

# Meetings on 50 years of the International Committee of the Fourth International

Peter Schwarz: “The founding principles have been confirmed”

**Peter Schwarz**  
6 December 2003

*On November 16, 1953, the US Socialist Workers Party (SWP) published an Open Letter that called upon orthodox Trotskyists all over the world to unite in a struggle against a revisionist tendency under the leadership of Michel Pablo, at that time the secretary of the Fourth International. The Open Letter, drawn up by James P. Cannon, led to the foundation of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI).*

*The German and British sections of the ICFI—the Partei für Soziale Gleichheit and the Socialist Equality Party—held meetings in Frankfurt and London on November 23 and 30 to commemorate this event and review the significance of the last 50 years of political work. Speakers at both meetings were Peter Schwarz, secretary of the ICFI, and Chris Marsden, national secretary of the SEP.*

*We are publishing here the contribution by Peter Schwarz. We will publish Chris Marsden’s remarks on Monday, December 8.*

The event we are commemorating today, the founding of the International Committee of the Fourth International, took place 50 years ago. Nevertheless, its significance is of burning relevance today.

The world situation is characterised by a profound political crisis. Contrary to the opinion of an apologist for American imperialism who maintained at the beginning of the 1990s that the collapse of the Soviet Union signalled the “end of history,” the dissolution of the Soviet Union brought to the surface all of the conflicts and contradictions of the capitalist system that had been held in a state of cold storage during the period of the Cold War.

The epicentre of the crisis today is the United States. The land that was regarded as the heart of international stability after the Second World War has become the most significant factor for instability across the globe. To resolve its own crisis, American imperialism feels impelled to reorganise the entire world in line with its own interests and in its own image. In the course of so doing, it is destroying all the mechanisms that served in the past to temper political and social contradictions on a national and international scale.

Already in the 1980s, under the presidency of Ronald Reagan, American society witnessed a profound polarisation that was further intensified by the stock market boom during the 1990s. This served as the means for redistributing social wealth into the hands of a tiny elite while, at the same time, basic forms of social security were demolished. As a result, the current polarisation of American society is without historical parallel. Forty percent of national wealth is concentrated in the hands of the top 1 percent of the population. This is twice as much as 30 years previously. Today, the typical boss of a large American company earns 475 times as much as the average worker.

Such drastic differences are incompatible with democratic relations. The rise of an ultra-right, semi-criminal clique to the highest echelons of

power is a direct result of this social polarisation. George W. Bush bases himself on the most right-wing and aggressive elements of the American elite who have close connections with the Christian right and openly fascist forces. But there is not a trace of serious opposition to be found on the part of the Democrats. They supported the farcical impeachment levelled against former president Bill Clinton and accepted the theft of the last election. They have awarded Bush a carte blanche for his war in Iraq and voted in favour of all the measures aimed at securing the occupation of the country. The Democrats are recruited from the same financial oligarchy as the Republicans. As contradictions grow between this privileged oligarchy and the broad masses, the Democrats are less and less able to put up any serious opposition.

America is moving inexorably towards a revolutionary confrontation. Along the way it is plunging the world into chaos and enormously intensifying social contradictions. There is no area of the globe that is excluded from this process. Wherever one looks internationally, one can see evidence of a growing social polarisation.

The former Soviet Union, which was once characterised by relative equality, is today one of the most unequal societies to be found anywhere. The masses of the population have been plunged into poverty and desperation while 17 individuals have risen to the status of billionaires. A similar process is at work in eastern Europe, where the vast mass of the population have been consigned to a subsistence existence without hope while a tiny layer, primarily drawn from the ranks of the former nomenclature or criminal milieu, have wrestled their way to the top.

The poorest regions of the world in Africa, Asia and Latin America are being systematically bled dry by finance capital. Hundreds of millions are condemned to lives without sufficient food, water and medical care. Numerous victims of such conditions risk their lives everyday to cross the borders into an industrialised country in the hope of finding an illegal slave-type job.

In western Europe, governments are intent on undertaking a task in the space of a few months that they failed to carry out in the 1980s—the complete destruction of the welfare state. There no longer remains any objective basis for a policy based on social harmony and compromise.

The Iraq war represents a new stage in the crisis of capitalism. To forcibly secure control of the oil wells of Iraq and the strategically important Gulf region, the US government violated international law, thrust aside international institutions that it had set up, and thoroughly discredited itself with the most blatant lies.

Despite overwhelming military superiority, the US is not able to win this war. The resistance to US occupation is growing every day. Nor is the US able to retreat without losing face totally and risking a revolutionary explosion at home. It has reacted to this dilemma by thrashing about ever more wildly and shifting to a “scorched earth” policy, aimed not only at

the Iraqi people but increasingly at neighbouring countries and its own allies. In this respect, the Iraq war is the harbinger of even bigger and more violent imperialist wars.

Under these conditions, countless people all over the world have come to learn that their most elementary interests are incompatible with society as it stands. Political parties and trade unions for which they voted and gave their support in the past have proved to be entirely bankrupt.

In Germany, the ruling Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Green Party, which took power five years ago, have made a breathtaking lurch to the right. In comparison to Chancellor Schröder's current "Agenda 2010," the social policy of his conservative predecessor Helmut Kohl appears positively progressive. At the moment, opposition to the SPD takes the form of loss of membership and votes. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the SPD has lost 300,000 members, and the rate is increasing. Last year, 26,000 quit the party, and 30,000 have already left this year. This figure does not include the loss of 7,000 members through death. The SPD is slumping ever deeper in opinion polls, and for the first time ever in a West German state election, it recorded less than 20 percent of the vote in the recent Bavarian poll. In the most recent local elections in the state of Brandenburg, just one in ten of the electorate bothered to vote for the SPD.

Social democracy in other European countries is undergoing a similar process. Tony Blair's New Labour Party is nothing more than an empty shell. In France, the traditional parties of the left have been unable to capitalise on the rapid loss in support for the country's right-wing government.

The increase in influence for conservative and right-wing parties evident in recent opinion polls and elections does not reflect a turn to the right by the people as a whole. It is first and foremost a result of the decline of the old reformist workers' parties. This does not mean, however, that the right-wing forces do not pose a threat. This is shown by experiences with the Bush government, which also lacks a broad mass basis.

Today, the most important political task is the construction of a new party that represents the interests of working people and is capable of articulating their concerns. The future of humanity is based on the resolution of this task.

Over the past weeks and months, there have been clear indications of a growing opposition to capitalism worldwide. It has been expressed in mass demonstrations that have taken place against the World Trade Organisation and several meetings of heads of state. On February 15 of this year, the biggest international antiwar demonstration in history took place, and protests against measures to dismantle welfare state protection are also growing in size. On November 1, 100,000 gathered in Berlin to protest and demonstrate against the government's "Agenda 2010." This figure was far higher than that predicted by the organisers of the protest, which had been boycotted by the main trade unions.

The growing social and political protests are the harbinger of a great social movement. But such a movement is unable to spontaneously develop a political strategy enabling the working class to take its fate in its hands. Herein lies the significance of the 50-year history of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

For a half a century, and under the most difficult conditions, the International Committee has defended the programme and principles of revolutionary Marxism. It has resisted every attempt to sacrifice the long-term interests of the working class on the altar of short-term political contingency. The programme of the Fourth International coincides today with a new revolutionary upturn of the working class and forms the basis for leading it to victory. It is not possible to build a new workers party without understanding why the old parties have failed and drawing the lessons from the political experiences of the 20th century. In this respect, the ICFI represents a unique body of experience. Its history is a concentrated expression of the lessons of the 20th century.

The ICFI was founded in 1953 to defend the programme of the Fourth International against Pabloism—a liquidationist tendency led at the time by Michel Pablo and later by Ernest Mandel. What was at stake in 1953?

Leon Trotsky analysed the source of the defeats suffered by the international working class at the end of the 1920s and the 1930s to be the false and increasingly counterrevolutionary policies of the Stalinist leadership of the Communist International. Since the formation of the Left Opposition in 1923, Trotsky had fought against the growth of the Stalinist bureaucracy, subjecting its nationalist programme and tactical zigzags to a remorseless criticism. He insisted on the international character of the socialist revolution in opposition to Stalin's nationalist conception of "socialism in a single country."

In China, Trotsky opposed the subordination of the Communist Party to the bourgeois Kuomintang. The correctness of his position was tragically confirmed in 1927 when the Kuomintang organised a massacre of communists in Shanghai. In Germany, he proposed a United Front of communists and social democrats to oppose the Nazis. He warned of the disastrous consequences arising from the policies of Stalin and Thälmann, who described social democracy as a twin of fascism, split the working class, and thereby opened the way for Hitler to take power. In France and Spain, he challenged the politics of the People's Front, which chained the working class to its own "democratic bourgeoisie," paralysed the workers movement, and allowed it to be defeated.

In 1933, following the defeat of the German working class and the failure of the Communist International to conduct any serious discussion of what took place, Trotsky came to the conclusion that the Third International was moribund for the purposes of revolution and it was necessary to build a Fourth International. This was subsequently founded in Paris in 1938.

Its founding programme states: "The orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism, and second, by the treacherous politics of the old workers' organisations. The crisis of the proletarian leadership, having become the crisis in mankind's culture, can be resolved only by the Fourth International."

Another passage reads: "The Fourth International declares uncompromising war on the bureaucracies of the Second, Third, Amsterdam and Anarcho-syndicalist Internationals, as on their centrist satellites... All of these organisations are not pledges for the future, but decayed survivals of the past."

The Pabloites broke with this conception at the start of the 1950s. They developed a completely different conception of the socialist revolution. They no longer regarded the socialist revolution as a result of the struggle by the Fourth International for the political independence of the working class, but saw it rather as a product arising from the activities of Stalinist bureaucrats, petty-bourgeois nationalists and other social forces that, under the pressure of events, were moving to the left. The task of the Fourth International, according to this conception, no longer consisted of fighting for socialist consciousness in the working class and developing the political strategy and tactics to enable workers to carry out their revolutionary role. Instead, the Pabloites saw their role as seeking out "revolutionary" tendencies inside the Stalinist bureaucracies and providing them support. This was nothing less than a formula for the liquidation of the Fourth International.

The Pabloites revised Trotsky's conception that the Stalinist bureaucracy was counterrevolutionary and ascribed to it a progressive role. In doing so, they reacted in a superficial and impressionist manner to political events following the Second World War.

Revolutionary movements of the working class had emerged towards the end of the war but were betrayed or directly suppressed by the Stalinist bureaucracy. To this end, the Communist parties in Italy and France actually entered bourgeois governments. In Soviet occupied Eastern Europe, they suffocated every independent popular movement. After

1948, however, the Stalinist bureaucracy felt forced to react to the aggressive US Cold War policy with anti-capitalist measures in the countries of Eastern Europe. In these lands, basic industry and the banking system, as well as media and transport, were either partly or completely nationalised.

Based on these events, Pablo concluded that, under pressure, Stalinism could play a revolutionary role. In so doing, he ignored the fact that the nationalisations took place without the active participation of the working class and were primarily aimed at preserving the position of the bureaucracy itself. He also ignored the fact that Stalinism continued to play a counterrevolutionary role on a world scale and brutally suppressed any independent movement of the working class—as was demonstrated by crushing of the workers' uprising of June 17, 1953, in East Germany and the popular revolt in Hungary in 1956.

For Pablo, social reality was no longer determined by the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat (in which Stalinism assumed the role of an agency of the bourgeoisie), but—as he wrote, literally—“objective social reality” consisted of the “capitalist regime” and the “Stalinist world.”

He even went so far as to describe the path to socialism as taking place over a period of “centuries of deformed workers states” similar to those that had developed in Eastern Europe. According to this theory, there was no need to build sections of the Fourth International. The existing organisations could function either as advisors for the Stalinist parties or dissolve themselves completely into the Stalinist apparatus.

Pablo adopted a similar stance to nationalist movements that were playing a leading role in the anti-imperialist struggle in the colonies. While Trotsky had emphasised that in those countries the working class must organise itself independently of the national bourgeoisie and refuse to trust the latter, Pablo advocated complete liquidation into the national movements. He eventually went to Algeria, where, as a minister in the government of Ben Bella, he assumed responsibility for the support and sponsorship of national movements throughout Africa. In this role, he worked closely with the Moscow bureaucracy.

Superficially, it may appear that the stance taken by the Pabloites in 1953 was more “practical,” “realistic” and “optimistic” than that of the International Committee, which insisted that the construction of a socialist society was only possible under the leadership of the working class and was conditional on the building of sections of the ICFI. In reality, the positions adopted by the Pabloites reflected a profound pessimism in the revolutionary potential of the working class.

I want to go into this question in more detail because similar positions have played an important role in the development of numerous political movements—in particular in Germany. Pablo and Mandel were by no means alone in their opinions, but rather were reacting to widespread ideological moods. Following the Second World War, there were numerous tendencies that cast doubts on the revolutionary potential of the working class. They sought the reasons for the defeats of the 1920s and 1930s not in the false political course of social democratic and Stalinist leaders, but in the social character of the working class itself.

The general conclusion they drew from a series of events—including the victims and devastation of the world war, the Nazi crimes that came to light at the end of the war, the wiping out of a generation of revolutionaries by Stalinism, the strangulation of revolutionary struggles by the Stalinist bureaucracy, and finally, the economic and political stabilisation and the relative strength of the social democratic and Stalinist parties at the beginning of the 1950s—was that the working class was organically incapable of playing a revolutionary role.

Typical in this respect is a document that was written in the last years of the war and first published in 1947—six years before the split in the Fourth International. The text explicitly states: “The impotence of the workers is not merely a stratagem of the rulers, but the logical consequence of the

industrial society.”

This thesis—that the impotence of the working class is the logical consequence of an industrialised society—is developed at length and repeated in various forms, for example: “The more complicated and precise the social, economic, and scientific apparatus with whose service the production system has long harmonised the body, the more impoverished the experiences which it can offer.” In this way, the “experiential world of nations” tends to be approximated “to that of the amphibians.”

Further down, the text speaks of “the enigmatic readiness of the technologically educated masses to fall under the sway of any despotism” and of their “self-destructive affinity to popular paranoia.” The working class is presented as a mob without a will of its own and prey to any and every form of right-wing demagoguery.

These sentences can be found in the book *Dialectic of Enlightenment* by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, a key work of the “Frankfurt School,” which up until today has had a lasting influence on German and international intellectual life. The 1968 student movement and the Green Party were, as we know, influenced considerably by the Frankfurt School.

Horkheimer and Adorno regarded themselves as left-wing critics of capitalism. They were even (wrongly) described by many as Marxists. However, they strictly rejected the Marxist standpoint that the revolutionary role of the working class is based on its objective status in capitalist society. They went so far as to claim that the development of capitalism and its contradictions served to increasingly paralyse the working class and make it incapable of revolutionary action. They portrayed the ruling capitalist class as all-powerful and able to exploit, manipulate and deceive workers at will.

“The ruled,” they write, “accept as unquestionable necessity the course of development that with every decreed rise in the standard of living makes them so much more powerless. When the standard of living of those who are still employed to service the machines can be assured with a minimal part of the working time available to the rulers of society, the superfluous remainder, the vast mass of the population, is drilled as yet another battalion—additional material to serve the present and future great plans of the system. The masses are fed and quartered as the army of unemployed. In their eyes, their reduction to mere objects of the administered life, which preforms every sector of modern existence including language and perception, represents objective necessity, against which they believe there is nothing they can do.”

This scenario leaves no place for the working class as a revolutionary subject. The only loophole offering a way out of this vicious circle for Horkheimer and Adorno is “critical thinking” (i.e., the critique of society by intellectuals such as themselves).

Pablo and Mandel did not go so far as Horkheimer and Adorno. But it is evident that in their turn to the Stalinist bureaucracy, which they presented as having the potential to carry out revolution, they were powerfully influenced by the ideas so clearly articulated by the founding figures of the Frankfurt School. They shared the latter's deep pessimism in the revolutionary nature of the working class, which they regarded merely as an object and not as a subject of history.

The conceptions adopted by the Pabloites had practical consequences. Their adaptation to Stalinism and petty-bourgeois nationalism in the name of the Fourth International served to cut off workers who came into conflict with the bureaucratic apparatuses from the revolutionary perspective of Marxism. At the same time, the Pabloites did everything in their power to isolate the Fourth International—even resorting to dirty tricks and provocations.

In Sri Lanka, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), politically supported by the Pabloites, entered a bourgeois coalition government, capitulated to Sinhala chauvinism and so created the basis for the bloody civil war that has continued up to the present day. In Latin America,

thousands of young people lost their lives after following the call of the Pabloites to take up guerrilla war. From their bases in the jungle, these fighters were cut off from the working class in the cities and became easy prey for the military and state-organised death squads.

But in the final analysis, the Pabloites were only able to isolate the International Committee because objective conditions were favourable to their policies. The domination of the working class by the Stalinist, reformist and trade union apparatuses, together with the grip of nationalist movements over the colonial masses, created great difficulties for the development of an independent movement of the working class.

Under these conditions, Pabloism also had repercussions for the International Committee itself. In 1963, the US Socialist Workers Party capitulated and joined up with the Pabloites to form the United Secretariat. In 1971, the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) broke with the International Committee and in turn became an important prop for the Socialist Party of François Mitterrand. In the 1990s, many of the most important positions in the Socialist Party—including the post of French prime minister—were occupied by long-time, former cadre of the OCI. Finally, in the course of the 1970s, the British Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) increasingly reverted to Pabloite positions.

The break with the WRP in 1985-1986 represented a shift in the relation of forces between Pabloite opportunism and the revolutionary Marxism of the International Committee. This break was an anticipation of the collapse of the most powerful bureaucratic apparatus to which Pabloism had turned—the Stalinist Kremlin bureaucracy. Since then, the Pabloites have disintegrated, or—as in the case of Brazil, Italy and France—are in the process of fully entering into the camp of bourgeois politics. For its part, the ICFI and its organ the *World Socialist Web Site* have increasingly won influence and are acknowledged today as the genuine voice of Marxism.

This transformation in the relation of forces has its source in objective processes. The bureaucratic apparatuses and petty-bourgeois formations towards which Pabloism oriented have been torn apart by the polarisation that has taken place in capitalist society. There is no longer a middle course to be taken between bourgeois reaction, embodied by the US Bush administration and establishment parties all over the world that are increasingly following the Bush lead on the one hand, and international proletarian revolution embodied by the ICFI on the other.

Fifty years after the publication of the Open Letter, it is possible to draw up a balance sheet of Pabloism.

What has become of Pablo's "centuries of deformed workers states"?

For 40 years, the Pabloite Unified Secretariat has scrupulously searched the Stalinist bureaucracy for revolutionary and left-wing currents and detected ever new ones. In one of Mandel's last books is glowing praise of Soviet leader Michael Gorbachev. The book was dedicated to Boris Yeltsin. Barely was the print dry when the real significance of Gorbachev's politics became clear for everyone to see—the liquidation of the Soviet Union. Trotsky's own prognoses for the Soviet Union had been confirmed. In the 1930s, he had already warned that either the working class would overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy or the bureaucracy would destroy the accomplishments of the October Revolution and restore capitalism. The Soviet and international working class paid and continues to pay a high price for this defeat.

What has been the fate of the national movements that were praised so fulsomely by Pablo and Mandel?

In their entirety, they have sought to make their peace with imperialism. Not one of them was able to achieve any real degree of independence from imperialism. In those countries where they were able to take power, they have established free trade zones and have opened up the borders for the exploitation of the working class by imperialist concerns. This is the case in China, Vietnam, South Africa, Nicaragua—the list could be continued at will. In those countries where the nationalist movements

remain suppressed, they are courting favour with the US in the hope of being received on the lawn of the White House like Yasser Arafat—but with decreasing hopes of success, as Arafat's own fate demonstrates.

The most pathetic example of all is that of Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Öcalan. Although he is being held under the most degrading of circumstances, he continues to offer his services to the Turkish and international bourgeoisie as a guarantor for order in the Middle East. Another example is the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka. It is striving to achieve a deal allowing for power-sharing with the Sinhala bourgeoisie in order to open up the north and east of the island to transnational companies.

The perspectives fought for by Trotsky and the International Committee have been completely vindicated: the liberation from national suppression is only possible as a by-product of the proletarian revolution. Outstanding democratic tasks can only be resolved under the leadership of the working class. For an entire period, the path to this solution had been blocked by the subordination of the working class to bourgeois nationalism encouraged by the Pabloites.

The political bankruptcy of the Pabloite organisations does not mean they will simply disappear. In light of the collapse of the old bureaucratic parties, the bourgeoisie is increasingly looking towards the revisionist milieu as potential recruits for its future ruling personnel.

We have already witnessed the way in which the 1968 protest generation—influenced by Adorno and Horkheimer—has risen to take up prominent government posts. It would be too simplistic to hold the ideas of the Frankfurt School as such responsible for the career of Joschka Fischer. Nevertheless, there is an underlying political logic to his passage from street fighter to German foreign minister. In the politics of the street fighter, who substitutes the education of the working class with punch-ups with the police, we can find the same contempt for the working class that characterises today's foreign minister—a contempt that was theoretically underpinned by Horkheimer and Adorno.

The taking up of posts in bourgeois governments is not restricted merely to former members of the 1968 protest movement such as Fischer, who in the 1970s turned towards the Green Party. This list also includes former or current so-called "Trotskyists." The most well known of them all is without doubt the former French prime minister, Lionel Jospin, who was a member of the OCI for two decades.

The editor-in-chief of the leading French daily newspaper *Le Monde*, Edwy Plenel, is also a former Pabloite. He was a member of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) in the 1970s and was a member of both its central committee and editorial board (for the newspaper *Rouge*) for a period of time. Two years ago, he published a biography in which he proudly acknowledged his political past and boasted that there were tens of thousands in France who had gone through a similar school.

The French establishment is now familiarising itself with the idea that a proposed electoral alliance of the LCR and Lutte Ouvrière (LO) could record considerable successes in European and regional elections due to take place next year. There are a number of indications that the LCR would be prepared to take up posts in a bourgeois government. In the spring of 2002, the organisation had called for a vote for Jacques Chirac in the second round of presidential elections. Whoever calls for a vote for a conservative bourgeois politician will not shrink from entering a bourgeois government.

In other countries, organisations affiliated to the Pabloite Unified Secretariat have been playing an important role in bourgeois politics for some time. In Brazil, the Pabloites dissolved themselves into the Workers Party of "Lula" (Luis Inacio da Silva), who is now the president of the country. The Pabloites have a minister in the government and several members of parliament, as well as numerous other members in leading positions at a local and regional level.

In Italy, the Pabloites have been active for a long time inside the Partito

della Rifondazione Comunista (PRC). Livio Maitan, who emerged as the most important leader of the United Secretariat after the death of Mandel, is a member of the PRC Central Committee and is one of the most significant advisors to the leader of the party, Fausto Bertinotti. Between 1994 and 2001, Rifondazione played a key role in maintaining the centre-left government in power as it undertook to trim the national budget as a precondition for entry into the European Currency Union by dismantling large parts of the Italian welfare state. On a number of occasions, the centre-left government faced parliamentary votes of confidence and depended on support from the PRC for its survival.

Even in the US, probably the most anticommunist of Western countries, it is possible to witness the incorporation of Pabloites into official bourgeois politics. In the recent recall election in California, the leading candidate of the Green Party was Peter Camejo, who at an earlier stage in his career had stood as presidential candidate for the Socialist Workers Party. In the 1960s, Camejo played an important role in expelling supporters of the International Committee from the youth organisation of the SWP. In the course of the election campaign, Camejo was handled in a surprisingly friendly manner by the establishment. In a country that demonstrates little scruple in digging out the most intimate details in a person's private life in order to blacken his name, nobody bothered to address Camejo's "Trotskyist" past.

The fact that the bourgeoisie now sees itself obliged to call on the services of Pabloites is an indication of the extent of its crisis. The gulf that separates the International Committee and Pabloism today is the gulf between workers' power and bourgeois rule.

Today the ICFI is not yet a mass movement, but its programme gives the international working class a voice and a conscious expression. This is confirmed by the growing readership of the WSWS. It has established itself as the most-read international socialist web site on the Internet.

The "founding principles" cited by James P. Cannon 50 years ago have been confirmed and retain their validity. Let me end my contribution by quoting these principles as formulated in the Open Letter:

"1. The death agony of the capitalist system threatens the destruction of civilisation through worsening depressions, world wars and barbaric manifestations like fascism...

"2. The descent into the abyss can be avoided only by replacing capitalism with the planned economy of socialism on a world scale and thus resuming the spiral of progress opened up by capitalism in its early days.

"3. This can be accomplished only under the leadership of the working class in society. But the working class itself faces a crisis in leadership although the world relationship of social forces was never as favourable as today for the workers to take the road to power.

"To organise itself for carrying out this world-historic aim, the working class in each country must construct a revolutionary socialist party in the pattern developed by Lenin; that is, a combat party capable of dialectically combining democracy and centralism."



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**