

Dan

Why I read the WSWS

23 March 2013

I discovered the pseudo-left during my university years. Their ubiquitous presence on campus complemented the “social justice” themes delivered in my classroom lectures. Being young, idealistic and inexperienced I found myself attracted by their magisterial pronouncements on peace and justice, and lured in by the promise that “activism” would cause political change. It was crude brainwashing—but I embraced it, as in so doing I got an instant philosophy, and instant political and social life.

All this came at a cost, however. I spent many years within a sterile mental box with all its putrid intellectual adaptations. It virtually guaranteed that my youthful “activism” amounted to nothing. It was pseudo-activism if anything and it certainly didn’t “change the world”—at least not for the better. And while I could cry when I think about these wasted years, I did learn a lot about the pseudo-left.

One thing I discovered was that when one group lied and betrayed you, there was always another one lined up to greet you and to restart the lying and betrayal process anew. A disillusioned New Democrat? Try the Waffle. Waffle’s got you down? Why not join the Greens? Greens not green enough? Then there’s the Red-Greens, the New Greens, the Deep Greens, Eco-feminism, Eco-anarchism, and so on and on.

By the time I stumbled upon the WSWS in the early 2000s, I felt politically defeated and just plain worn out. I was originally drawn to the website because it dealt with themes and issues that I recognized from my pseudo-left days; and just as importantly, the content was updated daily. I later found myself exploring the website, drawn to essays dealing with history and philosophy. I think that whether I realized it at the time or not, I was craving a larger and more stable philosophical perspective.

The WSWS essays delivered. They connected me to

Enlightenment thinkers, and to the grand idea that reason could be used to define and advance human progress. Essay after essay explained the revolutionary impact of these ideas, their limitations, and how Marx built on and extended this tradition. Life was no longer just an arbitrary set of impressions. Instead, I stood grounded in larger historical and socio-political processes—processes that could be understood scientifically, used to “change the world”, and even *gasp* to produce revolutionary effects.

In short, I believe the WSWS played a key role in giving me what my university education denied: Access to my birthright—to a cultural heritage that includes powerful philosophical foundations firmly grounded in historical and material reality. My ivory-towered university profs could keep their goofy post-modern brain doodles. The WSWS helped me obtain a true liberal arts education.

These early readings set the stage for my next level of development. Philosophy might help a person understand the world, but what then? To this, Marx replied, “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.” And it is on this point that the WSWS truly shines.

Unlike the pseudo-left, the WSWS is truly up to something big. It takes a while, but after reading the website daily for many years, the implications on the size, scope and scale of this project eventually reveal itself: Bringing to life the largest, deepest, most widespread democracy that the world has ever known. The website calls workers to build a global government for working people and by working people.

It is a huge, wonderful project. Yet it is also fraught with danger and peril. The WSWS often warns its readers of the terrible violence that the ruling elites have rained down against any genuine democratic movement of the masses. The website patiently

counsels that the only defense against these assaults has been a principled, disciplined and organized class resistance, led by a principled, disciplined and organized working class party.

The website also reveals the role of the pseudo-left and its agents: To introduce confusion and disorganization into the ranks. I know of this confusion, for I was part of it—and it is caustic, dirty and real.

In short, we are all involved in this ongoing and titanic struggle, whether we like it, want it, or not; and this is why I continue to read and study the WSWS every day.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact