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Why I read the WSWWS

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I started reading the WSWWS in 2011 after seeing a poster and attending a conference called “The Fight for Socialism Today” in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I was 3 years out of college and had just moved back to my home state after quitting my job installing computer hardware for a huge corporate IT firm in Chicago, where I had begun my career in July 2008, just before the collapse of Lehman Brothers. That process had been very politicizing for me. Chicago is a very unequal city, and I was able to get a close look at both very impoverished areas as well as sit in on corporate meetings in lavish offices where high-level managers and executives made very shrewd money-based decisions. My company soon laid off thousands of workers and forced speedup and longer hours on myself and the veteran workers that hadn’t yet lost their jobs. Some of our clients were huge banks that I could see were responsible for ruining the economy. I felt culpable just by participating in the system.

The situation literally made me sick, but I didn’t have an understanding of how it all worked. I was absolutely desperate to behave in a socially conscionable way, but was utterly confused about what was to be done. I initially became interested in identity politics and protest politics. To me it was all a moral problem, and people’s subjective ideas had to change first and foremost. And though I didn’t recognize it at the time, I had a thoroughly post-modernist outlook.

Enter the SEP and the WSWWS. They really had their work cut out for them with me!

I was very impressed with the news articles on the website from the beginning. No one else seemed to be paying such close attention to the crisis from every angle. But I was very critical of their attitudes toward identity politics, and toward the trade unions, who I naively believed were the representatives of workers. I began attending ISSE [now IYSSE] meetings, but was

very combative. Somehow these guys were the best news source around, but their whole approach seemed stubborn and unrealistic to me. Didn’t they realize that most people weren’t ready for such radical ideas? That they had to meet the masses at their current level of understanding? That to denounce identity politics and the unions would turn off huge sections of youth who had been brought up to support these things? Couldn’t they work with other liberal and left groups instead of criticizing them?

What I lacked—and what the website and certain indefatigable party members were finally able to help me attain—were a class perspective, a knowledge of history, and an understanding of dialectical materialism.

The perspectives throughout Obama’s campaign and first term were of immense importance, as here was the quintessential example of the bankruptcy of identity politics in action. The coverage of Occupy Wall Street, the explanation of the class forces at work, was another instructive episode. I had very high hopes in Occupy at first, but quickly saw the WSWWS perspectives coming true. Also important was the coverage of the Quebec student strike. I was able to follow it in real time from beginning to end and watch as the WSWWS warned presciently of the betrayals being prepared, and analyzed the perspectives of those leading the strike. And a number of articles on union betrayals here in the US were critical for me. I could see the class analysis of the WSWWS being vindicated over and over again, like clockwork. Without the consistent and scientific stance of the WSWWS I would not have been able to make sense of these events.

I also especially appreciate whenever a WSWWS reporting team interviews workers on the street, on strike, locked out of a factory, etc, and provides their photos and quotes of their own words, what they

themselves think of their situation, and how they respond to respectful, patient and truthful points made by reporters. One such article that moved me followed up on a police massacre of a mentally ill homeless man who had stolen a cup of coffee in Saginaw, Michigan. The working class is much better than they are portrayed in the mainstream media.

David Walsh's social commentaries—recent examples include the shooting death of a bus driver in Alabama, and the Steubenville rape case—explain how individual consciousness flows from objective conditions. It may sound cliché, but these stories and many others really restored my faith in humanity. No other news source is capable of this type of compassionate—and correct!—analysis, because no one else proceeds according to dialectical materialism, from the really existing world to its reflection in the minds of individuals. Post-modern quackery about conflicting “narratives” explains nothing and only serves to confuse.

I could really go on and on. I feel like I've hardly scratched the surface of the value of the website in this short essay. The art, music and film reviews have completely changed the way I appreciate and assess art, and I'm happy to have been able to contribute some of my own writing to this section of the site. No other publication attempts to put art in its complete historical trajectory and consider it as the most complicated and sensitive part of culture, the cognition of life in images. The recent article on George Bellows is outstanding, but there are many others.

Essentially, without the WSWWS and the ICFI, my correct feelings about the rotten state of society would still be misdirected into this or that safe channel while the ruling class continues its counterrevolution unimpeded. Instead, I'm working hard to build political consciousness in workers and youth, and myself, to fight for a permanent socialist revolution, equality, the end of war. ... It's hard to exaggerate the importance of what the ICFI and WSWWS are doing for the future of human society.



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