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Why I read the WSWS

18 March 2013

I first heard of the World Socialist Web Site in 2005 and have read it every day since then.

It had a profound impact in so many ways, in particular by allowing me to go back and understand more clearly the events that make up my past.

As a 17-year-old cabin boy on strike during the 1966 national Merchant Seaman's Strike I first came into contact with the Trotskyist movement in Britain. It was then called the Socialist Labour League.

After the strike was sold out I went back to my ship and lost contact. I sailed out of Southampton on the liners, but because of my contact with Trotskyists my view of the world had altered. I began to really understand that socialism was an international movement.

Once, when we docked in a South African port, the rain was coming down like a waterfall. I watched as black African port workers loaded cargo. All of them wore clothes that could barely be described as rags. Most were barefoot. Those that weren't had "slippers" made from old tyres. One of the deckhands explained that the small boxes being loaded contained one ingot of gold each, bound for the Bank of England. He shouted down to one of the guards, "Have you shot any Kaffirs [racialist term for black South African] today?" The guard answered, "We shoot Kaffirs every day."

Two hours later I was serving old colonials, Army Majors and their overdressed wives and daughters, lavish food—most of which they didn't eat.

When I left the Merchant Navy in 1972, I immediately re-contacted the SLL in Liverpool. I went into construction and led an unofficial strike at a council housing site in Netherley, Liverpool as a shop steward. The industry in Liverpool was dominated by Stalinists. They did the hiring and firing on all the big sites. Branch meetings were rigged, elections were never advertised and only big sites got decent wages

and conditions. If you didn't reach your target, you weren't called into the site foreman's hut. You got a stern talking to by the shop steward!

I worked on another site outside Wigan. Every second worker was a member of the SLL. Even the site foreman was a supporter. I loved every minute of it.

I remained in the movement after the formation of the Workers Revolutionary Party, but left in 1976—largely because of mistreatment by the party centre including repeatedly withholding my wages as a party full timer. ... I was then the only member active in Manchester, at a time when the election of the Labour government was accompanied by widespread illusions in reformism.

For years I did not understand what had happened. We were constantly told we were building a mass party through events such as the Right-to-Work marches, but the reality we faced was far removed from this. However, I always considered myself as a Trotskyist, albeit one "who wasn't up to the job." There were many such ex-members. You carried the guilt with you like a stone.

Reading the World Socialist Web Site changed all that and changed my life. By reading its analysis and being introduced to works such as *The Heritage We Defend*, I began to understand what had actually happened in the WRP politically for the first time and took the decision to become a member of the Socialist Equality Party.

I have only more recently become aware of the events surrounding the launch of the WSWS. The level of discussions and meeting that were held to make it happen reflect in its present daily production. There is no way a party that conducted itself as the WRP did or the pseudo-lefts could even contemplate something so revolutionary as a daily socialist web site. It's not surprising they howled when it was launched, but where are they now?

The articles are written to develop the readers' understanding of world events based upon a socialist perspective. It does not temper its editorial and political standards to save embarrassing any close political connections. It holds water tight to Trotsky's demand to always tell workers the truth.

The intelligent way that writers express themselves on the subject or event is not the patronising style used by the pseudo-left. Articles in publications run by such groups are dumbed down. It's clear they think workers are unable to read anything that has too many words with more than three syllables. By doing so they express more about their political understanding than those they say they write for.

On the contrary, reading the WSWS is an education in so many different ways. Its international grounding educates readers in the politics and workers' struggles in many different countries across every continent. It emphasises the nature of the global capitalist crisis, enabling the development of a global socialist culture in opposition.

It stands as a beacon against the nationalist garbage that will be used more and more to divide workers in struggle. I am confident that in the present objective conditions and having a weapon as powerful as the World Socialist Web Site, a revolutionary leadership within the international working class will develop rapidly.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact