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Why I read the WSWS

28 February 2013

As a teenager, and later as a university student—I am now 30—I have always had a sort of instinctual, semi-conscious sympathy for the downtrodden and exploited.

However, the almost imperceptible and ever-present influence of middle-class idealist ideologies in academic circles made me adopt—without ever becoming conscious of the process—various half-anarchist and post-modernist positions. I was reading people like Bertrand Russell or Noam Chomsky, thought that all written history inevitably reflects the writer's bias and we can never “objectively” validate or disprove different “narratives”, and so was determined never to fall under the influence of any “ideology”, but to compare various sources and look for the truth “somewhere in the middle”. I was disgusted by and rejected all “politics”. While all this made me consider myself pretty “enlightened”, “individualistic” and “free”, I was in fact shallow, impressionable and disoriented.

Then I found the WSWS. I think it must have been sometime in the autumn of 2008. Having long ago abandoned television as a source of information, I was trying to find on the internet a credible explanation of the sudden financial crisis, and how come a collapse of one institution I never heard of halfway around the world could have such a direct impact on my personal life.

I don't exactly remember how I first discovered the website, but it wasn't long before I was turning to it every day. Even though I still lacked theoretical and historical knowledge to understand what was really meant by the finishing paragraphs calling for nationalizations, international revolution and strengthening of the party etc., I appreciated the depth of analysis and firmness of principles revealed in every article.

I remember as early as 2009 I started openly

preaching revolution to co-workers. However, this opened more questions than I could answer at the time. Where and how could such a revolution come about? If it is “objectively necessary” isn't any leadership superfluous, and even elitist? Hasn't all this been tried and failed already? And, coming from a country ruled and destroyed by Stalinism, what are we to make of that period and that regime?

I knew I had to learn more. Capitalism blessed me with extremes of excessive overwork and forced idleness. The latter periods provided the time for reading and researching. The WSWS provided the general direction. Through works on and by Trotsky and Lenin, I got acquainted with the overall international framework in which the workers' and communist movement developed, especially in the 20th century.

I next turned to the national stage of my home country, Serbia. I learned a lot about the first pioneers of socialism in the late 19th century; the establishment of the Serbian Social Democratic Party and its early fights against reformists and social-patriots until the end of the First World War; the founding of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and its struggle with centrists immediately after the war; the White Terror and the vicious attack on the whole working class—and especially its party—begun by the bourgeoisie in the early 1920s; the Stalinisation of the party in the late 1920s, resulting in the complete stifling of intellectual life in the party, which ended up merely following all the zigzags of Comintern policies through the 1930s and 1940s; the organizational break with Stalin in 1948, even after which the Yugoslav party remained theoretically wholly within the framework of Stalinism.

Historically closer events, uniquely covered by the WSWS, include how imperialism found in the Stalinist bureaucracy willing accomplices in whipping up

nationalism and fomenting fratricidal war in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the NATO war in Kosovo in 1999 and the West-organized fall of Milosevic in 2000. On all these various questions I was able to find in the WSWS at least a general guide for my personal efforts, and at best, diligently researched and brilliantly presented finished analysis.

I therefore cannot thank the WSWS enough for helping me escape the intellectual dead end of post-modernism, and above all for revealing the inner workings and true meaning of the historical process, as well as the objective method of its continual analysis—historical materialism.

But all this does not even begin to exhaust the extent of my gratitude to the WSWS. For it is not enough to analyze the world, we must change it. And in order to change it, we, as a class, desperately need a party.

I would like to quote here from Trotsky's magnificent History of the Russian Revolution. In Volume 3, in the chapter "The Art of Insurrection", Trotsky, listing different important premises for a revolution to succeed, says:

"It is indeed the general testimony of history—the Paris Commune, the German and Austrian revolutions of 1918, the Soviet revolutions in Hungary and Bavaria, the Italian revolution of 1919, the German crisis of 1923, the Chinese revolution of 1925-1927, the Spanish revolution of 1931 [we could easily add recent examples of Tunisia and Egypt]—that up to now the weakest link in the chain of necessary conditions has been the party. The hardest thing of all is for the working class to create a revolutionary organisation capable of rising to the height of its historic task."

This "hardest thing of all" is just what the WSWS and SEP are tirelessly working on. This is precisely what we mean when we say that "the historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership". Being a member of the most conscious, the most principled, and the most revolutionary party in the world is the biggest satisfaction for a revolutionary. And the WSWS is the essential scaffolding for the construction and reinforcement of such a party.



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