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Why I read the WSWWS

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I don't remember when I first encountered the World Socialist Web Site, but it was around 2009, when I was a 19-year-old university student. At the time I was floating around a variety of leftist currents and organisations from young-Labour to the pseudo-lefts, but was never willing to truly commit to anything. I felt that there was something missing in these tendencies and a lack of seriousness, but I was never quite sure what the problem was.

My knowledge of Marxism was limited to post-modernism in university classes and politically, I would have considered myself a social democrat under the influence of leftist figures such as Chomsky.

The key turning point in winning me to the WSWWS was the analysis made of the Obama administration in 2009. Like millions of people I had believed that Obama would herald a new era in American politics similar to FDR and would mark a turn away from the politics of the previous Bush administration. I was under no illusion that the world had entered into a new economic crisis on the scale of the Great Depression, but I believed that Obama and a renewed New Deal would see the world through it.

Only the WSWWS criticised Obama from the left and argued that his administration would just be a continuation of the previous Bush presidency. I didn't yet believe this myself, but the subsequent events over 2009, such as the attack on auto workers, began to convince me that there was something to this analysis. I was still far from the Socialist Equality Party but interested in learning more.

I wrote in and started a brief correspondence with a writer, which was the start of my political clarification. I was impressed with the accuracy of the web site and wanted to understand "what did these people know that the others didn't?"

In 2009 I also attended a public meeting on the

Second World War, with a lecture by Nick Beams which was advertised on the site. I had considered myself a WW2 buff (and still do) but the analysis in the lecture was very different and insightful, compared to the mountains of literature poured out on those five dark years of human history. More importantly, I came away with a sense that I could begin to understand the origins of the war and its purpose far more clearly than before. I was blown away by the quotes delivered about how Churchill had supported Mussolini and that the war was not fought for the defence of "democracy" but for the interests of the great imperial powers.

I could begin to draw a clearer line between the politics of the First World War, the outbreak of the Second World War and the present world crisis. Historical clarification was for me a powerful step on the road to political clarification, and this remains ongoing. The various historical articles on the WSWWS and literature from the SEP have helped this process further, above all on the question of the Soviet Union and the fate of socialism. I had begun to perceive that the SEP and the WSWWS offered something far more substantial in terms of content and perspective than the other leftist groups.

The decisive moment in making the decision to join the Socialist Equality Party was in 2010. By now I was studying political science at Sydney University, but became increasingly frustrated with the superficial and disorienting explanations being given about political questions. I began to feel as though the sterile atmosphere was incapable of providing the political clarification I was seeking and so I left. I took up the study of Ancient History and the Classics instead, placing more energy and thought into the WSWWS as the basis of my further political knowledge. I would keep following other media and politics, but from the standpoint of someone who had turned towards

a socialist perspective and was no longer sitting on the fence.

In recent years I have had the privilege of contributing to the site and I have gained a stronger understanding of the open and collaborative process between the politically astute and experienced members of the ICFI across the world that makes the WSWs possible. The high degree of quality that goes into every article is very much the product of an international effort and time-zone-spanning coordination which can be missed by the casual reader. I firmly believe that the perspective and clarity of the website will continue to act as a powerful tool for educating new layers of workers and youth in the struggle for international socialism.



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