New today--Two letters on "'Socialism 2010': The politics of the International Socialist Organization"

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Thank you for this important article on the disastrous politics of the International Socialist Organization. This article could only have been written by a Marxist organization like the SEP and ICFI, because every other group out there is in one way or another doing exactly what the ISO is doing. Therefore to attack the ISO would be in many ways attacking their own organization. I really wonder why is it that all these groups aren't in the same organization.

Hopefully, the arguments raised by David Walsh reach not only all those people who are looking for an alternative to capitalism, but also reaches the membership of the ISO. See, some of the members in the ISO, to be honest, don't know any better than what the leadership tells them. I say that as a former member of the ISO.

The ISO leadership consciously keeps its membership ignorant of real Marxism and history of Trotskyism. Some may say how can that be true, if the ISO's book store carries books by Marx, Trotsky and Lenin. My response is: yes, that is true—but almost everything that the membership is encouraged to read and study is some interpretation of what Marx, Lenin and Trotsky wrote, that was written by an ISO leader.

For example, if you read what Trotsky wrote about the United Front, you would know that Trotsky never argued that in the united front socialists should build a reformist party like the middle class Green party. Well, according to the ISO's interpretation of Trotsky's United Front, supporting the Green Party and running as Greens such as the ISO did in California is part of the united front.

Also, some individual ISO members really are against the Democrats and the Green Party, but no matter what they feel as individuals, being in the ISO will eventually in practice force them to support the Democrats, because that is just part of the makeup of a group like the ISO. Therefore, in order to fight for the independence of the working class and against the Democrats, you have to break with groups like the ISO, because they tie the working class to the Democrats, as was showed very well by David Walsh.

Not surprisingly the ISO and such groups would call David Walsh's articles "sectarian." After all, one of the first lessons you get in the ISO is that you are a "sectarian" if you take principled positions such as fighting for the independence of the working class. But articles like these are important because they clarify the way forward for the working class, and put in front the politics that are needed for a socialist revolution.

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It is doing a great service to workers and students to make them beware of the program, affiliations and class outlook of organizations such as the ISO, which supports corporate trade union bureaucrats such as Sal Rosselli who are representative of the whole apparatus.

Rosselli became the main leader of the Sacramento and San Francisco Bay Area SEIU after defeating another, less-conservative wing of the union in 1989. After his faction won the contested election, his hand-picked, self-proclaimed union "business agent" in the Santa Cruz area, Tim McCormick, did everything possible to divide our group of newly-organized Non-Emergency Transport Drivers from the Paramedics who had been united with us. McCormick, with the full backing of Rosselli, vehemently opposed any master contracts expiring on the same date, and insisted on

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settling a separate contract with the Paramedics, thereby isolating our struggle.

We were told that if we went on strike, the local Santa Cruz Labor Council that was controlled by the SEIU and Rosselli would not support us in any way. This group bragged to workers and employers about settling contracts with few strikes and 2 percent wage increases. Nurses aides would tell us how McCormick, when making his rounds of the Nursing Homes, would go straight to the Human Resources Dept. and talk to management instead of meeting with the workers about their grievances. He was later promoted to head the Santa Cruz Labor Council.

Under pressure from and opposed by an alliance of the employer, the government NLRB, and the trade unions, we ended up voting not to strike and gained very little. This was a big mistake and capitulation on our part—for if we had gone on strike, we would have gotten some rank-and-file support around the city and our struggle would have led to a real political education among workers about the filthy, traitorous role of this triple alliance against the working class.

Any organization such as the ISO which collaborates with and allows anti-working class strike-breakers such as Sal Rosselli to speak at their conference is acting as an accomplice of these trade union engineers of defeat and preparing catastrophes in the future.

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