

Letters from our readers

19 July 2011

On “The International Socialist Organization’s perspective in tatters”

The WSWS’s wonderful David Walsh has to be one of the most versatile writers I’ve ever read: art, cultural problems, pseudo-socialist organizations; what topic can’t he nail?

I am glad the WSWS is continuing to keep tabs on the International Socialist Organization—a typical middle class group supporting the Democratic Party who hide behind a pale invocation of the heritage of socialism. Walsh is right to review the ties between the ISO and the *Nation*, because the political and class content of these two outfits is the same though the form differs superficially.

Covering the flank of the bourgeois parties by adopting the title “socialist” is nothing new. The ICFI was founded to combat this tendency, manifest most prominently and dangerously in Pabloism. For several decades—notably in the 1960s—the role of Pabloism in the United States was fulfilled by the Socialist Workers Party. Today the ISO seeks to occupy the position themselves.

Whatever their mealy-mouthed criticisms of the Democrats and fleeting references to Marx and Trotsky, their only real political strategy—as Walsh notes—is to reinforce the “left” side of bourgeois politics. Here is another telling quote from a July 14 article entitled “The Two Parties Agree On Austerity”:

“...[E]ven within the Democratic Party, there will be opposition to Obama’s full embrace of Republican priorities. There may be opposition to the deal struck among some Democrats in Congress. There is also likely to be a relatively serious challenge to Obama in the Democratic primaries. This will open up more space for socialist politics.”

!!!

TJM
Massachusetts, USA
18 July 2011

Thank you, and thank you and thank you for this article on the ISO—I’ve been watching them for years—bending this way and that, whichever way the wind blows, but never looking back with any sense of history.

Indeed, interactions with some of their members have shown me that they have no regard for their own party’s history, let alone history on a larger scale. One young, trusting member was unaware that the ISO had supported Nader—twice, because “I only joined last year”. This is pitiful on many levels, not least of which being that a fairly intelligent person had his first introduction to “socialism” through this opportunistic organization. He also noted that the ISO might team up with Nader’s current project, Peoples’ Progress Party (or some such) “If it got popular enough”!!

This group is rotten to the core and will never be anything else; their inability and unwillingness to examine mistakes they have made (or admit them!), their commitment to identity politics, and the idea of “pressuring” the powers that be and the actions they take when themselves on various boards all point to the truth: they are enemies of the working class.

Christie S
Washington, USA
18 July 2011

This was a concise and powerful article clearly presenting the difference in perspectives and class character between the SEP and ISO. It should be made into a pamphlet and widely distributed.

I would also like to know if the ISO addresses this article in some way, but it’s perfectly clear they have no intention of ever doing so, just as they avoid facing any issue in a principled manner. In any case, a highly commendable piece, which, with some names changed, is totally applicable internationally as well.

In revolutionary solidarity,

Mirko
18 July 2011

On “The European debt crisis and the threat of dictatorship”

Good article by Stefan Steinberg. In Britain the threat to the banking system is just as real, as UK banks have a great deal of exposure to Greek debt through their holdings of French banks. When the domino effect hits the banking system, then we could face the danger of more authoritarian governments in the UK, especially if both the Labour Party and trade unions are unable to hold back workers’ anger at the increase in austerity programmes. This is why it’s vital to build a revolutionary party now rather than wait until the crisis fully explodes.

Dave T
UK
16 July 2011

On “Fissures deepen over European debt crisis”

Ah, a return of die *ubermensch* and Nietzsche. We should all recall what this led to last time.

John S
15 July 2011

On “Obama presses case for ‘something big’ on social spending cuts”

What could be more transparent than the president’s intended audience in this press conference: the Wall Street banks. He is saying, in language whose content cannot be missed by any but the most narcoleptic, “I am your (Wall Street’s) man. I am staking out a position to the right of the Tea Party wing of the Republican Party (in cuts to the working

population). I am already in the office, running as an incumbent with several times the bankrolling of the Republican Party's stable of shrunken and stunted candidates. With a certain demagogic hold on key layers of liberal social Democrats."

Barring a social explosion (intervention by the American working class), the slashing of \$2-4 trillion in social spending will leave America a very altered landscape in a very short while.

G
Wisconsin, USA
17 July 2011

Patrick Martin's clear assessment of how massive reductions in entitlements will affect the most vulnerable is material that every aging person needs to read, re-read and digest. It is abundantly proven by President Obama himself; he is the leading agent and catalyst of the New America, a country moving beyond raw capitalism (financialization) to tyrannical capitalism (I call it fascistic). Like every analyst at WSWS, I have claimed and written of Obama's false credentials and "mentalism" for many years, to no avail. While it took a mainstream columnist at the *Washington Post* to finally "discover" Obama's transparent speciousness, it is all too little and too late.

For the baby boomer now over 62, plan ahead. For those elderly and poor already living at the poverty line, living in a Tea Party state or suffering from any catastrophic illness, the future is bleak if not life threatening. It's every man and woman for him/herself in what is shaping up to be a financial/corporatist/military government wearing a veneer of Libertarianism. Unless this country falls upon its own sword or leadership diametrically changes direction, the future will "feel" like 1930s Germany. To the poor, disabled and elderly, it will be!

As a member of the most vilified generation (the 1960s) my reply might be your reply: "No! No! No! America, I will NOT be your victim!"

Michael B
Maine, USA
17 July 2011

On "States axe higher education budgets, hike tuition"

I live in the state of Washington where tuition for community colleges just went up by 12 percent. Washington State University just went up 20 percent. Tuition cost keep rising making us the most expensive colleges in the country. I no longer can afford to keep up with the cost of tuition; many students have found their financial aid cut or reduced dramatically. The college textbooks alone keep going up. For example, a college textbook that cost \$150 last May now cost \$250 or more. Our governor made campaign promises that she would increase financial aid, and she was a strong supporter for higher education. She has done nothing but cut our state college's budgets and help raise tuition, where it is now out of control.

Paul
Washington, USA
17 July 2011

On "Remote control murder: Afghan drones operated from Nevada and Virginia"

I'd like to thank the writer for their effort in a very informative article.

From half a world away various military powers can remotely eliminate impoverished peoples indiscriminately. How can it be that technology of such great potential is utilized in such a murderous fashion?

These misappropriated resources could be channeled constructively into a plethora of ingenious endeavors for the benefit of humans. The catastrophe of the nuclear meltdown at Fukushima is one example where this technology could be possibly used to prevent laborers that are trying to contain the site from being sacrificially exposed to great quantities of radiation.

There is no rationale for further continuation of the murderously exploitative bourgeois system. It has been thoroughly bankrupted for a long time. Now is the time for the international working class to take the leadership and reorganize society into a planned socialist system.

Steve J
15 July 2011

On "Canada's military to establish base in Kuwait in push for global presence"

Thank you for this article, with some very useful quotes for someone like me, who is truly troubled by Canada's contributions to escalating militarism.

All the best,
Jan
Canada
16 July 2011

On "New York Times questions spending on 'Extremely Expensive Cancer Drugs'"

Death by Statistics. The recent controversy over Avastin as a treatment for metastatic breast cancer illustrates what we are in for as long as the statisticians rule.

All deaths are not equal. A long painful death from cancer is qualitatively different from a sudden heart attack, though the result is the same.

If decisions are to be made by the numbers, statisticians or others need to find a way to measure qualitative factors in human health.

Kathleen H
New York, USA
14 July 2011



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