

International Socialist Organization UW Chapter Constitution

Article I – Name

Section 1 The name of this organization shall be The International Socialist Organization UW Chapter, abbreviated as ISOUW. This name shall be used in all materials pertaining to the functions, actions, promotion, and membership of this organization.

Article II – Purpose

Section 1 ISOUW, as an affiliate of the International Socialist Organization (ISO), puts forth the political stance that a world without exploitation is not only possible, but worth fighting for, and that it is through socialism that this world can come into being. The ISO, and by extension the ISOUW, stands in the tradition of revolutionary socialists Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky in the belief that workers themselves-- the vast majority of the population-- are the only force that can lead the fight to win a socialist society. Socialism can't be brought about from above (i.e. through electoral politics), but has to be won by workers themselves.

Section 2 To further this cause, the UWISO seeks to educate the student body of UW through discussion groups oriented around reading both classical Marxist writings and those of contemporary civil rights activists, and to engage them in direct, grass-roots activism that opposes the injustices of our capitalist society, and builds solidarity among the ranks of workers and the oppressed so that we can truly become a movement capable of shaping a better world.

Article III – Affiliations

Section 1 ISOUW is affiliated both with the local Seattle branch of the International Socialist Organization (ISO), and thus, by extension, the ISO as a whole. The primary element of this relationship is that the political outlook of this chapter is shaped by the ISO, specifically the 6 articles of the ISO's "Where We Stand", as stated in Appendix I. Beyond this, Haymarket Books, which is affiliated with the ISO, will be the source of many of the materials ISOUW may be reading in its study groups.

Article IV – Membership

Section 1 The majority of the membership of the ISOUW shall consist of regularly enrolled undergraduate and graduate students of the University of Washington. Only those who are currently registered as University of Washington students have voting privilege.

Section 2 "Associate members", including UW faculty and staff and other individuals not affiliated with University of Washington who participate in these meetings will not have voting privileges, but may contribute to the debate period which may precede any vote, as described in Article VI.

Section 3 In addition, while we may encourage members of the ISOUW to also join the International Socialist Organization, ISO membership is not required for ISOUW membership.

Article V – Officers

- Section 1 The officers of the ISOUW, to be referred to as the “Organizing Committee”, shall consist of 5 individuals who are selected through membership voting as described in Article VI. The duties of these 5 individuals will be dynamic, and thus, there will be no differentiation in title: all will be known as “comrade”. This committee shall be responsible for arranging the meeting spaces for the events, maintaining the rules of order at meetings (see Article VII), communicating information to members about meetings and events of interest, monitoring the organization's finances, and reaching out to the UW community to increase our ranks. At any time, the membership of the Organizing Committee may be re-selected through election as described in Article VI.
- Section 2 Any member of the Organizing Committee must agree with the 6 articles of the ISO's Where We Stand, as described in Appendix I.
- Section 3 The term of each Organizing Committee comrade will be one year from October 1 to September 31. Should a comrade be assigned to Organizing Committee through an election after January 1st, their term of office shall be from that day until the 31st of September. When elections are called, it is permissible to vote a comrade from the last Organizing Committee onto the upcoming one.
- Section 4 Removal of a comrade from the Organizing Committee will be possible through the decisionmaking process as described in Article VI, and will require a vote of 2/3rds of membership. An election must be held to select a replacement comrade within 2-weeks of time, allowing pause in accordance with any breaks in the academic quarter.

Article VI – Elections and Decisionmaking Votes

- Section 1 Elections to determine the Organizing Committee will be held in the month of September. The Organizing Committee will notify current members through both an email list and a Facebook page for the organization at least 3 weeks in advance.
- Section 2 However, should a vacancy arise in the Organizing Committee through expulsion, resignation, or disqualification (i.e. a graduating student can no longer hold membership in an RSO), notification of this lesser election will be given a week in advance through those same channels.
- Section 3 Members may make proposals of “Organizing Slates”, or 5 individuals that they choose to occupy Organizing Committee. Through the email list and the Facebook page, members may campaign for their choice in Slate. Only a Slate whose members all consent to being a part of Organizing Committee may be considered valid. But on the meeting designated as the election day, all proposed Slates will be presented at once.
- Section 4 These slates will then be voted upon through a tiered voting system: if at first pass no Slate receives a majority of the vote, then the individuals who voted for the least popular Slate may reassign their votes, and the least popular slate will be eliminated from the options. If no slate holds a majority at this point, the next least popular slate may reassign their votes accordingly. This process will

continue until a Slate is chosen by the majority.

- Section 5 In addition, at any time, decisions about various functions of the organization, such as books to read, times and places to meet, and more serious proposals such as removal of a comrade from Organizing Committee and Constitutional Amendments may be held at any time. For any of these things to be brought to vote, one member must make a proposal, and a second member must second the motion.
- Section 6 If any member proposes there should be discussion before the vote, a period of time will be allotted to this discussion.
- Section 7 For minor decisions (such as meeting times and book choices), a greater than 50% voting share majority is sufficient to pass. For major decisions such as removal of members or comrades from Organizing Committee and proposing Constitutional Amendments, 2/3rds will be required.

Article VII –Meetings

- Section 1 Meetings shall be held weekly, and it will be incumbent upon Organizing Committee to make sure that information about when the meetings are scheduled to take place is broadcast on both the email list and the Facebook page. Unless voted otherwise, prior to breaks and vacations, meetings will not occur during times where class is not in session.
- Section 2 A quorum shall consist of 5 members.
- Section 3 In addition, at each meeting, Organizing Committee will designate one person to be the “Chair” of the meeting. The primary role of the Chair will be to observe the rules of order for meetings, as described in Article IX, Bylaws.

Article VIII – Executive Board

- Section 1 As stated in Article V, the management of this organization shall be in the hands of Organizing Committee, the slate of leaders and organizers elected by the membership of ISOUW.
- Section 2 There will be no differentiation in title or degree of power on the Organizing Committee, itself.
- Section 3 The primary power invested in this body is the organizing of the meeting structure, itself, including the selection of Chair at meetings, and control of the email list and Facebook page that will be used as the media of communication within the group. In addition, it will be the responsibility of the Organizing Committee to follow up with individuals who volunteer to perform responsibilities for ISOUW, such as printing fliers or contacting other individuals, to make sure they complete their tasks. Beyond this, as many decisions as possible will be delegated to elections within the general membership.
- Section 4 Reports to membership will be tendered on a quarterly basis at minimum, although minutes from meetings (a task which may be delegated to any willing volunteer at the meetings with the consent of Organizing Committee) will be circulated at the end of each meeting.

Article IX – Bylaws of Discussion

Section 1 The meetings of the ISOUW will be kept to the rules of order known as the “progressive stack”: an individual referred to as the Chair, who will be selected by Organizing Committee, will be responsible for taking down the names of those who wish to speak. Those who wish to speak will indicate that they wish to do so by raising their hands, and they will know they are added to stack when the Chair makes eye contact and nods with them. The Chair will then let people know when they may speak by going down the list of names they have written down. While people will generally be permitted to speak in the order that they raised their hands, priority will be given to those whose voices are marginalized in our society, such as women, people of color, queer peoples, etc. In addition, priority will be given to those who have not spoken yet. Comments will be limited to 3 minutes, at which point the speaker will be told to wrap up.

Appendix I – Where We Stand

Preface The “Where We Stand” article, which is available at: <http://www.internationalsocialist.org/pdfs/WhereWeStandPamphlet.pdf> describes the politics of the ISO at large, which ISOUW is affiliated with. While participants in the meetings do not necessarily have to agree with each of the 6 stances described in this appendix, this text does generally describe the politics of the ISO, and it is required that those who wish to be part of Organizing Committee agree upon and act to fulfill with these 6 points. This appendix lists the summary of the 6 points of unity of the ISO:

Section 1 Socialism, Not Capitalism

War, poverty, exploitation, oppression and worldwide environmental destruction are products of the capitalist system, a system in which a minority ruling class profits from the labor of the majority. The alternative is socialism, a society based on workers collectively owning and controlling the wealth their labor creates. This is the society we aim to create.

Section 2 Workers' Power

Workers create society's wealth, but have no control over its production and distribution. A socialist society can only be built when workers collectively take control of that wealth and democratically plan its production and distribution according to present and future human needs instead of profit.

The working class is the vast majority of society and is the key to the fight for socialism. Workers' central role in production gives them a social power--by use of the strike weapon--to paralyze the system like no other social force.

Section 3 Revolution

We actively support the struggle of workers and all oppressed people for economic, political and social reforms, both as a means to improve their conditions and to advance their confidence and fighting strength. But reforms within the capitalist system cannot put an end to oppression, exploitation or

ecological devastation. Capitalism must be replaced.

The structures of the present government grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect capitalist rule. The working class needs an entirely different kind of state--a democratic workers' state based on councils of workers' delegates.

Section 4 **Internationalism**

Capitalism is an international system, so the struggle for socialism must be international, uniting workers of all countries. The international working class is the only force capable of solving global problems like war, hunger and environmental destruction.

Socialists oppose imperialism--the division of the globe based on the subjugation of weaker nations by stronger ones--and support the self-determination of oppressed nations. We oppose all immigration controls.

Section 5 **Full Equality and Liberation**

Capitalism divides the working class, based on sexual, gender, racial, national and other distinctions. The specially oppressed groups within the working class suffer the most under capitalism.

We oppose racism in all its forms. We support the struggle for immigrant rights. We fight for real social, economic and political equality for women, and for an end to discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. We support the fight for Black liberation and all the struggles of the oppressed. The liberation of the oppressed is essential to socialist revolution and impossible without it.

Section 6 **The Revolutionary Party**

To achieve socialism, the most militant workers must be organized into a revolutionary socialist party. The ISO is committed to playing a role in laying the foundations for such a party. We aim to build an independent socialist organization, rooted in workplaces, schools and neighborhoods that, in fighting today's struggles, also wins larger numbers to socialism.