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Why I read the WSWWS

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At the outset, I deem it a great a privilege to extend my warm greetings to the World Socialist Web Site on its completion of 15 years of publication. In 2000, while seeking asylum in France after leaving northern Sri Lanka as a refugee, I had the opportunity to read the WSWWS for the first time. This turned out to be a turning point in my life.

Myself and others belonging to the generation of those born in the 1980s were accustomed to hear right from our school days during daily life the detonating sounds of bombs hurled from the planes, artillery fire, grenades, many types of bullets from pistols, etc. When we ran out from the schools subjected to attack by bombs, we would see dilapidated buildings and the decimated bodies of the dead and gone. We often heard the death rattles. We feared death and also the unknown—what should be done next? We were just running without really knowing where to.

In Sri Lanka, during those younger years, I did not know electricity, gas, the telephone, trains, newspapers in the library and people who spoke a different language in our own country. There were curfews, round-ups and disappearances of people. We were accustomed to accepting them as routine things. People who expressed their personal views were shot dead by the military or paramilitary groups or by the LTTE people in full view of the public.

From medicines to all essential commodities we had to buy everything by paying much higher prices than in Colombo. During the 1990s, we had to pay Rs.300/- for a bottle of kerosene oil, which was sold at Rs.20/- in Colombo. Often we had the misfortune to lose our relations due to our inability to buy medicines or get medical help from the doctors. Even for funeral rituals and the burial of those who had died, we had to wait for the time allotted by the military. I could never understand the reasons for facing such degrading

conditions. In short, we were isolated from the rest of the world, and, like the prisoners given death sentences, lived in an open prison camp called the northern province of Sri Lanka.

When I came to Colombo in order to emigrate, I had new experiences. Until then I was brought up to believe that the Sinhalese were the enemies of the Tamils. In Colombo, for the first time, this was proved to be a lie. I found ordinary Tamil and Sinhalese people living together in Colombo. I found Tamil commercial centers, hotels, community centers, etc. However, I also saw many members of so-called “Tamil liberation organizations” fully cooperating with the Sri Lankan police and secret services. When I saw these things, I could not find answers to the questions that arose within me as to why this war was taking place and against whom.

In 2000, I had the opportunity to get in contact with the ICFI in France. They introduced me to the WSWWS. They stressed the need to build an international workers’ organization. The task of giving political education to the working class is a long and arduous one. They also explained that there is no shortcut to achieve this task.

When I raised questions on the differences between the social conditions of the workers in Sri Lanka and France, they explained that the development of the working class does not begin with the question of what it has achieved materially at a given stage, but its understanding of the destruction of socialist consciousness in the working class by the betrayals of the Stalinists and the pseudo-lefts in both countries linked by the same international crisis of capitalism and social counterrevolution. This understanding is an important factor in leading a revolution to a success. These deep thinking discussions helped me to understand myself and the external world on the basis

of class.

During my initial discussions, the article A socialist program to end the war and social inequality [in Sri Lanka] appeared on the WSWs. It played a principal role in my development. We could understand the inseparable relationship between the socialist revolution of the working class and the unresolved democratic tasks in the former colonies in the epoch of imperialism. The origin of the Tamil Liberation Movements was not a product of historical necessity. On the contrary, I understood that the origin of these movements was the product of the betrayal of the LSSP which had once fought to unify the working class and oppressed people for a socialist revolution, transcending race, religion and language.

My first political intervention was during the 2002 French presidential elections. We jointly intervened along with our American, German and British comrades with our statement calling for No to Chirac and Le Pen! For a working class boycott of the French election . We stressed the need to resolve the crisis of leadership within the working class and proposed a socialist perspective and solution. Socialist Party members raised a hue and cry saying that we were supporters of fascism and asked us to leave the country. The pseudo-lefts shouted at the top of their voices about the danger of fascism, and distorted the thinking of the working class and made them vote for Chirac and defended French capitalism.

From that day till now, the standard of living, jobs and social gains of the working class have been systematically and gradually destroyed and at the same time the ruling elite has been adopting neo-colonial policies to subjugate Africa and the Middle East, by making war against four countries. In the past 11 years they bear full responsibility for these catastrophes and have proved the correctness of our perspective.

Even though four years have elapsed since the end of the war in Sri Lanka, 15 divisions of the Sri Lankan Army, about 150,000 soldiers, have been stationed in Northern Sri Lanka. That is one soldier for 3 citizens. Even today in Sri Lanka, the editors of newspapers and journals critical of the government and the workers who distribute them face death threats daily. The WSWs today, through its Tamil language web page, continuously gives a socialist, international perspective to workers and oppressed people living in the areas

under full military control.

May the World Socialist Web Site and its International Editorial Board live long and guide us!



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