

Greg Near

Why I read the WSWS

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I am always interested in news and opinion. I have a wide variety of sources from which I get information. The WSWS coverage during the Detroit Symphony strike was very interesting to me. It's another viewpoint. I like that. You don't get that kind of coverage in your traditional news programs. The *Detroit Free Press* barely covered the strike. It did not surprise me.

Your coverage of the role of the unions was a side I was somewhat surprised about. Because when I think of the socialist movement it is about workers. And when I think of the unions it is also about workers. And yet the socialist viewpoint was that the unions had failed the workers. And that's a side that I hadn't seen before.

I don't always agree with the socialist viewpoint on that and I think the unions are in a tough place, and they are trying to survive as well. At the time [of the DSO strike] Gordon Stump was president of the musicians' union. He was getting pressured from other unions. They were shocked that he would let this go on so long. They put pressure on him to settle this thing.

I am not with the Detroit Symphony. I am with the Michigan Opera Orchestra. And there didn't seem to be a lot of talk between the two orchestras as far as the strike goes. I was very supportive of the symphony. I was there for all the strike. I was only one of several from our orchestra that was really involved in what was going on.

I think that for me, personally, it was very depressing to look at the kind of coverage they were getting locally. The *Detroit Free Press*, the *Detroit News*, they were much more supportive of management's side. They treated the musicians as if they were spoiled and getting far more money than other workers in Detroit were getting for what they thought was an easy schedule.

The WSWS was very supportive of the workers. I felt that our side was getting more fair coverage than from the other news sources in town. I would go to the website and I would first look at the coverage of the DSO. But then I would look around at other things that were happening.

And there was a lot of coverage about things in general in Detroit: the homelessness, the fire department and people losing their houses because of inadequate money to pay these people to put out fires. It seems like there is a real Detroit connection to the website.

I kept reading and discussing during the time of the [2012] elections. I would read what the WSWS would have on, let's say, the inauguration. Then I would read the *New York Times* and see what their coverage was like, and then I would contrast the two and compare them.

On the inauguration, the *New York Times* article said, "Obama offers liberal vision, We must Act." So they just went down with what happened that day. They included some of the salient points of his speech which was presenting this more liberal vision than what happened in the first four years of his presidency. Then it ends up talking about what Michelle Obama wore. That's basically their coverage of it.

Then there is the WSWS. The headline is "Inaugural demagoguery" and it doesn't touch on who wore what, but it covers the point that Obama was speaking of these things he spoke of before and he has failed to deliver on. And he continues to talk one way and act in another way. There really wasn't anything I could disagree with in the WSWS coverage. I can see all your points and the *Times* was more of a feel-good kind of coverage.

I consider myself a liberal and even more towards socialist than not. So I will watch MSNBC because they have their certain liberal viewpoint. But they totally embrace capitalism and the two-party system. And sometimes you watch these things just because if all I watched was Fox News, I think I would kill myself. You kind of gravitate toward your interests. So to feel good I will watch MSNBC. Or I will read the WSWS, because of the way I view things. I like to get sort of a balanced approach.

Right now in this country we are more of a two-party system and it is based on the capitalist system. I think the

socialists do not embrace the capitalist system, they want to go with another system. What I am not getting is how this can come about. What I *am* getting is that the workers need to rise up and change things. And my next question is—how is that going to happen and how would this system work? Who is going to lead this? How will this transformation take place?

I think it is a positive perspective. It is a daunting task. I think back to my childhood, my education. My parents were both teachers in the public schools. And looking at my own education, I went through the public school system and we were all taught that the capitalist system was the finest system and this was the greatest country in the world. So I can see it is a tough task to get people to think another way.

I think that younger people are beginning to be more tolerant of alternatives. And that is a good sign. I think that things are getting more polarized in this country. The right has swung so far to the right that they talk about smaller and smaller government to the point where you can take it into the bathroom and drown it in the tub.

Everything has been shifting toward the right and we are losing a lot of the benefits that we expected we would have. They are talking about cuts to Social Security and cuts to Medicare. At work people are losing their health benefits.

It was so frustrating when initially they were talking about a public option for health care. As if that was a good possibility. Then all the talk was—it's a nonstarter. It's dead. We can't do it. It was just so deflating. It made me feel terrible. I like the socialist approach. It made me feel more positive. I may actually be able to survive a little longer.



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