

Robert Fowler

Why I read the WSWs

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I first found the World Socialist Web Site on November 30, 2010 after being introduced to it by a poet friend in Ireland. We were having tea and a left wing rant or two in his apartment and at a certain point in the conversation he nudged his laptop in my direction and said, “take a look at that chief”—suggesting I read the WSWs review of the revival of the Tony Kushner play *Angels in America*. I was immediately struck by what I considered to be an accurate and objective criticism of Kushner’s abilities as an artist—and indeed his political outlook. At one point the review criticized Kushner’s assertion in the play that “Gorbachev is the greatest political thinker since Lenin.” Although at this point in my life I was not yet a scientific socialist I knew that such an opinion from the playwright was ridiculous, so it was a relief to read the brief and clear-cut analysis of Gorbachev’s regime in the review.

As an artist myself I was becoming increasingly frustrated with the liberal milieu but couldn’t articulate my frustrations, so I actively sought out intelligent criticism on these types. I found such criticism quickly from reading more and more arts reviews on the WSWs over the following months. A highlight was the review of *The King’s Speech*. The film made me angry, made me feel ill after seeing it. Cheap, sentimental, trite—that managed to endear itself to large sections of the middle class. However I knew it was crap and more importantly that it was historically inaccurate. So many critics raved about this film, so it was with great satisfaction I read the WSWs review to discover that not only was it crap but it was indeed historically incorrect.

In my head I had considered myself a socialist for many years but what exactly does that mean?

From reading the analysis of political events on the web site, I began to say to myself—“that’s what I have

always thought” as I was reading—but the web site was making me realize the difference between generic “left wing” rhetoric (which admittedly I was prone to!) and concrete analysis. This feeling was particularly prevalent when reading the WSWs analysis of the Obama administration. ...

Another factor was the analysis of politics in Ireland. At the time of my coming round to the WSWs a “left” organization, the United Left Alliance, was emerging. They were masquerading as a potential alternative to the two-party system in Ireland. Being naïve and so desperate for an alternative it is easy for one to perhaps quickly develop illusions in such organizations. So naturally I said to myself, “I wonder what the World Socialist Web Site thinks of these guys?” The answer I found was like everything else on the Web site, a concrete scientific and historical analysis of the tendencies within this so called alliance—which made me realize that the United Left Alliance were just another pseudo left party. ...

... Upon my return to New York I briefly looked at other so-called left sites and was struck by how flimsy and vague their analysis was on these topics compared to WSWs, and perhaps and I was also struck by an apologetic air they all seemed to have with their views on the Obama administration. Through reading the WSWs over the last two years I have developed a critical and concrete understanding of these fake left groups. ...

I will be eternally grateful to my poet friend in Ireland for nudging his laptop in my direction on that night in November. A life-changing evening.

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Socialist Equality Party visit:



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