

Doug

Why I read the WSWS

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I wish to offer warm congratulations to the World Socialist Web Site as it marks its 15th year of publication.

I started reading the WSWS about ten years ago. I don't recall how I found it, but when I did I knew that I had discovered something very different.

This was my first exposure to a genuine socialist publication, and what impressed me about the site was its clarity, depth of analysis of world and political events, the high caliber of journalism, and above all the ring of truth in what I read.

On a personal level, it's not an overstatement to say that the discovery of the WSWS was a life changing event. The WSWS's analysis and criticisms of the union bureaucracy and the pseudo-left political parties is, from my experience, completely vindicated.

Prior to my discovery of the WSWS I was politically active, though in retrospect politically confused. I was also active as a union member, and became a Canadian Auto Workers shop steward in 1997 where I remained for ten years until, after 24 years, I lost my job to layoff. Following this, in October 2012 I fell off the union recall list with 29 years of seniority.

The struggle for my job brought me into a head-on collision with not only my employer, but also the union I was a member of and the social-democratic New Democratic Party.

During this troubling period the employer was laying off workers and contracting out work, claiming they had to because they were short staffed! And the CAW did nothing.

Over the 18 or so years the CAW "represented" the workers at my former employer prior to my layoff, close to 85% of the unionized staff, or 3000 workers, lost their jobs. The union occasionally thumped its chest, but this was only to placate the workers. In not one instance did they fight for a single lost position.

Rather, they acted as the right arm for the company, administering the layoffs. They claimed that there was "nothing" they could do, and they did little more than "ensure that the collective agreement was followed". By their inaction, they became complicit in the destruction of the jobs they claimed to defend.

When I criticized the union for their lack of strategy, I was attacked. They falsely accused me of harassment and blamed the victims, claiming that it was my own fault for refusing to uproot my family to move 3500 km to a job. In violation of the CAW national constitution, they said that because I was an inactive (laid-off) member and no longer paying dues I had no right to representation. And I came in receipt of a damaging communication between the local president and the director of human resources where the union explicitly accused me and a co-worker of being troublemakers, and stated that our chances of getting our jobs back was next to nil.

I approached my representative in the NDP asking for assistance. Despite posturing as the leftist working man's advocate and heavily supported by Canadian labour unions, this NDP Member of the Legislative Assembly revealed his party's true colours. In one of the most hypocritical and cowardly acts I have ever witnessed, he responded by saying that any action on his part, or on the part of his party to assist workers facing what we were would be "...too much like communism".

This experience left me confused, demoralized and feeling isolated. However it was the WSWS that helped me to understand what had taken place, and the true nature of those organizations that I had previously believed were on the side of the worker.

As the WSWS points out, the relationship between the labour unions and those they claim to represent is thoroughly bankrupt. These so-called workers'

organizations are organically hostile to the working class, and having shifted far to the right, they now walk arm-in-arm with the employers. In the case of the CAW, the lowest paid bureaucrat, a national representative, makes a base salary of \$120,000 per annum, with no worries about becoming redundant. As the workers they and other unions “represent” are thrown onto the street, and those that remain see their incomes stagnate and fall and their working conditions become more and more arduous, it becomes clear to any thinking person that the union bureaucrats are only concerned with maintaining their privileged lifestyles.

It is equally clear that the so-called “left” political tendencies that the unions support are just as bankrupt. The WSWS is the only publication I have found that speaks the truth in its analysis of the pseudo-left socialist and social-democratic parties. As my experience shows, and as revealed in the pages of the WSWS, these parties worldwide are wolves in sheep’s clothing, feigning support for the working class while supporting war, austerity and the root cause of these abominations: capitalism. They are nothing more than big-business parties whose policies differ from “right” politics only in tactics but not aims.

Through its analysis and Marxist perspective the WSWS shows that the working class can’t put its faith in these forces of betrayal, and that the ruling class will stop at nothing to place the full burden of the economic crisis on the backs of the workers. The only way forward is the overthrow and replacement of the labour unions with new, democratic workers’ organizations, and a political struggle leading to the establishment of a genuine international and democratic socialist workers’ party.

In closing I wish to thank the WSWS for its outstanding work and leadership, for educating its readers and for being a beacon of light and truth.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact