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Why I read the WSWS

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As I entered college as a cynical misbegotten youth at 18 years of age, I longed for answers regarding the misery encompassing the world. Throughout high school I always considered myself a “leftist,” opting for a Rage Against the Machine album or a book on political prisoners to encompass my time as opposed to the latest video gaming console. My friends ran within anarchist circles and I became acquainted with the “lifestylism” of CrimeThInc. and the like. While all of these various analyses offered something, I found myself wanting the entirety. I knew that there was an explanation to war, poverty and social misery, but missed it entirely.

I first came into contact with the World Socialist Web Site through the avenue of the (then) International Students for Social Equality (ISSE). I was just a freshman at San Diego State University in 2008 when the financial crisis sent the world into an economic tailspin. The media flew into a frenzy as the politicians hoped to make the eventual massive cuts palpable. The words “shared sacrifice” became commonplace and seemed inescapable.

Opposition began to mount within the schools as proposed fee increases were set to take effect. As a means to conceal and maintain this frustration, universities launched “Vent at the Tent” demonstrations. These consisted of large tents where students and faculty could express their animosity through recorded video messages and pre-drafted forms that would be sent to Sacramento. This was an implied strategy of begging the Democrats in Sacramento to “listen to our pleas;” I was confronted with protest politics from the ground. The only organization on campus that offered answers other than this dead-end was the ISSE.

Two reporters asked to interview me. After expressing my frustration with the Democrats and the

unions, they directed me to look at the World Socialist Web Site for an analysis of world events and as a way to fight for a new world system, one which was based on public interest and not private profit. Cynical as I was, I began to browse the website at my leisure.

The most impactful of all articles that I came across and the single-handed reason why I continue to read the WSWS today was David North’s piece on the Columbine High School tragedy entitled “American Pastoral... American Berserk.” As I looked for answers on why it seemed the world was afire around me with catastrophe after catastrophe, North and the WSWS offered an explanation, stating:

“...the concentration on individual warning signs will be of little help in preventing further tragedies. Attention should be focused, rather, on the social warning signs, that is, the indications and indices of social and political dysfunction that create the climate that produces events like the Columbine HS massacre. Vital indicators of impending disaster might include: growing polarization between wealth and poverty; atomization of working people and the suppression of their class identity; the glorification of militarism and war; the absence of serious social commentary and political debate; the debased state of popular culture; the worship of the stock exchange; the unrestrained celebration of individual success and personal wealth; the denigration of the ideals of social progress and equality.”

Since reading this in 2009 it is unfortunate to say that these words have only been proven in the negative. Sandy Hook, the Newtown massacre, the Colorado shooting massacre and countless other seemingly “random acts of violence” have peppered the national news. Today, the White House debates ways in which to prepare for another incident, not to prevent another one. Throughout the world, war ravages with a

multitude of illegal wars having been launched since Obama's ascension to the presidency in 2008. Today we await the conflagration between North Korea and South Korea, which, just as in 21st century remakes of 1950s disasters, only promises to be graver.

While the WSWS has illuminated the misery we face today, it offers a way forward. If the problems we face today are systemic, the solution we must fight for is systemic. What is the counter-pole to bourgeois media but working class media? What is the counter-pole to capitalism, a system based on private profit, but socialism, a system based on social need? In the short 4 years of reading it, I have seen the WSWS grow in readership, in coverage and in its analysis. Time and time again, its unwavering, principled nature has proved that there is a meta-narrative that explains society. And all the more crucial, there is a solution to the problems we face.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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