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Why I read the WSWS

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Throughout my adult life I have always considered myself a socialist. It was very much a part of my family tradition. My father had fought hard in the 30s on the streets of Dublin against the Blueshirts which were a Catholic fascist organisation which tried to overthrow the then Fianna Fail republican government. When I was in my twenties I read Marx and James Connolly, and joined the SWP which was a small group in Ireland in the 70s and 80s.

I was a shop steward for many years and was blacklisted on two occasions and found it hard to get work. Whatever the shortcomings of the SWP at the time I believed that they at least stood for a number of principled positions. In short, they championed the working class and I believed that they were seeking a revolutionary transition to socialism, and they would not sell out workers and their struggles as the Labour party had done.

Because I was blacklisted, and possibly through demoralization, I drifted out of the SWP but I still considered myself a socialist and a revolutionary.

In 2007, at the beginning of the capitalist crisis and banking crash in Ireland, I decided to get stuck into some activity which would advance the cause of the working class. I believed (very naively I must add) that as the crisis of capitalism unfolded, groups such as the SWP or SP would offer a lead to working class people and fight to put the struggle for socialism on the agenda. How wrong can one be.

What now passed for the left was a couple of parliamentary representatives (Joe Higgins from the Socialist Party and Richard Boyd Barrett, SWP) who made it perfectly clear with every public statement that capitalism needed to be regulated and reformed into a “fairer” system.

Indeed, constant meetings with the troika (the European Union, European Central Bank and the

International Monetary Fund) on a regular basis and the constant use of nationalist terminology such as “our nation” and “the way forward for Ireland” reinforced a number of conclusions that I formed from watching them in action.

Firstly, they had dropped the struggle for socialism and trying to raise workers’ consciousness like a hot potato. Out went Marx, out went Trotsky, and in came the most horrible opportunism to get a few votes at election time. The gallop to the right to me was astonishing. These people were now part of the establishment.

But the second thing which struck me was that for these so-called socialists to betray the working class and the historic fight for socialism, something rotten and very twisted must have been running through them from the very beginning. How could organizations such as the SWP and SP end up as they are now? How could they end up making alliances with bourgeois politicians, and meeting the troika to discuss managing capitalism a little better?

It only became clear to me after reading the WSWS and investigating the politics of the ICFI. The disgusting move to parliamentary nationalism and Labourism must have been rooted in their false and fake politics and their split from the international Trotskyist movement.

The WSWS outlined in great detail how these groups served the interests of a middle layer in society which is hostile to any genuine international workers’ fight against capitalism. At first quite naively I thought it was an Irish phenomenon, but these groups internationally now accept capitalism and have become totally counterrevolutionary and hostile to the struggle for socialism.

The WSWS must be congratulated and supported in its coverage of the fight against the capitalist system

and in its coverage of the sell-outs of the fake left. A fake left which has abandoned the working class with its half-truths and lies. A fake left which has made its peace with capitalism.

I only began reading the WSWS five years ago. I wish now it had been 15 years ago. It's a brilliant and truthful website.



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