

Excerpts from a Speech Delivered at the Party School  
by Barry Weisberg — Summer, 1980

# The November Elections and ...

On November 4th, you will be asked to vote for four more years of imperialist rule. All the political parties who are running candidates request in unison that you choose your favorite ruler. None of them call for the overthrow of the existing order, the defeat and destruction of imperialism and the victory of socialism. Both the advocates and apologists for imperialism at best want to improve the conditions of slavery—not put an end to wage slavery altogether.

In complete opposition, the Communist Party U.S.A./Marxist-Leninist openly proclaims that the only road out of the crisis today is the road of class struggle, victory over the bourgeoisie and its collaborators and the establishment of working class political power.

It is no accident that in the last decade, 15 million eligible voters have stopped voting, that in the last election circus, in 1976, 70 million eligible voters refused to vote. This marks a steady increase in the number of people refusing to vote over some 20 years. And most important, is who votes today. Increasingly the composition of those voting in the imperialist election circus are from the middle or above average income bracket. Fewer and fewer people of national minorities vote.

(Editor's Note: For reasons of space, we have omitted the subsequent sections which review the overall alignment of class forces in the world today and the present situation in the U.S., some of which is discussed in the following text:)

Not since the 1930's has the danger of imperialist world war and fascism at home been as great as it is today. What is the way out of this crisis?

We say NO to four more years of treachery and deception! No to four more years of a mounting danger of imperialist war and fascist reaction. No to the reformist and revisionist promises of a Gus Hall or a Barry Commoner.

There is a way to take a step out of the imperialist crisis, to move toward building the independent political action of the working class. That is to withhold your vote in this election circus. Boycott this election! No Vote November 4th!

History has shown that the real business of the imperialist state is not decided in elections, but in the back rooms of Wall Street. Congress is nothing but an empty chatter box of the rich.

While the outcome of the election does not determine the course of the class struggle, it is an important barometer of the alignment of the monopoly capitalist class today.

In light of this, how are we to view the current election? First and foremost we must recognize that all historical struggles are reflections of struggles between social classes. As Marx pointed out, these struggles show how classes behave and how they collide. To prepare us to wage the struggle for a No Vote November 4th, and to understand the de-

velopment and the outcome of the election itself, we must grasp firmly the current balance of forces in the world in general and of the future of U.S. imperialism in particular....

## Balance of Imperialist Forces

Imperialism is not the result of some ill-advised policies or poor leadership in the White House. It is the final, dying stage of capitalism. Whether U.S. imperialism, Soviet social-imperialism, Japanese, German or French imperialism, it operates by a series of basic laws long ago described by V.I. Lenin:

"Capitalism has grown into a world system of colonial oppression and of financial strangulation of the population of the world by a handful of 'advanced' countries. And this 'booty' is shared between two or three powerful world marauders armed to the teeth (America, Great Britain, Japan), who involve the whole world in their war over the sharing of their booty."

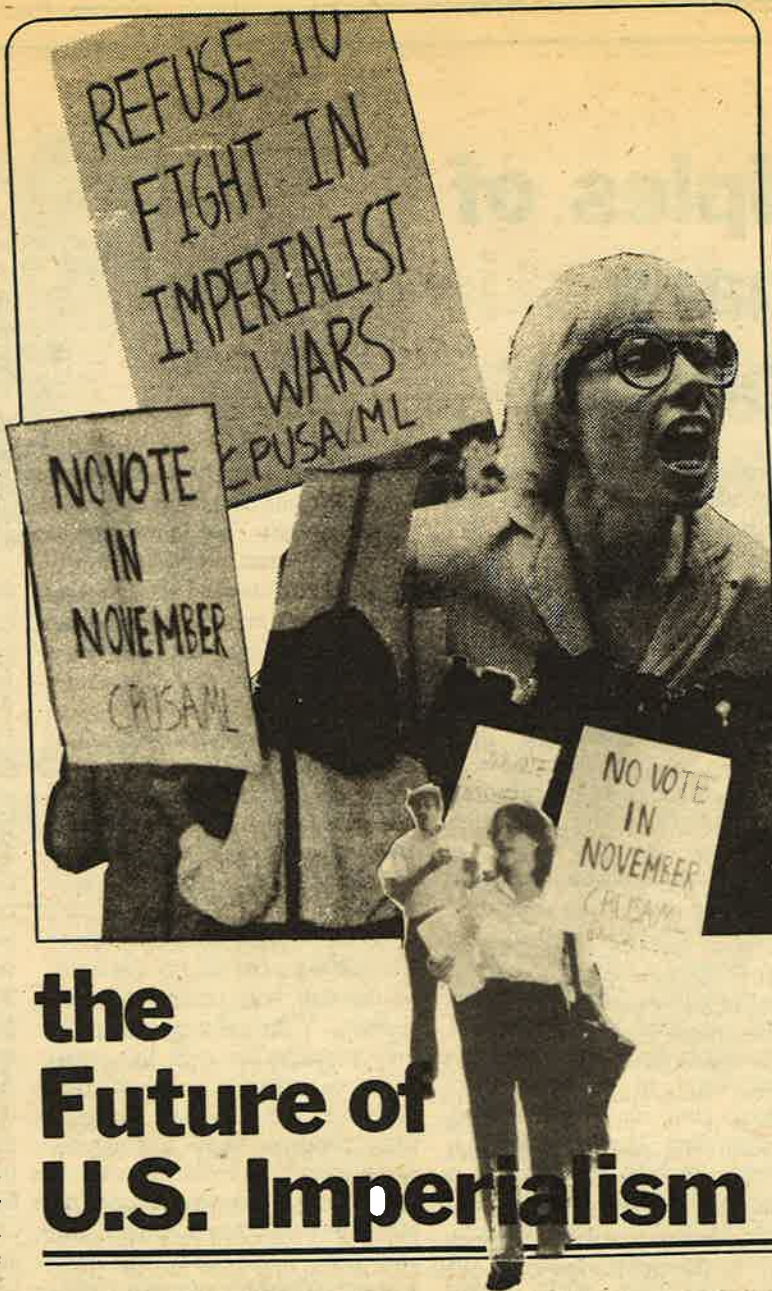
Merely substitute Soviet social-imperialism for Britain and Japan, and this scientific description of imperialism by Lenin, written in 1917, would vividly apply to the present world situation.

Further, the basic features of imperialism and social-imperialism today...all verify that the world imperialist system is today headed by two major superpower blocs. On the one hand is U.S. imperialism, together with China, Japan, Germany and the majority of the capitalist countries of the world. Through such counter-revolutionary organizations as the World Bank, the IMF, NATO, the Common Market and others, the neocolonial web of U.S. imperialism enmeshes the majority of the people of the world today.

At the same time, Soviet social-imperialism, together with its spheres of influence in Eastern Europe, Cuba, Angola, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and elsewhere, operates through the Warsaw Pact, COMECON and other enslaving alliances. Together, the two superpowers are armed to the teeth.... and present the greatest danger to the peace, well-being and prosperity of the people of the world.

## Is the U.S. Weaker Than The Soviet Union?

Today, from Peking or Washington, we hear the absurd lie that U.S. imperialism is no longer competitive with the Soviet Union, cannot even produce a competitive auto with Japan, that it has lost its will to reign as the center of the world imperialist system. The present source of this illusion is the counter-revolutionary alliance between U.S. imperialism and Chinese imperialism engineered by Nixon and Mao, in the so-called theory of the "three worlds" — which rapidly became the policy of one world — uniting all that can be united against the Soviet menace. This is reflected in the Nixon Doctrine...and the Carter Human Rights Doctrine.... Today all the imperialist poli-



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ticians, who clamour about the need to Make America Great Again, sing this song....

It certainly is true that within the world imperialist system U.S. imperialism no longer enjoys the absolute hegemony which characterized the period from 1945 through the 1960's. Further, the general crisis of imperialism has struck serious blows against U.S. imperialism in particular, gravely weakening the entire imperialist world system. Together with the flood of periodic economic crises during the 1970's, there has been a dramatic sharpening of the basic contradictions in the world today, apparent in the all-round economic, political, social and ideological crisis which grips all the imperialist and social-imperialist countries....

In response, U.S. imperialism has reshaped its basic strategic objectives to suit the present conditions. Relying still upon economic, political and military aggression worldwide, coupled with a massive ideological aggression, U.S. imperialism seeks to consolidate and strengthen its global empire while stabilizing its hegemonic position within the world imperialist system. At the same time, it has promoted every variety of reformism and revisionism, counter-revolutionary ideology, to try to undermine and defeat the world revolutionary movement, and particularly the Marxist-Leninist parties.

Today, we see Khrushchevite revisionism, Chinese revisionism, Eurocommunism, Titoism, Trotskyism and other anti-Marxist, counter-revolutionary theories in direct service of world imperialism and social-imperialism. To one extent or another, they find their basis in the imperialist aggression of the U.S. against the people of the world since World War II.

Yet, with every manner of attempts to maintain its global hegemony, to undermine the flames of world revolution, the position of U.S. imperialism with respect to other imperialist powers has eroded since World War II. In the Suez crisis, in the decay

of dollar diplomacy, in the 1973 oil crisis and the defeat in Vietnam, there are signs of this erosion. As early as 1969, the U.S. bourgeoisie sought a policy to reverse this process, the Nixon Doctrine....

## Carter Doctrine: Another Stab at Hegemony

The failure of the Nixon Doctrine (the most glaring example being the defeat of the Shah by the people of Iran) has prompted the latest variety of U.S. expansionist doctrine, namely the Carter Doctrine. It has its origins long before the defeat of the Shah or the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union....

The main tenets of the Carter Doctrine include:

- 1) Direct military interventionism,
- 2) A greater degree of reliance on new social-democratic or revisionist coalitions to protect U.S. interests, more than the old fascist regimes.
- 3) All-round efforts to strengthen the competitive position of U.S. imperialism in relation to its allies and to the Soviet bloc.
- 4) Active preparation for a new imperialist world war to temporarily resolve the crisis and stabilize U.S. markets and resources....

The most obvious justification of the reactionary bourgeoisie for this new expansionist doctrine has been the illusion that U.S. imperialism, relative to the Soviet Union, is not competitive. Facts prove that this is nothing but a fabrication of Chinese revisionism and the U.S. imperialist bourgeoisie to cover up its global ambitions.

Economically, the Gross National Product of the Soviet Union is only two-thirds that of the U.S., and the standard of living as measured by bourgeois statisticians, is four times lower. The position of Soviet social-imperialism in the world market more resembles a developing nation than an exporter of finished goods. Its main exports are not finished goods but

natural resources and fuels, while its main imports are machinery. The Soviet Union is dependent on goods and important technology like computers. The Soviet bloc owes some \$20 billion to western capitalists.

In contrast, the U.S. is not dependent on the Soviet Union for any materials or technology, is not a debtor to the Soviet Union, and the motion of trade relations between the two countries is unmistakably favorable to the U.S.

At the same time, the U.S. has made major political inroads into the Soviet bloc countries, notably in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania. While the Soviet bloc adds a country such as Afghanistan, the U.S. adds China, a major strategic advance. Ideologically, while the Soviet Union has lost ground for its unbridled expansion into Afghanistan, the U.S. still continues to gain benefits from its demagogic human rights facade.

The most frequent comparison between the two superpowers centers on their respective military arsenals — which in fact is probably the least useful comparison to make. Here, there is little doubt that Soviet social-imperialism has brought its arsenal of nuclear blackmail and destruction to parity with the U.S. In various categories, each country may excel. But the focus of attention on this question is nothing but demagoguery. The question of how many times each of the superpowers can destroy global life is irrelevant. Any rational discussion of this question cannot focus on the numbers of weapons accumulated but their obvious use by each superpower to threaten and blackmail the world's people....

But even here, aside from the numbers, the U.S. imperialist bloc enjoys a far superior displacement globally of bases and supply routes than does the Soviet Union....

Why is such a comparison required today? It certainly is not to suggest that one of the two superpowers is less dangerous than the other. We must point out that the illusion of Soviet superiority over the U.S. has no basis at all in fact.

Finally, looking at the international balance of U.S. imperialism we must note that in recent years, the U.S. presence in Asia and Africa has notably increased, to the point that the strength of U.S. interests in Asia is today greater than at any time since the end of World War II. While there have been setbacks in Iran or Nicaragua for the imperialists, the U.S. is moving to shore up its interests in the Middle East, Latin and Central America. In Europe, too, there has been a heightened competition from Germany in recent years, but overall, the Atlantic Alliance remains firmly in the possession of U.S. imperialism.

Therefore, the reactionary call to Make America Great Again sung by all the imperialist candidates must be seen for its true purpose. Propaganda of U.S. imperialism's "weaknesses" provides a smoke screen behind which the U.S. unleashes a new round of aggression and expansionism with the aim of stabilizing world capital, recovering past losses, putting out the flames of world revolution and securing a new period of U.S. hegemony in the world imperialist system.

## Danger of Fascism At Home

We have seen thus far why it is

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## The November Elections...

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possible to say that in the recent period, particularly since 1978, U.S. imperialism has definitely turned a corner, entered a new, more highly aggressive period of expansionism, and settled on a course toward a new imperialist world war.

At the same time, there has been a corresponding turn in domestic events as well, a turn towards fascism. The menace of fascism today is the central political question in the U.S., and the lense through which we must view the significance of the November 4th elections. Fascism will not come to power through bourgeois elections on November 4th, but the elections will provide a barometer of the pace of the fascist menace, the cohesion of the fascist movement and the contours of the fascist program....

The central feature of the rule of monopoly capitalism in the U.S. is the growth and development of the reactionary imperialist state. In the *State and Revolution*, Lenin long ago recognized this development.

"Imperialism — the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, the era of development of monopoly capitalism into state monopoly capitalism — has demonstrated with particular force an extraordinary strengthening of the 'state machine', and an unprecedented growth of its bureaucratic and military apparatus, in connection with the intensification of repression against the proletariat..."

This can be seen in the economic, social, ideological and political balance in the U.S. today....

The periodic economic crisis which has gripped the U.S. economy since late last year is reflected in inflation, unemployment, the decline of productive capacity, trade deficits, the credit and savings crunch, and the severe situation in the auto and steel industries....(Editor's Note: Due to lack of space, these portions of the presentation have been omitted).

While there may be some important economic fluctuations in particular figures, the monopoly capitalists will not easily extricate themselves from this crisis, and seek every opportunity to pass the burden of this crisis on to the workers in a massive decline of living standards....

The consequence of three major economic crises in ten years in the U.S. means that such crises are coming closer and closer together and with ever greater intensity....

The social decay and degeneration of life in the U.S. is everywhere obvious, in the fiscal crisis in the cities, the turmoil in the public schools, the liquidation of small farms, the rise of pornography, child abuse and "wife beating", and countless other effects of the crisis....Both the youth and the aged face special oppression and special hardships in this crisis....

Various national minorities face increasing national oppression which has obliterated many of the hard-won democratic rights of the last two decades....These developments fully verify the



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reality that national oppression is a component part of the imperialist system.

Ideologically, we must note the sharp rise of national chauvinism and white supremacy in the U.S., the spread of all manner of decadent and degenerate theories and tendencies, the promotion of disaster and horror films, punk rock, and the rise of spiritualism, metaphysics and anti-scientific theories of every variety....It is no accident that the imperialist state has promoted a campaign to spread reactionary religious thinking, lavishly funding the so-called "born again" movement....Such organizations as the Moral Majority are training the shock troops for fascism....

### What Conclusions Do We Draw?

All of the various tendencies we see economically, politically, socially or ideologically are reflected in the actual political balance of forces....In this light, there are a number of points to recognize about the present situation.

First, there is no doubt today that a growing number of people refuse to participate in the imperialist election circus. Voter participation has plummeted from 62% in 1960 to 53% in 1976, and even less in the 1978 interim Congressional elections. As a consequence, there has been a dramatic rise in reformist and revisionist activity in the recent period, corresponding to both the needs of imperialism and the relatively quiet situation in the class struggle. On many fronts the credibility of the imperialist politicians has eroded....and the props of imperialism are called on to plug the gap.

Second, there is a definite polarization occurring in the U.S. The Right, unmistakably more powerful and more organized than the Left, is accumulating forces rapidly, and indeed, this is one of the functions of such elections. While the Left is splintered, the spontaneous revolutionary movement of the working class is growing. As a result, there is definitely a collision of classes emerging on a scale not seen since the 1930's....

Third, we notice that today the imperialists are increasingly unable to rule and larger and larger numbers of people are unwilling to be ruled. This cannot be interpreted as a class-conscious cleavage, but as mounting spontaneous sentiment, an objective phenomenon....

Fourth, the state is definitely preparing for fascism. Fascization of the state is occurring at break-neck speed. The centralization of power in the executive; the increasing force of the bureaucracy and armed forces; the abolition of countless bourgeois democratic rights on both a national and local state level; the mounting methods of class collaboration between business, government and labor leaders — such as the Tripartite commissions in steel and coal, the National Accord; etc. ... all reflect the efforts at fascization.

Among the bourgeoisie there is mounting disagreement over how to maintain their rule. However, we must recognize that fascism is a question of bourgeois class rule, and merely reflects a change in the form of the state, not in the relations of classes.

Fifth, the fascist forces are moving to consolidate into a single movement with a single fascist program. This is the result of fundamental objective processes, and not the subjective role of any one individual, such as Reagan. But the Reagan candidacy has become the central focus of the fascist movement, and presents a far greater menace to the working class in the future than such overt fascist gangs as the KKK or the Nazi's.

Sixth, therefore, we must recognize that the monopoly capitalist class today occupies an offensive position and the working class is in a defensive position in the class struggle....

What all this means today is that the period ahead in the class struggle, regardless of who gets elected, will mean increased hardships, exploitation and oppression for working people, with an intensity and pace that has not been seen in 50 years in the U.S....

There is nothing more absurd than the wild proclamations of the Maoists such as the Revolutionary Communist Party or the Communist Workers Party (who are more and more becoming look-alike twins) than that a revolutionary situation can be predicted for the 1980's. A sober and factual presentation of the actual motion of classes and balance of class forces leads to the conclusion that a revolutionary situation is not on the horizon in the U.S. in the next few years. This is not a prediction but a material evaluation of the facts. This certainly could change, but the subjective factors of the revolution in the U.S. are very largely unprepared for such a change. In the event

of a genuine revolutionary situation emerging, there is little indication today that the working class would be prepared to wage the battle required for victory....

The tactics of the Party today are based upon this scientific evaluation of the class struggle and the actual motion of class forces in the world and in the U.S. In this period, revolutionary propaganda and revolutionary action must be boldly combined, to strengthen the revolutionary class consciousness of growing numbers of workers, to draw into struggle countless more workers and to train and steel the CPUSA/ML and the revolutionary mass organizations for the large class battles ahead of them.... That is why the building of the Party in this period is a question of forging real revolutionary cadre to build a real revolutionary center to the working class movement....

We are confident that the No Vote November 4th effort of our Party is a correct and extremely important implementation of the united front tactic of the Party....

We promote no illusions that those millions who will refuse to vote on November 4th have rejected imperialism. But their refusal to vote, their refusal to participate in the election circus, is an important step toward class consciousness. We already know that the largest number of those not voting are workers.

We can take a step out of the crisis on November 4th by denying the imperialists any moral victory, by swelling the ranks of those who refuse to vote. This great refusal does not weaken the so-called "democratic system", but exposes the fraud of imperialist democracy for what it really is, an enslaving dictatorship of the rich monopoly capitalists over the working majority....

## The Capitalist State

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...Elections, parliamentary democracy, in the bourgeois state, are instruments of bourgeois rule. Elections certainly can and should be used by the working class. But the utilization of the bourgeois electoral system, as Engels said, is "the gauge of maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state." We know from long experience ourselves that elections within the present U.S. state system are not really "capable of ascertaining the will of the majority of the toilers and of securing its realization." (Lenin) How, then, can they possibly be the road to power?....

Our Party is convinced, and history proves, that the working class must seize power, in armed battle against the bourgeois state machine. Only a fool would try to predict exactly how that will happen. In the complex social conditions of the U.S., and facing the most powerful state the world has ever seen, a state controlled by a very experienced, highly skilled and ruthless bourgeoisie — in these conditions of the U.S., it will certainly take ingenuity to

In the last two decades there has been a remarkable surge in the development of the revolutionary and democratic forces in the U.S. This is sure to continue, though there will certainly be further valleys and still higher peaks. History has proven and events in our lifetime demonstrate that U.S. imperialism, the bulwark of world imperialism and reaction, will not be brought down in a day, in an election, nor in a decade. But it will fall. This year we have an opportunity to build up the independent action and experience of the working class in the No Vote November 4th mobilization. We must be certain to utilize this opportunity to the utmost, to prepare for the future battles ahead....

**Our Program makes the call: Socialist Revolution!**

"This is the only road that can win better conditions of life, genuine democracy, peace and equality for the proletariat and its allies.

This is the only road out of the crisis of capitalism, the only road out of exploitation and oppression, the only road that can prevent imperialist world war and put an end to the savage dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and world reaction.

Working men and women of the U.S., rise up and wage the class struggle! Rise up as an army to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat!

Workers of all nationalities, oppressed nations and national minorities, small farmers and revolutionary people of the U.S., unite in the struggle against the bourgeoisie! Build the CPUSA/ML and follow the lead of the proletariat and its Party on the road of socialist revolution and liberation!

Rally to the banner of the CPUSA/ML! Fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat! ■

find the path by which the working class will arrive at the revolution.

We can say this much, though: it will require that the workers be united and organized as a class, under the leadership of its own vanguard communist party; it will require that the revolutionary proletariat rally to its side all the honest and progressive elements of the other oppressed classes and strata in American society; finally, it will require an armed insurrection....

The working class is the first and only class in history that can and must actually deliver on the promise of democracy. The proletariat has no private property to protect; it has no relation of exploitation to force upon anyone else; its own emancipation from wage slavery requires that it emancipate the rest of society from exploitation. The proletariat is the only class in modern society that has a material interest in introducing the fullest and most consistent democracy in all spheres of life. It will do this precisely by suppressing the rights of capital.... ■