

Tony Williams

Why I read the WSWWS

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I began reading the WSWWS approximately 10 years ago and became impressed with the depth and lucidity of its political and economic coverage. What most stimulated me was its constant championship and respect for the working class, often ignored and marginalized by many post-Marxist critics. How often did I hear the phrase, “The working class doesn’t exist any more” following screenings of independent films during that short-lived movement of alternative cinema in England during the early ’80s. Similarly, my frustration grew with the dismissal of classical Marxism and the crucial axiom of the role of the revolutionary proletariat at any point of history, no matter how dismal the prospects may appear at certain moments. While others championed Hindess and Hirst’s jargon-ridden works and the obscurantist ideas of Althusser, Foucault, and Lacan, I felt a hesitation. The WSWWS confirmed something I intuitively felt—these works bore no relation to the everyday struggles of working people and were in reality hostile to any form of revolution.

The WSWWS has long exposed the reactionary nature of the Democratic Party that many people still cling to, despite evidence to the contrary. It is no longer the party of the New Deal and FDR (problematic though these associations are). Those of an older generation cling to this belief with a stubborn nostalgia despite evidence to the contrary, evidence they refuse to consider. Such is the power of self-willed delusion and ideology. This is certainly the case for those who consider Obama the new FDR who will change things for the better. As we all know, his idea of “change” is change for the worse. He has done things that George W. never dreamed of doing, and his attack on the Constitution and Bill of Rights would evoke a charge of justified impeachment were the Republican Party less lunatic than it is now.

Middle East coverage and revelation of the real nature of Israel are key merits of this site. But I wish there were more criticism of fundamentalist thugs such as those who attempted to murder the Afghan girl campaigning for female education in her country and those vigilante groups in Europe who brutalize women and gays. Condemning these incidents does not mean you play into the hands of the enemy. Any critique should be even-handed for Left as well as Right. It should not show favoritism as certain people do with Paul Buhle and Dave Wagner who do not do their historical work in cinema any good by their inaccuracies. All this does is supply ammunition to the enemy.

The WSWWS also has stimulated me to read the works of Trotsky apart from *Literature and Revolution*. His magnificent *History of the Russian Revolution* is one of the key works of this period. Written by a participant fully aware of historical influences and cognizant as to why October had to happen at that particular time, it is essential reading for anyone seriously interested in that subject, as well as his critical interrogations of Stalinism, the decline of the Soviet Union, and the effect of bad policies that made the situations in Britain, China, France, and Germany much worse than they could have been. Naturally, our era is different, and the same circumstances do not apply. Yet Trotsky’s writings present an intelligent and lucid analysis of what was happening at that time and present a very positive precedent for the type of critique we need today, a critique provided by WSWWS.

I’ve left culture for last, but it is not least. This is an area I work in, and the cultural work of David Walsh, Joanne Laurier, Hiram, and many others form an essential antidote to what passes for criticism in the mainstream. How often have I welcomed the devastating critiques made of Tarantino, a director

applauded by a Hollywood community that always closes ranks against any justified criticism (as with Bigelow, though we do have dissenting voices like Ed Asner and Martin Sheen) that I find nowhere else. The same is true for Scorsese, a director whose work has adversely deteriorated over the past three decades who would be better employed back at NYU teaching classical cinema rather than making modern reactionary atrocities. Here WSWS says things that really need to be said in a mainstream dominated by *Entertainment Today* and many university departments whose chairs tell faculty to “bite their tongues” and not make justified caustic remarks against someone regarded as “cool” at a particular time by unthinking students.

Both culturally and politically, WSWS has made very important contributions to informed thought, encouraging debate and, sometimes, disagreement. What is important is not just its existence but its role as a positive inheritor of the ideal of the Fourth International established by one of the great figures of the 20th century who saw the need for change (but not in the manner of our Louis Lepke Buchalter in the Oval Office!) that engages not a small, controlling vanguard but a group that reaches out to the working classes, takes them seriously, does not treat them with contempt, and wishes to make things much better than they are now.

Except for the privileged few, nobody can really accept our current state of affairs assuming they have critical and rational minds. Yet many do not, and this makes the struggle hard, but necessary.

Things must change. Money and dehumanization can not dominate relationships in a world that needs human dignity, freedom from hunger and oppression, and the right to progressive, non-military related employment, and free education.

WSWS embodies all these ideals. Let’s hope for another 15 years and much better ones!



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