialism abroad" but was meant only in this sense. For the purpose of evaluating the rights and wrongs of this criticism this review of CS coverage above has therefore accepted this bias and has surveyed only coverage of British imperialist oppression. It must therefore be emphasised that side by side with these examples there were many attempts to expose British imperialist appeasement in the pages of CS.

Which aspect we should in fact expose more must be thought about further in the context of how we educate workers and progressive people step by step to embrace a revolutionary position. Do we expose British imperialism fundamentally by presenting it as morally bad or do we expose it by showing that its material class interest are opposed to the material interests of the proletariat and the people. There is a need for lively agitation evoking feelings of hatred and contempt in both approaches but there is still a fundamental difference. The first approach is an idealist moralistic one. The second approach is a historical materialist one.

If we grasp the second basic approach clearly we can then go on to ask how much emphasis should we put on showing workers that the imperialist nature of British imperialism through its appeasement policies makes world war and Soviet domination of ourselves more likely. On the other hand how much should we emphasize that British imperialism exploitation of the oppressed peoples and natures strengthens its ability to maintain its class exploitation and oppression of us ?

This question of relative emphasis is linked up with another question of relative emphasis. How much relative emphasis in international coverage should we put on building the broadest possible international united front against the hegemonism and war policies of the two superpowers and how much relative emphasis on the international united front against imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism ? This should be seen from a practical point of view rather than from the point of view of abstract dogma. While both united fronts are important for the international working class which in practice is the more important ? - Surely the one that mobilises all possible factors against the most dangerous enemy of the international working class and strives to isolate it - ie. the first united front. That still leaves the important question however of what particular emphasis should Communists in Britain make in view of the particular position of Britain within the overall world situation.

These questions need more thought by all comrades.

So far we have reviewed our propaganda by looking at every issue of CS up to January 1978. In terms of our practice internationally up to that time this can be summed up in terms of the Czechoslovakia demonstration of which there had by then been two (1976 & 1977). In the light of our reappraisal of mass work we can now see that there was a dogmatic rigidity with which we pursued the correct emphasis on work with the industrial working class. This restricted the scope for international solidarity work, and excluded any participation in broad front events. Nevertheless it is necessary to remember that shortage of members also restricted mass work severely if we were to try to build the party in a balanced way. Within this extremely limited scope for public demonstrations of international solidarity in the period up to Jan 1978, the RCL and the CFB before it allocated the only two demonstrations to raising the banner against the most dangerous enemy of the international working class, the Soviet Union. A more flexible and less dogmatically rigid policy towards mass work and to struggling with opportunists would have permitted us to participate in demonstrations for example against British imperialism in Ireland or in southern Africa without presenting us with the impossible organizational challenge of leading them ourselves.

CC3 and the Decision to Launch the Zimbabwe Campaign.

We have now reviewed the developments in the RCL's understanding of international policy and the record of its propaganda in CS and of its practice up to January 1978. As the minutes of the January SC quoted on page 3 of this document show, the decision to launch the Zimbabwe campaign was closely linked with the minute stating "there has been a rightist tendency in propaganda and practice to under-estimate British imperialism abroad".

At CC 3, at the end of January 1978, the two subjects were similarly closely linked. Redfern presented a verbal lead on the question of "proletarian internationalism". Despite its importance this hadn't been presented in writing for CC comrades' consideration before the meeting.

The verbal lead struck a pose in order to impress and intimidate and succeeded in doing so. Redfern reeled off twenty to 30 economic statistics usually in thousands of million dollars. Many of them were subsequently used in the article in the June 1978 issue of Revolution on "Proletarian Internationalism". They are intimidating enough there in written form but just receiving them by ear they were more so. Redfern was making a show of "Seeking Truth from Facts" yet of all the economic facts he threw at the CC not one was a statistic about the Soviet Union, the most dangerous enemy of the international working class, a fact he brushed aside by blandly saying that the figures were only for western imperialist countries. In short he was not Seeking Truth but Selecting Facts, selecting facts to support his dogmatic and ultra-left prejudices; but at that time our vigilance was not sufficiently high against such an opportunist manoeuvre.

As well as the barrage of international statistics (international that is with the exception of the Soviet Union) Redfern particularly emphasised that British imperialism is the main enemy of certain third world countries, and gave further statistics about Malayasia, (ignoring Soviet activity in Singapore) and quoted the Communist Party of Malaya describing British imperialism as the main enemy of the Malayan people.

This argument about third world countries which are an exception is a major one for assessing the correctness of the Zimbabwe campaign. For example at other times subsequently Redfern pointed to a passage in the Beijing pamphlet on the Three Worlds Theory on page 56:

"Although Britain, France, West Germany, Japan etc. have been striving to maintain their control and carry on their exploitation of many third world countries by political, economic and other means under new circumstances and in new forms on the whole they no longer constitute the main force dominating and oppressing these countries".

Redfern alleged that this passage means that there are some third world countries which have a second world imperialist power as their main enemy and that we had made an error of rightism in ignoring this.

The fact that a minority of third world countries have a second world power as their main enemy is true, and countries such as Malaya and Zimbabwe are probably examples. Such countries however are an exception to the general situation summed up in the three worlds theory. To a substantial degree the Zimbabwe campaign was deliberately pushed <sup>by Redfern</sup> / as an exception to the three worlds theory.

As for the charge that we had made a rightist error of ignoring such exceptions to the general pattern, the Manifesto states

"In particular the Revolutionary Communist League will oppose all acts of British imperialism exploitation and oppression of other peoples and nations such as those of Ireland Southern Africa".

The record of our propaganda on these questions is certainly not that we ignored them although we should have grasped them more firmly and to that degree there was a rightist error.

However there was an correct understanding in the RCL that by the '70's British imperialism mainly continues its exploitation of the oppressed peoples and nations by indirect neo-colonial means rather than by direct colonial means. Also that British exploitation is increasingly a part of the general imperialist exploitation in which it is both in contention and collusion with many other imperialisms, rather than consisting of cases in which many countries specifically have British imperialism as their main exploiter. It was for this reason that we have at times tried to do the difficult job of educating the working class on the justice of the third world countries demands for a new international economic order. This work is not as dramatic as a campaign of solidarity with a liberation war but it is no less an obligation of proletarian internationalism and in the concrete circumstances that face us it will become even more important.

As for Redfern's charge that we had not paid attention to exceptions we should not apologise for first having tried to grasp the three worlds theory from the point of view of the international proletariat. As the Beijing pamphlet said:

"When we look at a question, we must first grasp its essence and its main aspect and see the actual results as shown by the general balance sheet". (p50) and "We can hardly form correct judgements on international phenomena and make a correct differentiation of the political forces of the world if we adopt an idealistic or metaphysical approach and make abstract, isolated observations instead of proceeding from the international class struggle as a whole and making a concrete analysis of concrete cases at a given time, in a given place and under given conditions", (p5a)

In retrospect we can see that the line of the Zimbabwe campaign as it later unfolded violated this approach quite drastically.

To return to Redfern's major unwritten lead at CC3, he had produced a barrage of economic statistics ignoring the Soviet Union and had emphatically argued that the main enemy of Malaya was British imperialism. This case had been brought to his attention by a discussion with a supporter of the Communist Party of Malaya and he was right that we hadn't considered it before. What is perhaps also significant is that Redfern never bothered to do anything about Malaya subsequently: the main practical purpose of his arguments was solely to increase his prestige as a thoroughgoing revolutionary and by analogy to prepare the ground for the Zimbabwe campaign.

At this point in his speech Redfern stated emphatically that "the main aspect of Britain is that it is an imperialist power. The secondary aspect is that it is oppressed and exploited by the superpowers".

He then went on to launch two surprise attacks, one on the Manifesto and the other on CS, all the more undemocratic in view of his insistence in "Strengthen the League Committee System" that CC members should not make "surprise attacks" on the PC. He arbitrarily asserted that section B of the Manifesto "effectively hands over leadership to the bourgeoisie" and quoted highly selectively from page 6 ignoring passages specifically committing us to combatting British imperialism, in such a manner as to imply we ignored the imperialist nature of Britain. Redfern read out paragraph B11 as if it was a confession of sin, and, with the bravado of a petty-bourgeois revolutionary, declared emphatically "No - the main fact is Britain is an imperialist power!"

CC cdes were not prepared for such an onslaught and did not have copies of the Manifesto to hand to refute these arbitrary attacks point by point. When the present chairman with perfectionist correctness merely indicated to Redfern after his speech that paragraph B12 should be read in conjunction with paragraph B11, Redfern waved with his pencil to indicate that the order of the paragraphs was the decisive point and dismissed the matter. Because of the rigid and mechanical policy of the united face of the PC the present chairman who had been on leave from September to January and had not taken part in discussions on the leading core was unable to draw these passages to the CC's attention.

Even more seriously Redfern had roundly claimed in his speech that "Section B doesn't once mention proletarian internationalism!" This was not even strictly true as can be seen in paragraph B14 but the important fact is that no CC comrade was either prepared or permitted to point out that an attempt had been consciously made to declare the essence of proletarian internationalism in the first point of clause A5 in the section "Fundamental Communist Principles" right at the beginning of the Manifesto as a whole: further that what-ever shortfalls we may come to decide there are in section B, the intention was firmly to write it on the basis of "the common interests of the entire proletarian independently of all nationality" and particularly to pay attention to the British proletariats' contribution to the overall course.

Having launched his surprise attack on our programmatic document (approved only six months before), Redfern launched his surprise attack on CS for which the editor had been completely unprepared except by the SC minute that there had been a rightist tendency in propaganda. Redfern rolled out the statistics again. On the basis of notes that are not quite clear we know him to have claimed that since the Congress out of 15 articles on (the Class Struggle internationally?) only two were on British imperialism abroad. He added that there were two articles on southern Africa which hadn't even mentioned British imperialism. For Redfern the matter was open and shut. He saw no need for the sort of detailed investigation done earlier in this document, which looks at the weaknesses concretely and in context. He never proposed it before or after CC3 and his splittism and disraption delayed it till long after he had gone.

Redfern moved towards the end of his speech by saying "if we persist in this error any longer it must become social chauvinism and not just a right opportunist blemish". This statement was factually true but although it can't be faulted factually it magnifies the seriousness of the error by suggesting our powers of self-criticism and self-correction might suddenly become paralysed. We would indeed become a revisionist organization if we stopped practising self-criticism but it was not the habit of the RCL consciously to persist in errors once it had become aware of them. Indeed it was Redfern's approach at CC3 that severely damaged conscientious practice of self criticism and the careful and scientific summing up of errors and correcting their roots. In this it continued and exacerbated certain incorrect ultra-left idealist aspects which we had imported from the gang of four of "hunting down" errors with ultra left and idealist zeal."

In reply to this major surprise attack several CC comrades said there was some one-sidedness in Redfern's speech of under estimating the importance of the struggle against the two superpowers, particularly Soviet social imperialism. Nevertheless comrades were not in a position to refute the specific charges and some of the mud stuck along with the correct points. No occasion was proposed for studying the charges systematically and collectively. They therefore remained as splittist poison in comrades' minds.

The CS editor in a difficult situation felt obliged in his first contribution to say "We have been suffering from an error of social chauvinism", which in fact went beyond what Redfern claimed. Why? Partly because of an ultra-left emphasis in our past on being bold in self-criticism, which in some circumstances is necessary to emphasise, but in others can create a domineer-effect by which a dogmatic distortion can go through many comrades.

In his second contribution the CS editor spoke again to make a self-criticism for subjectivism for speaking irritably as he recalled it in response to Redfern's unexpected criticisms. This was typical of an ultra left perfectionist and idealist approach to self criticism that affected almost every comrade at one stage or another in the fight with the anti-League faction, including the present chairman. When confronted with Redfern's arrogant attacks the first thing comrades would do was to think what was wrong with themselves. If they were so subjective as to feel any annoyance the very next thing they would do was make a self-criticicism for subjectivism. (This unreal situation severely distorted our inner party life and coupled with over-centralism created conditions whereby the vast majority of good comrades - too good comrades! - were vulnerable to a tiny

minority of comrades who had turned into careerists because of their individualism and ultra-left dogmatist political platform. In this there are close similarities with the experience of the Communist Party of China).

Having made his incorrect self-criticisms the CS editor however made the most coherent political statement at CC3 in reply to Redfern's dogmatic attack. He argued "The principal question is the isolation of the two superpowers. Yet within that international united front the class struggle continues. This is better than saying that the imperialist nature of Britain is the principal aspect and its oppressed nature is the secondary aspect. Our error is that within the international united front we have not struggled enough against our very vacillating enemy".

In replying to the discussion Redfern blandly said he thought there was something to be said for this point and he also made self criticisms for one-sidedness and a tendency to left-opportunism. Redfern as a left-opportunist super-revolutionary made self criticisms as casually as picking his nose. It is fundamentally a deeply opportunist method of work which in fact obstructs genuine self criticisms and we must learn to treat it with derision and contempt. By a perfunctory self-criticism Redfern succeeded in making a show of seeking unity; meanwhile much of the left opportunist mud he had mixed up with the correct points in his opening speech had stuck.

Why so much on this item rather than on the decision to start the Zimbabwe campaign? Because the serious fact is that the decision to start the Zimbabwe campaign taken immediately after this, went through with very little substantive discussion despite the fact that it was an extremely radical departure from all our previous practices. It is hard to escape the conclusion that comrades were influenced by the opportunist line that "Practice is Primary!" in the document "Build the League to Build the Party" approved earlier in the session, but even more by the item just discussed on "Proletarian Internationalism". With a few self-criticisms and in the spirit of reconciliation created by them Redfern had succeeded in effecting a substantial shift in the centre of gravity of our political line.

Guilt was a factor. Redfern had made a series of criticisms which were not only onesided in themselves but had obstructed a serious and scientific self-criticism. Yet in the absence of a scientific self criticism there is an inevitable tendency to operate on the basis of guilt. As the thinking goes, since we are Communists in an imperialist country we must "bend over backwards" never to under-estimate the significance of the struggle of a people oppressed by our own imperialist bourgeoisie. If we can't get the estimate quite right it is safer to over-estimate the significance of the struggle - so the thinking goes. Certainly social chauvinist tendencies within an imperialist country are a serious problem which we must always be vigilant about in our own ranks, nevertheless this type of thinking ends up in practice always tending to overestimate the significance of struggles against your own bourgeoisie: the penalties are so great in terms of guilt for underestimating them it is always safer to over-estimate, with the effect that every democratic discussion will be lopsided. This is none other than the left-opportunist line applied to the international situation that it is safer to be "left" than to be right. And in a situation in which Redfern would launch attacks, frankly it was safer to be "left" than right, as events in the rest of 1978 showed. We could not seek truth from facts on the CC, or PC or in the organization as a whole.

#### MINUTES OF CC3

Not only was no written lead given to CC3 on the important criticisms discussed above but no motion was explicitly put to the vote. This gave still further power to Redfern who was the minute taker. These minutes are another important chapter in the story with important political implications. The minutes read:

#### 3.7.1 Proletarian Internationalism

3.7.1.1 Agreed that there has been a rightist tendency in practice and propaganda to neglect our proletarian internationalist duty to render the fullest possible support to those third world people and countries exploited and oppressed by British imperialism. If not corrected this tendency will become a consolidated social-chauvinism.

3.7.1.2 Agreed that main aspects of Britain is that it is itself an imperialist country. Its aspect of being itself subject to superpower aggression, control and threat is secondary.

3.7.1.3 Agreed that lead by Acting Sec. was one-sided and tended to 'left' opportunism for failing to consider this question in the light of the international united front against superpower hegemonism. Selfcriticism by Acting Sec. for this error.

3.7.1.4. Agreed that in future it is imperative that CS carries regular articles exposing and criticising British imperialism abroad".

The main substance of the first minute was correct in that there had been a rightist tendency not to struggle hard enough against British imperialism internationally in our propaganda. The point about practice is incorrect and the weaknesses here are basically to do with our dogmatic rigidity about mass work.

The statement about "fullest possible" is "left" opportunist idealism which is there to sound good. We can decide to increase or substantially increase a commitment but formulas about "fullest possible" inevitably imply an obligation to do something to the point virtually of physical exhaustion even if it throws other work into disorder. There was indeed definitely an element of throwing the rest of our work into disorder in the Zimbabwe campaign as if unfolded in 1978.

The sentence about "a consolidated social chauvinism" was out of all proportion to the situation - there had been no resistance at all to the correct aspects of the criticisms, and tended to create a climate of alarm and fervour. It also prepared the political climate to justify the splittist attacks Redfern was soon to make.

Finally it must be said that although the first minute does not necessarily state as much, it tends to suggest that proletarian internationalism should be defined primarily in terms of the duty of a proletariat in an oppressor country to support those particular people oppressed by its own imperialist bourgeoisie. This is indeed an important duty of proletarian internationalism in the era of imperialism but it is by no means the sum total of proletarian internationalism, which is a question of being guided by the overall interests of the entire international working class, and also, in the era of imperialism, of the oppressed peoples and nations. The fact that the minute opens the door to a one-sided distortion of proletarian internationalism is linked with the fact that Redfern opportunistically gave a major lead on this subject without attempting to define what <sup>proletarian internationalism</sup> was. The distortion suggested here ran on through 1978.

The second minute is opportunist and is an attack on the three worlds theory. In essence it is a two worlds theory that as far as we must be concerned the primary division in the world is between oppressor and oppressed nations. This minute more concisely than anything else sums up the "left" opportunist line on the international situation which held sway in the RCL in 1978 throughout the Zimbabwe campaign.

It was opportunist of Redfern as minutes secretary to attempt to write this formula into the decisions of the CC although it had not been formally considered and voted on. It was even more opportunist of him to write this, in view of the fact that he had said in his reply to the debate that there was some merit in looking at the question in terms of the need to increase our struggle against British imperialism in the context of building the broadest possible international united front against hegemonism. He even deceptively said in a splittist polemical document of 2.3.78 circulated in the PC, "I agree with the point made at the CC that looking at this problem from the point of view of what is the main aspect of British imperialism is not very helpful, and that we should instead see British imperialism internationally as an enemy that we struggle against in the course of struggle against superpower hegemonism. This is consistent with the view that the second world countries can 'be united with'". Typically Redfern never repeated this remark later or did anything to facilitate serious discussion of this point. How true the saying that you can never catch an opportunist with a formula'!

Meanwhile he had attempted and succeeded in writing into CC minutes a formula that had not been systematically discussed on the CC. It is typical of the opportunist superficiality on the PC at the time and its dogmatic readiness to support ultra left positions and wave aside the need for any further discussion that the PC approved and endorsed Redfern's attempt. At the following PC the chairman protested at the minutes and managed to force a vote but only on the question of accuracy not of content. The voting was 4:1 in favour of stating that the opportunist formula was CC policy. With a guilty conscience Redfern brazened it out by getting inserted in the PC minutes "The political line of this CC minute is correct and it is in conformity with the Manifesto, but no formal vote was taken on this issue".

How come the tide should flow so strongly on the PC in support of an opportunist decision like this that the chairman was at best able to force a vote only on accuracy and not on content? One answer is that "Build the League to Build the Party" had just been passed with Redfern's opportunist line that "Practice is primary and you don't have to think about the line you are practising so long as you do it with revolutionary haste and fervour"! With this sort of approach, serious thought about our lines was stigmatized as introspection in Party-building - a deeply opportunist position, which nevertheless has plausibility because we had in fact made perfectionist errors in overstressing discipline and ideological correctness.

The other reason was that the "leftist" train of thinking was running strongly on the PC. It would have been impossible at that time for any rightist formula to have been inserted into the minutes as an authentic record of CC views as easily as this formula was.

The overwhelming majority of PC comrades considered the formula to be self-evidently correct and the question of whether it had been arrived at in a principled way of quite secondary importance. Indeed they considered that to deny this formula was in itself a sign of ideological weakness towards British imperialism. But is the formula correct? The answer depends on from what point of view you are talking. "The main aspect of Britain is that it is itself an imperialist country. Its aspect of being itself subject to superpower aggression, control and threat is secondary." The "main aspect" from what point of view? "Secondary" from what point of view?

The statement smacks of a number of dogmatic, pretentious, pseudo-dialectical statements produced by Redfern at this time, particularly in the document, "Build the League to Build the Party" ("Internal Bolshevization is principal over mass work in the movement generally." "In the spirit of having contempt for difficulties we must grasp firmly that cadres are the principal aspect of this contradiction." - "principal" from what point of view?) Actually this similarity to other pompous statements gives the clue to Redfern's own approach. His point of view was one of dogmatic pretentiousness: a statement was useful to him only to the extent that it enabled him to strike a pose in order to impress, intimidate or bully less confident and more honest comrades. Like the gang of four he was quite pragmatic about which concepts he found it convenient to seize on and brandish as holy dogma. From such a point of view the statement opportunistically recorded as CC policy was strong magic. By its own definition it was very difficult for anybody to disagree with it without themselves being guilty of "social chauvinism". This would explain why the chairman's attempt to get the formula properly debated should have been so firmly squashed. This statement served Redfern's "left" opportunist pragmatism well.

From the point of view of honest revolutionary practice, however, the statement shows a complete divorce of theory from practice. As a pair of sentences in isolation they cannot be disagreed with, although they could be more concrete about exploitation and oppression. But the Manifesto is already clear that Britain is one of the most reactionary of the second world imperialist powers, so why repeat the point in a new form so dogmatically and in isolation from other crucial concepts? In isolation they cannot be disagreed with; but that is the point: we cannot take sentences in isolation and build a policy on them alone. We have to take all propositions in the context of the real world, one in which for example the people and countries of the third world are rising, and the two superpowers, especially the Soviet Union are preparing for a new world war.

Taken in isolation, in the opportunist way they were presented, these sentences

inevitably imply that we should mainly see international affairs as divided into two worlds between oppressor and oppressed nations, and that the main thrust of our international coverage should be to expose Britain as an oppressor nation. It is inevitably contrary to the three worlds strategy. It implies that instead of finding all sorts of ways to lead people to press that Britain joins the third world in the broadest possible united front against the hegemonism and war policies of the two superpowers, the main thrust of our international coverage should be to show that Britain is an enemy of the third world and is in the same camp of enemies of the third world as the US and the Soviet Union. In other words, by dogmatically attempting to substitute an isolated two-sentence dogma for the whole analysis of the strategic situation summed up in the three worlds theory, the position was in fact making it more difficult internationally to expose the most dangerous enemy of the international working class, the Soviet Union. And this was done with great "leftist" revolutionary pretensions in the name of proletarian internationalism..! Who says now that it is safer to be "left" than to be right, if such a bias within a revolutionary organization can contribute to making us so vulnerable to such opportunism?

#### POLICY RESOLUTIONS ON ZIMBABWE

As in the CC item on the Zimbabwe campaign there was again little discussion at the February PC 7, when the first PC policy resolution on Zimbabwe was adopted. As well as the ideological factors leading to this that have already been noted, it must also be said that this resolution, drafted by Redfern with a deceptive show of all-sidedness does appear to put the Zimbabwean struggle in the context of the three worlds theory. It reads:

"We salute the heroic struggle of the people of Zimbabwe, led by ZANU and the Patriotic Front, against British and US imperialism and their puppet Smith. We are convinced that the armed struggle of the Zimbabwean people will soon be victorious and will thus shake even further the edifice of British imperialism. This victory will be an inspiration and a spur to the further development of the struggle of the people of the whole of southern Africa against British and US imperialism.

We are also confident that the people of Zimbabwe will, while expelling the British and US imperialists by the front door, guard against Soviet social-imperialism entering by the back door.

We fully support the revolutionary dual tactics of ZANU and the Patriotic Front in waging struggle both by armed struggle and peaceful negotiations, whilst having no illusions that liberation can be gained peacefully.

We condemn the farce of the 'internal settlement' as a desperate attempt by the British and US imperialists to prolong their rule. We condemn the activities of any traitors who go over to the side of imperialism or social-imperialism."

Although this resolution at times reads more like a solidarity message than a resolution guiding our policy, it appears to be fairly strong. Above all it attempts to integrate the particular situation of Zimbabwe and of ourselves with the overall strategy of the three worlds. The formula "British and US imperialism" which is used four times, combines particularly exposing the role of British imperialism with targeting one of the superpowers.

The references to Soviet social-imperialism could have been stronger and spelt out its strategic goals in southern Africa in its rivalry with US imperialism. They should also have spelt out what stand we should take on this in our propaganda and not spoken only of what the Zimbabwean people should do about it. However at the time the resolution was moved it was reasonable to assume that these references would have given adequate opportunities for hitting the Soviet Union in the context of Zimbabwe.

A political weakness of the resolution was its definition of Smith as a "puppet". Although Muzorewa was a puppet, Smith was not a puppet but an agent, who had more of an independent power base of his own in the white racist colonialists, and had been both in contention and collusion with British imperialism for many years. The political effect of calling him a puppet is to portray British imperialism as more powerful than it is. The implication is that British

imperialism is typically capable of still oppressing in a direct colonialist way as in the 1950's, instead of having been forced in general to attempt to exploit and oppress by indirect neo-colonial means.

It is quite true that British imperialism acquiesced and colluded in UDI and in many ways encouraged the white colonialists. But on the other hand British imperialism has also tried to organize a neo-colonial settlement, correctly calculating that this would be more stable. Smith repeatedly frustrated these attempts in a very lively manner for a puppet! The metaphysical type of analysis that presented Smith as a puppet excluded shades of grey. This line could produce vivid agitational material denouncing British imperialism, but it inevitably miseducated workers and revolutionary people to see the balance of forces in the world as if they were such as existed twenty years ago prior to the development of the line up of forces summed up in the great strategic theory of the three worlds.

Another weakness of the resolution is in saying that the armed struggle of the Zimbabwean people will "soon" be victorious. This clearly refers to the struggle against British imperialism and its agents, and blinds people to the fact that the struggle for genuine liberation will come under severe tests from the two superpowers, particularly the Soviet Union. It too is metaphysical. Like describing Smith as a puppet, this approach paints too simple a revolutionary picture. While this is effective in mobilising people to support an important liberation struggle, it opportunistically miseducates them about the overall truth of the situation, and can hardly be called principled.

However there was little discussion about the resolution and no discussion of these points.

Astonishingly in retrospect, this item of policy on Zimbabwe was taken at quite a different point in the PC agenda from discussion of the Zimbabwe campaign. As a result the campaign was discussed without clear reference to our policies and analysis of the situation in Zimbabwe. In introducing the item on the campaign Redfern merely gave two general reasons for it:-

1. "Imbuing the working class with the spirit of proletarian internationalism."
2. "The particular importance of the struggle in Zimbabwe."

In the light of later events this presentation can be seen to illustrate Redfern's tendency to take Zimbabwe out of the context of the three worlds situation and to imply that proletarian internationalism was somehow separate from implementing the three worlds strategy.

During the item on the campaign the present chairman specifically said he felt he too should support the decision to have a Zimbabwe campaign; having been on leave for four months he felt out of touch with the situation in the League and considered he should be guided by the comrades who had been carrying on the work at the centre. It must therefore be recorded that all leading comrades supported the Zimbabwe campaign. The chairman's statement was probably unnecessary and probably over-estimated the extent to which Redfern was in touch with the situation and he himself was out of touch. By yielding to the moral pressure to support the Zimbabwe campaign regardless of objective circumstances, he contributed to the dogmatist atmosphere that later made it difficult to discuss the campaign democratically, and which Redfern tried to use in his bid to cause a split.

The fact that Redfern's all-sidedness in the resolution drafted on Zimbabwe was feigned, soon became apparent in a very sharp form. In the course of another item he declared that British imperialism is the main enemy of the people of Zimbabwe. The chairman corrected him and pointed out that the resolution passed earlier in the session had not said that.

Redfern flew into a fierce rage and insisted that it did. The chairman ruled it did not and stressed the importance of collective decisions not being violated arbitrarily at the whim of an individual. Redfern, unable to find a clear statement in the resolution confirming his claim, made an incredible attack on the democratic-centralist principle of taking a collective decision after collective debate by arrogantly claiming that the resolution should be interpreted

as stating that British imperialism is the main enemy of the people of Zimbabwe, "because I said it in my introduction!"

The chairman persisted in ruling that we did not have a resolution stating that British imperialism was the main enemy of the Zimbabwe people and that any motion to this effect would have to be moved separately and debated on its merits before being collectively voted on.

Redfern then made an unprecedented charge in the history of the CC that the chairman was being dishonest. This, in the first meeting at which the chairman had returned from leave to full membership was a clear indication of the extent to which Redfern was prepared to go to force a split and his political ruthlessness to anyone who dared to stand up to his individualism.

PD's response was also instructive for the future and indicative of the balance of forces on the PC. He merely said with studied neutrality: "That is a serious charge, a charge which should not be made lightly", thereby implying that we should take the charge seriously and focus on the question of the honesty of the chairman rather than on upholding the orderly and principled collective leadership of the PC. No other comrade denounced the gross sectarianism of Redfern and the chairman out of perfectionist and idealist selflessness did not demand it be withdrawn then and there. He concentrated on insisting that collective decisions should not be arbitrarily interpreted according to the whim of individuals, and won the point in a modified form by proposing that the question of organizing a further resolution be referred to the new standing committee. This was accepted as the only way out.

The standing committee in turn accepted that there had to be a serious debate at the next PC on a motion on who was the main enemy of the Zimbabwean people. This was a major victory against the highly opportunist practice which Redfern had introduced of deciding questions on the basis of the immediate impressions of a majority, quite contrary to our previous custom in the RCL. The practice was an attack on democratic centralism and was not democratic at all. It was inseparably connected with Redfern's "left" opportunist and dogmatist line.

The fact that a serious debate was held at all at the March PC was itself a major victory against opportunism. But the actual content of the debate - who is the main enemy of the Zimbabwean people - was not an ideal one for exposing Redfern's left opportunist tendencies on Zimbabwe. However it was necessary to go into this question thoroughly in order to show how unprincipled it was of Redfern to claim the right to pronounce on our collective policy on the basis of his individual whim and "because I said it in my introduction".

#### THE MARCH 1978 PC

Prior to the meeting the chairman circulated a paper arguing that the resolution passed in February was adequate for us to get on with Zimbabwe work and that we should not adopt a formula on who is the main enemy of the people of Zimbabwe. He affirmed 1. that in propaganda work on Zimbabwe we must pay special attention to hitting British imperialism hard, and 2. that it is correct to say that British imperialism gets the largest part of the exploitation of the people of Zimbabwe. However "neither of these points automatically means that British imperialism is 'the main enemy of the people of Zimbabwe'."

The paper went on: "We must be ready to look at the question from its main different aspects. The people of Zimbabwe have a number of different enemies. Some are more immediate than others, and some are more dangerous than others. In order of obviousness the enemies of the people of Zimbabwe are:

1. the racist colonialists,
2. British imperialism,
3. US imperialism,
4. Soviet social-imperialism.

But in order of dangerousness to the people of Zimbabwe the list is almost exactly the reverse of this! Therefore we should be prudent before deciding a formula on what is the "main" enemy of the Zimbabwean people."

The spirit of these arguments - that there should be all round consideration - was correct. However it did not go far enough. It inevitably accepted that the

terms in which we present propaganda to British workers should depend primarily on what the actual situation was in Zimbabwe. Important as it is to study this, such a view is wrong. The primary consideration in how to present Zimbabwe to British workers should be based on the significance of Zimbabwe within the whole international situation. Failing to do this fails to educate British workers in the all round spirit of proletarian internationalism on the overall interests of the international working class and the oppressed peoples and nations, and instead chops the question up into isolated cases.

This is not to deny that the question of who is the main enemy of the people of Zimbabwe should be taken seriously. It should. But there is an even more important question that should influence our selection and reporting of all particular international struggles - who is the main enemy of the people of the world.

The chairman's paper continued by saying: "We should get on with Zimbabwe work, and the resolution that was passed is quite adequate as a general orientation to let us do so vigorously. But to be clear-cut - if we were to attempt a statement on who is the "main enemy" of the Zimbabwean people, for my money it should be: "the two superpowers, with the Soviet Union the more dangerous". That was the case in Angola, and in the long run it is very likely to turn out to be the case in Zimbabwe and Azania."

The argument that the February resolution was adequate for guiding our propaganda and agitation was a correct one but not a reason for refusing to take a collective stand on who is the main enemy of the people of Zimbabwe. The latter part of the chairman's argument confused several questions: "who is the immediate main enemy of the Zimbabwean people?", and "who is the long term main enemy of the Zimbabwean people?" And it confused both of these with who is the main enemy of the people of the world. In general we should define the main enemy as the one the revolutionary forces are fighting at any particular time.

Redfern had replied with a document provocatively entitled "The People are the Real Heroes, Not the Bourgeoisie!", which was an all round sectarian and splittist attack on the chairman. In the section on Zimbabwe he sweepingly replied to the point about Angola, "It's absurd to say that Portugese colonialism was not the main enemy of the people of Angola and Mozambique ... (the chairman) pours intellectualist scorn on the heroic fighters against Portugese imperialism."

Objectively attacking the three worlds theory he dogmatically and metaphysically stated, "British imperialism has no historically progressive role to play in the world today."

After striking a pose in order to intimidate by quoting an impressive array of selected economic statistics, he then attacked the democratic spirit of seeking truth from facts in a democratic discussion with this sort of mixture of splittist lies and "left" opportunist blackmail:

"the levity with which (the chairman) is willing to jettison the special responsibility of British communists to fight against British imperialist exploitation and oppression of the oppressed nations is an error of social-chauvinism." (The chairman's) "line that we should not take a decision on this is in practice not to say British imperialism is the main enemy of Zimbabwe when in fact it is. It is therefore throwing overboard proletarian internationalism."

The atmosphere set for the debate at the March PC therefore was not one in which the PC in a spirit of proletarian democracy could seek truth from facts and consider the question in an all-round way. In addition to all these points so far reported, at the first meeting of the new Standing Committee held in February, Redfern had furiously denounced the chairman for "monstrous and disgusting social-chauvinism", had walked out of the meeting and had refused to return. This too was unprecedented in the history of the RCL. Although Redfern subsequently completely withdrew his criticism the whole incident was a warning to comrades about how determined and ferocious he was prepared to be against anything he could label as social chauvinism. There was no problem of over-centralism threatening democratic debate among the five comrades attending the March PC (the Standing Committee had specifically been excluded from having a united face to the PC). It was ultra-left dogmatism and sectarianism that destroyed the possibility of a situation in which comrades could have a democratic and all sided discussion on

(cont.)

who we should name as the main enemy of the people of Zimbabwe.

Redfern presented the following three part draft minute to the PC. It was subsequently approved unamended by majority vote and it became the justification for the "left" opportunist line on Zimbabwe:

1. British imperialism, although declining rapidly, is still the main enemy of the people of Zimbabwe. Its military and political ability to maintain its control is very weak. US imperialism is both contending and colluding with British imperialism in southern Africa and may well quickly become the main enemy in that area. Whilst struggling to expel the British and US wolves through the front door, the people of Zimbabwe must prevent the Soviet tiger entering by the back door.

2. The recently announced 'internal settlement' in Zimbabwe is an attempt to engineer a neo-colonial settlement and set up a black puppet government subservient to the interests of British and US imperialism. Only the Patriotic Front truly represents the people of Zimbabwe. We demand that the British government recognises the Patriotic Front as the sole legal representative of the Zimbabwean people and hands over political and military control to the Patriotic Front.

3. Slogans for the current stage of the struggle in Zimbabwe:

1. British imperialism out of Zimbabwe!
2. Only the Patriotic Front represents Zimbabwe!
3. Power to the Patriotic Front! "

The struggle at the PC focussed only on the first part, which was an error.

The chairman had moved two amendments to paragraph 1. The first was to change "main enemy" in line one to "main exploiter", but also to insert after the first sentence, "To teach the British working class concretely about proletarian internationalism, we must put particular emphasis in propaganda and agitational work about Zimbabwe on opposing British imperialism." The second was to delete the phrase in line four about US imperialism, "and may well quickly become the main enemy in that area", substituting instead, "and potentially is much stronger than British imperialism". At the end of the paragraph he moved the following: "Although from the point of view of the next 5 or 10 years US and Soviet social-imperialism are the main enemies of the people of Zimbabwe, with Soviet social-imperialism by far the more dangerous, at present we will not adopt a specific formula on the "main enemy of the people of Zimbabwe" but use formulas as in PC minute 7.1, which are in conformity with ZANU's own formula that "the immediate enemy is imperialism represented in Zimbabwe by British and American economic interests"."

In speaking to the motion Redfern's main logical argument was that "we in general decide who is the main enemy on the basis of exploitation." In essence this position was a very simplistic and mechanical one. By building on the fact that comrades did not contest that British imperialism was the main exploiter of the people of Zimbabwe he sought to imply in a crude way that it should automatically be named as the main enemy. (This argument appears to have weighed most heavily with PD who said in his contribution that "we should state British imperialism is the main enemy primarily because of the economic facts".)

In his contribution Redfern also presented the arbitrarily illogical argument that Britain should be named as the main enemy of the people of Zimbabwe because it was very weak: "It is precisely because the British imperialists are the weakest link in the chain that (the Zimbabwean people) have to break", he said. Such sloppy use of self-contradictory unthought-out arguments by a leading comrade is a basic sign of opportunism.

More central to his main political line, Redfern argued that "British imperialist exploitation in the world is probably second only to that of the superpowers. It is essential therefore that we strike hard against British imperialism as the main enemy of the Zimbabwean people. This argument reveals how Redfern was attacking the three worlds theory. Instead of trying to increase our struggle against British imperialism within the context of the three worlds theory, he was trying to find an example where Britain was the main enemy - an exception

to the general pattern - and focus our main attention internationally on that exception.

His contribution was laced with blackmail and splittist statements which were not only attacks on the chairman but attacks on the possibility of the committee as a whole taking a democratic and all-sided decision. He arbitrarily charged that for the chairman "to want not to say British imperialism is the main enemy without investigation is an error of social-chauvinism!" (Implicitly a threat to all other comrades too.) Even more arbitrarily he flaunted splittist suspicions by declaring, "I think (the chairman) wants to let British imperialism off the hook", and even compared him to Khrushchev: "similarly to Khrushchev he thinks the rivalry between the imperialist powers has been consummated".

Another comrade moved an alternative amendment to replace the first sentence of the motion with a statement that "British and US imperialism are still the main enemy of the people of Zimbabwe". (It should be said that this comrade prior to CC3 had on the then Standing Committee made criticisms of the one-sidedness of Redfern's approach in criticising the League's rightist weaknesses in combating British imperialism.) This amendment would have had the merit of the February resolution of combining strong blows against British imperialism with blows against at least one of the superpowers. By extension it would then have permitted us to open up more in the future about the extremely important strategic question of superpower rivalry in southern Africa. In moving the amendment this comrade welcomed the approach to the struggle but argued that Redfern's figures were not conclusive and that it was likely that US imperialism had already displaced British imperialism as the main exploiter of Zimbabwe. Perhaps inevitably however, the contribution was not a sufficiently effective counterweight to Redfern's dogmatic and arbitrary left opportunism.

All amendments were defeated by majority vote and the resolution was approved with four votes to one abstention, as subsequently circulated to all comrades. Since it provided the justification for Redfern's left opportunist distortion of the Zimbabwe campaign it requires closer attention than the biased discussion at PC 8 gave it.

The third sentence of the first paragraph is deceptive. The image used by the Chinese propagandists at that time about wolves and tigers was a vivid image. However Redfern used it here as a clever substitute for a serious consideration of the policy we should adopt towards social-imperialism's schemes for dominating southern Africa. The phrase blandly says, "the people of Zimbabwe must prevent the Soviet tiger entering by the backdoor", and thereby neatly sidesteps any statement about what we should tell our section of the international working class about the schemes of our most dangerous international enemy.

The second paragraph was not struggled over at all. In retrospect the overwhelming stress given on upholding the unity of the Patriotic Front must be seen as a weakness. While we should certainly support the Zimbabwean people as a whole and should in general uphold the Patriotic Front so long as this is the wish of the genuine liberation fighters, practice has shown that it is extremely difficult to write anything in CS which effectively exposes the threat from Soviet social-imperialism if we uphold the unity of the Patriotic Front in a fetishistic and dogmatic way. Certainly we want to expose how British imperialism has often tried to split the Patriotic Front but it is also necessary to show how Soviet imperialism is infiltrating the Patriotic Front for its own purposes with the aim of hijacking the liberation struggle.

Redfern however, made a dogmatic fetish of the unity of the Patriotic Front. In fact in his introduction to the resolution he gave as one of his arguments, "We must not exacerbate the contradictions in the Patriotic Front by naming the US and the Soviet Union as the main enemy of the people of Zimbabwe." So by having a dogmatic position about the Patriotic Front he attempted to restrict our ability to expose what is the long term most dangerous enemy of the Zimbabwean people.

The third section of the resolution on slogans was however where the PC was collectively most negligent in not discussing the resolution closely. These slogans did nothing to integrate our work on Zimbabwe with longer term education on the three worlds theory. They are, bluntly, a two worlds line!

Later in the meeting Redfern scored a further success in arbitrarily attacking and chopping up our all round understanding of the international situation by once again, as at the February PC, succeeding in separating the discussion on political line from the Zimbabwe campaign itself: the campaign was discussed several hours later on the agenda. (Part of Redfern's businesslike classification of subjects into organization and politics!) This separation of theory and practice enabled Redfern to ensure that the line implemented in the Zimbabwe campaign in fact moved even further from the overall strategic concept of the three worlds and towards a two worlds orientation.

Thus in opening on the campaign item itself he particularly emphasized that it is "essential we point out the common class enemy of the British working class and the Zimbabwean people" - British imperialism.

In summing up Redfern said with a deceptive show of broad-mindedness, "I feel there is a danger of seeing proletarian internationalism as only supporting struggles against British imperialism. For example struggling for Britain to be independent from the Soviet Union is part of proletarian internationalism". However he went on to say, "But in my view the kernel of proletarian internationalism is supporting the nations oppressed by your own imperialism". And this was the "kernel" of Redfern's position on proletarian internationalism, and how he distorted the Zimbabwe campaign into a weapon against the theory of the three worlds by so overstressing a passage from Lenin that he had torn out of context as dogmatically and opportunistically as Lin Biao brandished isolated quotes of Mao Zedong.

In the name of proletarian internationalism he attacked proletarian internationalism. By seizing one important aspect of it and exalting this above all others in a metaphysical, "left" opportunist, self-righteously "revolutionary" way, he attacked out duty to educate the working class on the interests of the entire international working class. This left opportunist line was a more deceptive, treacherous and effective attack on the true spirit of proletarian internationalism than any frontal attack could have been! Is it really safer to be "left" than to be right? Should we not guard against both "left" and right opportunism?

Democratic discussion in the spirit of seeking truth from facts had been damaged on the PC by left opportunist dogmatism and sectarianism. However after this the over-centralist distortions in our system of democratic-centralism substantially weakened the possibilities for more all-sided consideration of the PC line by comrades at other levels. Because of the policy of the united face of the PC to the CC, no minority views on the question were recorded in the PC minutes for the reference of CC comrades. Another very important factor was that no CC meeting was called between January and June at which the issue might have been ventilated. The fact that the details of the development of our political line on Zimbabwe is so much a question of the positions taken by five individuals is an illustration of the over-centralism in the RCL at this time.

All these were factors which greatly helped Redfern's left opportunist dogmatist line on Zimbabwe rapidly to establish itself in the RCL. His overwhelming stress on British imperialism soon became apparent in practice, and any all-sidedness in the PC policy resolutions was swept away in what was to be the main focus of our international work for at least the next six months.

Coverage in CS in the First Half of 1978

The last issue of CS with the old policy on British imperialism occurred in February. It had a page long article reporting Patriotic Front war successes against the racist forces with only patchy exposure of British and US imperialist economic control.

The March issue showed a significant change with 1½ militant pages devoted to Zimbabwe. The propaganda article exposed British and US imperialism on the internal settlement in accordance with the generally correct line of the PC resolution of February.

The April issue launched the Zimbabwe campaign proper with a double spread that followed the PC line as amended in March. This key issue devoted its blows overwhelmingly at British imperialism, thus setting the tone for the campaign. This was true also of the chairman's article written under the watchful eye of Redfern. In the centre spread there were only two references to US imperialism, only one to the superpowers, and no specific reference at all to the most dangerous enemy of the international working class and oppressed peoples and nations, the Soviet Union. This was despite the fact that the two-page feature announced that one of the purposes of the campaign was "to develop the spirit of working class internationalism".

The May issue showed the same picture. Again there was no mention of Soviet social-imperialism or of super-power rivalry in the two pages again devoted to Zimbabwe. While these articles were certainly valuable in redressing the weakness of giving insufficient attention to British imperialism in southern Africa, they had gone so overwhelmingly in the other direction that the main emphasis of CS's international coverage had become British imperialism. Thus the main thrust of the paper nationally was against the British monopoly capitalist class, while the main thrust of the paper internationally had become against the British imperialist class (the same class in its two different aspects). This was certainly a very militant line from the point of view of the British working class, but where did the interests of the international working class, independent of nationality, figure in this orientation?

The June issue of CS showed signs of the CS editorial committee struggling to use what initiative they could to put international coverage in the context of our overall line of supporting the three worlds strategy. While Redfern had arrogantly and arbitrarily forbidden the editor to edit his left opportunist article on Zaire (see discussion document on Zaire), the editorial committee had put it in the context of a larger article entitled "Superpowers Struggle to Dominate Africa". Originally this large article had been specifically planned by the comrades of the editorial committee to put the Zimbabwe campaign in context, but when Redfern's Zaire article appeared, they changed plans and used the large article to place the Zaire article in a more all sided context. Almost certainly a correct initiative in the circumstances but it unavoidably delayed the process of integrating the Zimbabwe campaign into our three worlds orientation. A whole page in that June issue was devoted to Zimbabwe, including advertising Redfern's speaking tour. In this page British imperialism was exclusively the only imperialism attacked.

Zimbabwe Pamphlet

The June CS advertised a new RCL pamphlet entitled "Zimbabwe - The Struggle Against British Imperialism". This pamphlet was produced by honest comrades on the London DC. They had already raised a number of important and correct criticisms of organizational aspects of the Zimbabwe campaign. Despite this and continuing reservations, they and other comrades in London had acted energetically to try to fulfill the call of the campaign. In fact, significant amount of the hard work of the campaign was born by these comrades, not by Redfern. Perhaps because they had already raised a number of important criticisms and were concentrating on centralist discipline, and because, like the chairman in the April issue of CS, they were being watched closely by Redfern, this pamphlet illustrates strikingly the strengths and weaknesses of the political line of the Zimbabwe campaign and the extent to which Redfern had suc-

ceeded in imposing his leftist deviation on our international work.

The twelve-side pamphlet was produced at the comrades' own initiative. Selling at only 5 p a copy, it was useful for comrades in all parts of the country. It was a strong agitational weapon effectively arousing hatred against British imperialism with many lively concrete facts. It is lucidly written; the different sections hang together and successfully end up by focussing the reader's attention on the importance of supporting the campaign. These are significant strengths which were valuable then and which we will want to use even more in the future.

The political line however followed the March PC resolution. It is directed overwhelmingly against British imperialism, while US imperialism is presented in a secondary light (even though the "Anglo-American Initiative" was fundamentally an American initiative). With hindsight what is far worse is that Soviet social-imperialism got only one passing sentence in 12 pages:

"Waiting in the wings is the other superpower - the Soviet Union, on a world scale the most dangerous enemy of the world's peoples."

Then the text returns without a further thought to its theme of hitting British imperialism.

With hindsight it is possible to see the opportunism of this line. If the Soviet Union really is the most dangerous enemy of the world's people, why does it get only one sentence in a twelve page pamphlet? Why with out limited resources was the main focus of our international work being directed so exclusively against British imperialism that we ended up with the most dangerous enemy of the international working class getting only a passing sentence? And it is a passing sentence: the effect of the qualifying phrase, "on a world scale" is to imply that while this is true on a world scale, as far as Zimbabwe is concerned we can ignore it and get on with the more revolutionary work of combating British imperialism.

The comrades who wrote this were not opportunists - far from it - but there was opportunism involved in this line for which the responsibility must be laid at Redfern's door, but which none of us was sufficiently vigilant about. With hindsight we can see that this opportunist line was all the more deceptive and dangerous through having a "left" revolutionary appearance. It must also be said that the comrades were obliged to write within the limits of the PC line and that the tactical problems of exposing social-imperialism on Zimbabwe are substantial. But this illustrates again the left-opportunist way Redfern set out to use the whole Zimbabwe campaign to attack the three worlds strategy, and just how low our vigilance was against this left opportunist line in practice, despite all the criticisms we had studied in our heads refuting the ultra-left stand of the Party of Labour of Albania.

The pamphlet frankly ignores the three worlds theory (and thereby objectively played into Redfern's desire to attack the theory). There is no conception or hint in it that as a result of the victories of peoples' struggles, the second world countries such as Britain, could be brought to a more progressive position against the superpowers. Certainly it is important to hit British imperialism hard, but the lesson given by the pamphlet is that its class nature means that it is always and under all circumstances to be ranked as the enemy in international class struggle. This is metaphysical and ultra-leftist.

A recurring theme in the pamphlet are references to "the world wide system of Imperialism" and "the world-wide system of exploitation - Imperialism". There were perhaps some tactical reasons for this: a simplification in order to get across a fundamental point about imperialism in what was an agitational pamphlet. Possibly also a cautious attempt to broaden out beyond the strict limits of targeting only British imperialism. Nevertheless theoretically it is wrong and minimises the importance of one of the fundamental contradictions in the world which plays a major part in the three worlds theory - that is, the contradiction between different imperialisms. Without understanding this fundamental contradiction it is impossible to grasp why the two superpowers are in deadly rivalry and why the lesser imperialist powers of the second world,

although still imperialist, have significantly different interests from the first world. Emphasis on the world system of imperialism by contrast tends to educate people to think that imperialism is primarily one monolithic system of exploitation and oppression (an impression re-inforced by strangely giving imperialism and imperialists a capital "I" throughout the pamphlet - perhaps not accidentally). Such a bit of agitation and propaganda tends to educate workers to think in terms of a broad international united front against imperialism rather than to understand that what is even more crucial at present is the broadest possible international united front against the hegemonism of the two superpowers. It is in fact no exaggeration to say that the left opportunist line on the Zimbabwe campaign was implicitly one of putting the main emphasis on building an international united front against imperialism, an ultra-left position.

One other more specific point about this pamphlet. On page 4 it states:

"ZANU was now clearly committed to the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought."

ZANU is a heroic liberation movement with deep roots among the masses, and clearly a significant number of leading comrades have read parts of Mao. Nevertheless it is not a vanguard Marxist-Leninist Party, nor does it have a vanguard Marxist-Leninist Party operating within it. In fact it muddles up the role of a vanguard party and a mass movement in a way that causes it a number of problems. On another vital practical question there is considerable confusion in ZANU about the stage of the revolution and a tendency to call what must be a national democratic stage a socialist stage.

The point is not to say we should tell ZANU how to run their struggle: only the Zimbabwean people are able through many cycles of trial and error to integrate the general truths of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the revolution. The point is that there was a certain tendency among our comrades, which Redfern fanned and exploited, to over-estimate just how politically strong ZANU is and to put it on a pedestal. This too was metaphysical.

This metaphysical distortion was the other side of the coin to the rather metaphysical handling of British imperialism. The Zimbabwe campaign as a result came across very vividly in a stark black and white manner: ZANU versus British imperialism. There is a lot that is correct in this and which we should uphold, but the metaphysical tendency to over-simplify in very stark black and white terms cannot be said to be correct. While in the short term it presents a strong political line that comrades and supporters can identify quickly, and support strongly and enthusiastically, it does not educate people to understand in a more all-round way some of the complexities of the situation and the contradictions involved. It would make it difficult for them to understand at another time why we support the broadest possible international united front against hegemonism, and why in due course the Soviet Union is going to have some short term success in penetrating not only ZAPU but also ZANU. Such a metaphysical distortion in brief has an element of opportunism in it: for the sake of short term advantage in rousing people's feelings, we sacrifice some of the longer term interest of educating them in a more all round way about the international situation. From this longer term view it has to be said that to some degree the Zimbabwe campaign opportunistically mis-educated comrades and supporters.

#### Counter Attack on Political Line

At the May PC when the chairman had criticised the fact that the article in the May CS entitled "Divisive Plots are Met by Bullets" had not specifically named US imperialism, Redfern has arbitrarily interrupted him and claimed that this was "the line of the CC". No CC had met since January and this statement illustrated how arrogantly Redfern was prepared to abuse the name of the CC and distort its position. However by June conditions had matured for a limited counter attack against Redfern's left opportunist distortions of our international line.

In this counter attack tactics played a necessary but also a regrettable

part. The chairman who had tried most strenuously at the March PC to resist Redfern's attempts to switch our emphasis internationally overwhelmingly to opposing British imperialism, had been in a minority of one in the amendment he had moved on the "main enemy"; on the content of the formula about the main enemy probably correctly so, but in the spirit of vigilance against Redfern's leftist one-sidedness, not. Subsequent months had shown the correctness of this vigilance, and the extent to which Redfern was prepared to distort our international line. Nevertheless very careful consideration of the position moved in the counter<sup>was necessary</sup> attack to avoid being isolated again. This was all the more so because Redfern's wild sectarian statements had become openly splittist. The situation was increasingly confusing and serious and it was even more necessary to think carefully tactically in order to unite comrades round a correct position.

The chairman circulated a paper called "Integrate the Zimbabwe Solidarity Campaign with the Struggle Against the Two Superpowers". This made sharp and correct criticisms of Redfern's opportunism in the text. However it proposed a motion for voting on that did no more than change the slogans of the Zimbabwe campaign from ones directed exclusively against British imperialism and proposed amending the description of Smith as a puppet to an "agent" of British and US imperialism. In other words the motion liberally failed to call on comrades to support correct principles and instead appeared almost a matter of detail.

At the June session of the PC Redfern actually explicitly stated (although with a deceptive tone of objectivity) "I think there is some evidence that in our present situation it is better to be 'left' than to be right." (The clearest an underlying theme ever came out.) However despite this lop-sided, dogmatic and opportunist approach to political line, when it came to the motion of the Zimbabwe slogans, he was fundamentally unable to resist the proposal to amend them. Thinking discretion the better part of valour, he therefore restricted himself to trying to refute some of the chairman's criticisms, and actually supported the new slogans in an amended form.

Two points he made were particularly revealing. He stressed "I think the yardstick of an internationalist campaign is whether it opposes British imperialism and helps revolution in Britain". This reveals that under the leftist super-revolutionary disguise, the essence of Redfern's view of proletarian internationalism was not how much an action served the interests of the international working class, but how much it served the interests of the workers in Britain. In his self-seeking way he had produced an impressive ultra-left distortion of proletarian internationalism that was more social chauvinist than the previous errors of the RCL that he had seized on for his own purposes.

Therefore in his contribution Redfern tried to belittle a point in the chairman's criticism that it was a serious disadvantage that in our Zimbabwe solidarity campaign the two superpowers, the main enemy of the international working class, were not being directly hit.

Redfern also stressed, "We must be very careful to uphold the unity of the Patriotic Front". This illustrates he was making a dogma out of this generally correct principle, a dogma which he used to block effective exposure of the manoeuvres of Soviet social-imperialism.

The one significant amendment to the chairman's motion was to combine his proposed two slogans ("US Keep Out!" "S.U.Keep Out!") into one slogan of "Superpowers keep out of Zimbabwe!". This was done on the grounds of not having too many slogans. However it inevitably had the effect of reducing the sharpness with which we were to highlight the Soviet threat to the liberation struggle of the people of Zimbabwe.

In amended form the new slogans to replace the old ones were then passed unanimously:

"British Imperialism Out of Zimbabwe!  
Hand Over Power to the Patriotic Front!  
Down with the Anglo-American Plot!  
Superpowers Keep out of Zimbabwe!"

Lulled by Redfern's show of unity in voting for these proposals and relying too much on the spirit of unity being deepened by debate, the chairman then proposed for the sake of unity and to avoid disruption to the work of the campaign, also minuting that:

"The present propaganda is generally correct and should be used, but future propaganda should be in conformity with the above slogans. The campaign up to now has been generally correct but we must take into account the danger from the superpowers."

This proposal was a liberal opportunist error in the hope of peace and friendship at a time of a developing split. It was incorporated in the collective minute. PC comrades themselves were quite aware of the contradictions involved. The great harm of the addition to the minute lay in glossing over the political importance of the change of slogans for comrades outside the PC. Just as seriously, by not making a serious collective self-criticism, the PC disrupted the democratic link between the mass of comrades and the leadership, and failed to educate them seriously about questions of political line.

An attempt was made at the September PC to rectify this omission with a statement called "Concrete Guidance to Rank and File Comrades on the Two Line Struggle". This says: "The PC made an error of liberalism in not directing comrade's attention to the need to study the changed slogans on the Zimbabwe campaign." However the statement continued to make errors of liberalism, although in a reduced form. It called on primary units to study and discuss the revised slogans on the Zimbabwe campaign and said:

"This resolution illustrates concretely some of the problems of applying the theory of the three worlds and upholding proletarian internationalism that leading comrades have been struggling about for some months. As an exceptional measure we are hereby informing comrades that this particular resolution was passed unanimously on the PC in order to illustrate the fact that if two line struggle is carried out correctly it is not one between individuals but one in which correct ideas and Marxism become increasingly strengthened in the course of struggle with incorrect and objectively opportunist and revisionist ideas."

But this was still liberal: what it didn't say was what the errors were in the previous slogans and how serious they were. Accordingly, it made the call for comrades to study the political issues a bland and to some extent a formalistic one.

This failure played into the hands of Redfern who was soon to claim that discussion of political line had been suppressed in the League and that although he had been suspended from office for calling the chairman a traitor to the working class, comrades had not been informed of the political grounds on which he had based the slander.

Liberalism is a form of opportunism. While it is right sometimes to reserve secondary questions in the interests of overall unity, liberalism is a corrosive that destroys unity. One reason for the PC's liberalism was that it feared a split. Comrades on the PC had become hardened to Redfern's verbal bullying but the danger of a split was now becoming real. The situation was made more difficult by the sympathy and support PD had given Redfern and concern about the harm PD's defection would do for the unity of former comrades of the CFB and CUA. It is right to seek unity and to seek it sincerely, but it was wrong to be intimidated from dealing with serious matters seriously out of fear of a split.

#### Coverage in CS in the Second Half of 1978

In view of the weak political lead given in changing the slogans of the Zimbabwe campaign it was inevitable that progress in correcting the orientation of the campaign was slow.

This played into the hands of the faction. Indeed as late as 3rd September, PD gave instructions to the print cell leader to reprint the Zimbabwe pamphlet with the only changes being the slogans. This approach treated the change in slogans purely organizationally. (Subsequently some changes were made to the

text of the second edition.)

In CS any attempts to redress the orientation were in any case blown off course in the July issue by the news stories about the possibility of British imperialism launching an armed intervention into Zimbabwe similar to the French paratroop operation in Zaire. There was plenty of evidence at the time that the British government was actively investigating contingency plans for this. In these circumstances it was certainly very necessary and our duty to warn of the danger of this and to expose the imperialist motives behind such plans. An article carried on the front page correctly did this, which was good. However it went beyond this and stated "The British government is preparing a direct military invasion of Zimbabwe." An armed intervention, and one of a very disruptive and unscrupulous kind, yes; a direct invasion, no. This did not seek truth from facts and was an opportunist argument. For the sake of getting an important political point across very vividly, it sacrificed the long term objective of educating comrades in a more all-round way about the imperialist nature of Britain and the position it takes within the three worlds. The truth is that the time has long passed in which British imperialism was strong enough to wage a colonial war against a nation of eight million people in normal circumstances. Although a British armed intervention was possible at that time to swing the balance of power in favour of some neo-colonial regime a direct invasion was impossible. This was an opportunist distortion of the truth designed to scare comrades into more feverish revolutionary activity. It was deeply manipulative and whatever short-term gains were achieved in terms of activity by comrades, they are more than lost later in confusion and cynicism in their loss of confidence in a principled leadership.

On its inside pages, the July issue reported on the Zimbabwe speaking tour carried out by Redfern. This contained one rather formal and general reference to Soviet social-imperialism, which was however an advance.

During this tour Redfern made one point that illustrated his manipulative and opportunist attitude to truth. In one meeting he claimed that when British imperialism loses its investments in southern Africa as a result of the liberation wars, "it would not last six months". When challenged about this afterwards he dismissed the point as a permissible bit of rhetoric. But he was being dishonest. Although British investments in southern Africa are very substantial (of the order of £3-5,000 million) and are a strong economic base for British imperialist oppressive and manipulative policy in the area, their loss will certainly not lead to the collapse of British imperialism. The capitalist class is used to the phenomena of periodically having to write off large sums of old capital that for economic reasons are no longer productive. It accepts the inefficiencies in its own system which in terms of lost production by the unemployed alone, each year waste a comparable sum to the total UK investment in southern Africa. Redfern's demagogic argument was a bit of Trotskyite manipulation, opportunism of an ultra-left form trying to screw an extra ounce of revolutionary fervour out of us by telling us lies. What a contrast to the unwavering revolutionary spirit of the proletariat that we must strive to develop.

In the August issue of CS  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pages were devoted to Zimbabwe without any reference to the superpowers, even the United States, and unlike the previous issue without even a mention of the new slogans. A formula referred to how aid to the Zimbabwean struggle would help to weaken "our common enemy", which was defined as British imperialism.

In September CS went fortnightly with the first issue devoting a page to Zimbabwe including half a page by the CC calling for an extra effort to raise the sum of money for the landrover by December 2nd. This statement contained a paragraph on the superpowers.

The late September issue carried half a page including a very necessary article exposing British sanctions busting. Reviewing the situation since June we can see that the CS editorial committee had restored to a large measure its emphasis on hitting Soviet social-imperialism internationally by means of articles on other themes. Nevertheless as far as Zimbabwe was concerned, in the six months

up to the end of September so much militancy had been devoted to exposing British imperialism that out of all the pages involved there were about only two paragraphs specifically exposing the superpowers' aims in Zimbabwe.

In the two October issues there was greater attention to integrating exposure of US imperialism with exposure of British imperialism on Zimbabwe. The early November issue which celebrated the success of the landrover fund, carried a strong statement from Mugabe specifically educating about the role of US imperialism, making points which at that time we would still have been unable to put in our own words because of the arbitrariness of the faction's attacks.

The late November issue contained no article directly on Zimbabwe but carried one exposing British imperialism's related manoeuvres in Zambia.

The early December issue carried  $\frac{1}{2}$  page of announcements about the Zimbabwe campaign. This was counterbalanced by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pages in the mid December issue on the national meeting celebrating the sending of the landrover. The passages reported in the chairman's speech were the first explicit statement carried in CS since the beginning of the campaign that the Zimbabwean struggle must be seen in the context of the three worlds theory. This is an illustration of how far Redfern's ultra-left line had tried to play up Zimbabwe as an exception to the three worlds theory.

The end of year issue of CS contained a strong  $1\frac{1}{2}$  page article reviewing the struggle in Zimbabwe in 1978 and warning against the superpowers moving in. This article adapted the formula about "our common enemy" to integrate it with the three worlds theory by saying, "We have the same enemies - the British imperialist ruling class and the two superpowers." This was an advance, developed in the course of practice, on the slogan about the "same enemy - British imperialism!"

#### Solidarity Against Our Own Main Enemy

Two political questions in the campaign need to be particularly highlighted. One is the theme of "solidarity against our own main enemy".

In pushing his ultra-left over-emphasis on combating British imperialism internationally Redfern paid lip service to the view that as Communists our political stands are not fundamentally moral ones but are fundamentally expressions of material interest. (This is not to deny that the proletariat has its own morality based on its own material class interests.) As it says in the Manifesto, paraphrasing in turn the Communist Manifesto, "Revolutionary Communists do not set up any sectarian principles of their own by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement. Their theoretical conclusions merely express in general terms actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes."

In claiming to subscribe to this Redfern stressed that we should repeatedly point out to British workers that the defeat of British imperialism and its agents by the Zimbabwean people would be in the direct material interests of British workers because it would weaken their ruling class and bring socialist revolution nearer. In itself this point is a correct and important one.

The approach was expressed most vividly in a passage from the "Zimbabwe Folder" produced in September 1978 and written by Pat Redfern (a four-sided folded leaflet which was given away). The section entitled "No British Troops Into Zimbabwe" ends:

"The sooner British imperialism gets thrown out of Zimbabwe lock, stock, and barrel the better. We want British imperialism weakened because it's British imperialism that lives off us, sucks the energy out of our pores, turns the machines faster and faster and keeps us in wage slavery. We don't want to march into Zimbabwe to be of service to you - we're preparing for the day when we turn the guns on you."

This says in vivid agitational terms that it is in the direct material interest of the British workers to support the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. This is a very valid point *(Although the style is ultra left)*

However with Redfern's left opportunist line on the Zimbabwe struggle we had slipped for a time into a policy where the national section of CS was devoted to showing British workers that it was in their material interest to support struggles against the British monopoly bourgeoisie at home, and the international section was overwhelmingly devoted to showing that it was in the material interests of British workers to support struggles against the British imperialist bourgeoisie abroad (i.e. our own main enemy yet again). From this point of view, educating British workers in the spirit of proletarian internationalism actually boiled down to supporting international struggles which serve the material interests of the workers of Britain. As Redfern said in June 1978, "I think the yardstick of an internationalist campaign is whether it opposes British imperialism and helps revolution in Britain."

This is a travesty of proletarian internationalism foisted on us under a super-revolutionary ultra-left guise. What about the material interests of the international proletariat independent of nationality? Should not the international sections of our political paper be devoted above all to showing the material interests of the world-wide proletariat and educating the British working class on what our particular contribution to the international cause of the proletariat should be?

And if Redfern really were genuine that our policy should not be based on moralistic tub-thumping but on educating the workers on their material interests both short term and long term, both national and international, what is wrong with also showing them that it is in their material interests to oppose the threat of Soviet domination, to resist US interference and to obstruct the policies of the two superpowers, which are leading on directly towards a third world war? By pointing out such facts we show that the British workers' material interests coincide with the material interests of the entire proletariat. And in the course of such fundamentally materialist education (in which of course indignation and outrage will have an important agitational place) we can also teach British workers that the people and countries of the third world are our most reliable friends in the international struggle against the two superpowers. We can show how the reactionary and oppressive stand of the British imperialist bourgeoisie repeatedly goes against the real interests of the British working class and the international working class and plays into the hands of the superpowers.

The fact that Redfern's left-opportunist line counterposed one aspect of proletarian internationalism (unity with the people oppressed by your own bourgeoisie - certainly a very important aspect) against all these other ways of educating British workers on the interests of the international working class, shows that in truth Redfern's concept of proletarian internationalism was not a materialist one but an idealist one, not one of genuine fraternal solidarity in the common struggles of the international proletariat but moralistic tub-thumping and moral blackmail.

We definitely need to support solidarity work against British imperialism - "our own main enemy", such as on Ireland and southern Africa. We should have paid more attention to this in the past and we must continue to pay attention to it in the future. But fundamentally our approach to international questions must start in the materialist spirit of proletarian internationalism from what are the overall interests of the entire international working class and what can we, as a particular detachment of that international army, do and what should we do now to aid the overall fight against imperialism and all reaction. Today that means being especially guided by the overall theory of the three worlds and integrating it with our concrete situation.

#### Hitting Soviet Social-Imperialism in Zimbabwe

All comrades agree that as Communists within imperialist Britain we have a particular duty to expose and oppose British imperialism on Zimbabwe, for example their blood-stained interference in the election campaign held at the beginning of this year. What has been more difficult to understand is how to combine this with exposure of Soviet social-imperialism in the area. The question required and still requires time to solve. It is difficult because

a) the designs of Soviet imperialism have not yet become fully appraen<sup>t</sup> in Zimbabwe, and b) there is the problem of how to relate and balance blows against our own bourgeoisie and blows against the imperialist bourgeoisie which on a world scale is most dangerous for the international working class.

Redfern made this objective problem more difficult for us by the left impetuous opportunist haste with which he tried to push us into a quick solution. He also dazzled us with a number of immediate facts without seeking the truth that underlies those and other facts. He thereby effectively ignored the role of Soviet social-imperialism and ironically accused us of not seeking truth from facts and applying the theory of the three worlds dogmatically.

Was it dogmatic to believe that the Soviet Union should have been treated as a serious threat to the Zimbabwean struggle even as early as 1977 when we had no facts on its specific activities in Zimbabwe to go on but only our overall analysis and sepcific facts like its behaviour in Angola? No; because a general all-round analysis of many facts in the world has revealed the truth that the Soviet Union is an imperialist power, and a rising imperialist power at that, more aggressive, more dangerous and out to redivide the world in contention with the other superpower. To say that this general situation is bound to have a particular effect on Zimbabwe is not at all dogmatic, it is in the spirit of seeking truth from facts. It would only be dogmatic if we said we could predict mechanically the particular way in which Soviet imperialism will move to strengthen its influence in Zimbabwe: that will be affected by the particularity of the situation which must be analysed in its own right.

Specific facts about Soviet subversion of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle were not readily to hand for us in early 1978. We knew of rumours in the bourgeois press that Nkomo's men in Angola were trained by Cubans and we knew that ZAPU's journal was printed in East Germany. On the other hand Nkomo was playing a double game and as late as the second part of 1978 had a secret meeting with Smith in which he nearly agreed to come over as an agent of British and US imperialism. It was after the exposure of this secret meeting that Nkomo threw his lot in with the Soviet Union particularly openly, ~~and even used Soviet anti aircraft missiles to bring down Rhodesian planes.~~

It was only long after the Zimbabwe campaign that we learned some more detailed facts on the extent that Soviet pressure had been building up on the Patriotic Front, throughout 1978 while the campaign was going on in the League. The following is a loose translation of parts of an article on Zimbabwe printed in "Rote Fahne", the paper of the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Germany, 25th October 1979. While we would not necessarily agree with all the points and are not in a position to check the facts, these extracts illustrate some of the questions that we should have been considering and which Redfern tried to close our minds to.

"The social imperialists have been able to build up the armed forces of ZAPU, with which they have had contact for a long time, from an unimportant band to an army 10,000 soldiers strong mainly in Angolan training camps, and who have by comparison with ZANU much more modern equipment. This army could be decisive in the final phase of the war in which there is a battle for control of the cities, especially after the racists have been overthrown and have fled. Even after a putsch there will hardly be any enthusiasm in Zimbabwe and especially in the "Front Line States" (which are themselves anyway nearly impoverished by the long-lasting war, and which themselves look more and more towards the Soviet Union and for increased business contacts with the racists) for supporting a continuing people's war of liberation. For example in Algeria the externally-based army of Boumedienne, which virtually didn't take any part in the liberation struggle, had an easy run of it after the withdrawal of the French army from the areas in which the guerillas had been fighting them. In Vietnam something similar happened to the NLF forces. They were replaced by regular North Vietnamese troops.

"The Soviets not only have military influence within ZAPU. The strategy of looking for a quick victory, reliance on foreign help, neglect of the whole job of mobilizing the masses - these are some of the points on which ZAPU's political line co-incides with Soviet interests.

"By means of ZAPU the Soviet Union also tries to draw ZANU under its control or at least either to pull some elements in ZANU over to its side or neutralize them. It is the Soviet Union's aim to impose a policy serving her hegemonist interests on the whole of the Patriotic Front (including ZANU) by making use of her influence in ZAPU.

"At least in part their plan has succeeded. In 1978 the shift in ZANU's relations towards the social imperialist camp could be seen very clearly. ZANU's leaders made extensive journeys to Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union (by Vice-President Muzenda). In August 1978 Mugabe and Castro met for the first time in Havana at the World Youth Festival. Apparently Mugabe was open to substantial offers of assistance. Only shortly afterwards in September, negotiations continued in Addis Ababa during the celebration of the anniversary of the fascist junta's victory and a "solidarity conference" organized by the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization (AAPSO). At this conference a resolution was passed in which for the first time in the history of AAPSO conferences China was accused of collaborating with South African racists as well as other reactionaries. Although Russian propaganda claimed that the ZANU delegation led by Mugabe had given its support to this resolution, ZANU never officially dissociated itself from the resolution or denied the rumours about its conduct in the voting. As a result Mengistu made available to ZANU a military camp in which 5,000 ZANLA fighters at a time can be trained with Russian weapons by Cubans, of whom there are enough in Ethiopia anyway. In the meantime the proportion of Russian weapons in ZANLA's equipment is said to have reached 80% ("Africa Confidential" no12 vol20), but apparently ZANLA leaders still refuse to accept foreign auxiliaries on the principle that "We are our own liberators."

...In the May 1979 issue of New Africa an interview with Mugabe was published in which he criticised Nkomo sharply for the first time for a long while - but not for wavering towards the racists and the Western Powers but because he had tried to prevent ZANU establishing contacts with Cuba, Vietnam, Angola and Ethiopia."

Later on the article says, "It has nothing in common with imperialist or Russian propaganda if one states that with a mass exodus of the white population the country would suddenly be without experts, experienced technicians and experts for administration. Angola and Mozambique show how quickly the Russians are on the spot to fill that gap with their own white experts, and take over the administrative apparatus by means of Cubans and East Germans."

These points by no means automatically imply that Comrade Mugabe and other leading ZANU members should be immediately analysed as comprador bourgeois agents of Soviet imperialism, because it is sometimes necessary for patriotic revolutionaries to take advantage of contradictions among the enemy. However they do show that Soviet pressure is extensive not only on ZAPU but, as we should have expected, on ZANU too. It is a statistical certainty that some elements in ZANU will lack the necessary vigilance and will for a time at least favour co-operating with the Soviet Union's plans. (These points also do not imply that we should therefore reduce our support for the Zimbabwe liberation war. On the contrary they give additional arguments for supporting the genuine patriotic fighters.)

It is necessary to be far-sighted as well as all-sided. At the time of writing this document, some three weeks before the election, there is already a lot of evidence that Nkomo, a man who is prepared to sell himself to Soviet imperialism as well as to British and US imperialism, may become Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, perhaps leading a coalition of puppet parties from which ZANU is excluded. This fiercely divided situation would be one in which the Soviet Union would not lack the inclination or the opportunities to deepen its influence and control over various political groupings, including ZANU as well as ZAPU.

We have quite rightly studied the question of Zimbabwe seriously from the point of view of the Zimbabwean people in order to support them better, and also from the point of view of British imperialism in order to oppose it more effectively. Let us also accept the responsibility to open the map of southern Africa again and look at it from the point of view of the social-imperialists in Moscow. They already have the dominant influence in Angola on the west coast and Mozambique on the east (both these states voted for them at the UN in defence

of the invasion of Afghanistan). In Namibia they have extensive influence in SWAPO, the leading liberation organization. Zambia is economically weak and much more open to Soviet overtures than is generally recognised. The Russians have built up their embassy in Lusaka to the largest in central Africa. Zambia abstained in the UN on the vote concerning the invasion of Afghanistan and a month later, in early February, she signed a \$50 million arms treaty with the Soviet Union including MIG fighters, and the Russian advisers that must inevitably accompany such advanced technology.

Viewing the map from Moscow, Zimbabwe is not intended to be a liberated area serving as a rear base for a vigorous and independent national liberation struggle in Azania. From Moscow Zimbabwe is a strategic square lying between Angola and Mozambique. With this space filled, the Soviet Union will have a cordon of states under its influence surrounding the tottering but extremely rich and strategically vital South African racist state. If successful, Moscow will have thrown a noose around the neck of the liberation struggles of southern Africa. By means of this noose she would attempt to manipulate and control these struggles, using them in her battle for world domination to undermine her rival, the United States, but pulling the liberation movements up very short if they tried to assert their independence from Soviet domination.

Ofcourse in the long term the Soviet Union is a paper tiger and the more she attacks the interests of the oppressed peoples and nations, the sooner they will rise up against her too. But cognition is a process that takes time, and in the shorter term events in southern Africa may very well fit in with the plans of Moscow's strategists more than we would like.

How then should we deliver blows against British imperialism in the context of building the international united front against hegemonism? This is a problem that will take time and practice to solve. There is always a strong need for straight exposure of British imperialist oppression and for straight solidarity with those oppressed by it, and the case for this will remain valid as long as British imperialism exists. But also we need to link up such exposures with the superpowers. One theme we should probably try out is to show how each act of British imperialist oppression and exploitation plays into the hands of Soviet social-imperialism. (The same is true of US imperialism, which repeatedly drives the people and countries of the third world into the arms of the Soviet Union by its hegemonistic blunders.) Each time British imperialism, by violence or by cunning, thwarts the just demands of the Zimbabwean people for national liberation, it gives more openings to Soviet infiltration. Zambia is also an illustration, where British tacit support of the fierce Rhodesian racist raids at the end of 1979 must have influenced the Zambians to sign an arms treaty with Moscow. Each case in which British imperialism hangs on to its superprofits by means of blackmail, murder, or deception, is not only morally disgusting, and not only helps to shore up its class rule in Britain, but gives free jokers to the Soviet imperialists. It hastens the day when the Soviet Union may have a stranglehold on the oil-lanes round the Cape of Good Hope and will patrol among the oil rigs in the North Sea expecting to be paid political protection money by servile regimes in Britain and western Europe. Because of its imperialist class nature the British ruling class repeatedly fails to meet the just demands and genuinely unite with the one force in the world that is most reliable in the long term struggle against hegemonism - the peoples and countries of the third world. This theme too should be considered in the context of Zimbabwe.

#### CONCLUSIONS

1. While the RCL had been correct to concentrate on grasping the main features of the three worlds theory, there had been rightist errors in carrying out our proletarian internationalist duty to support the struggles of those particularly oppressed by our own imperialist bourgeoisie.
2. Redfern seized on this error, and instead of promoting a militant but scientific self-critical study of the error and how to correct it, attempted to stampede us into a left-opportunist distortion of our line internationally.
3. The political line of the Zimbabwe campaign as launched by Redfern was counterposed to the three worlds strategy. We have a particular responsibility to oppose British imperialism abroad. However we must strive to integrate this work with the three worlds strategy.

February 1980.