

Charlie

Why I read the WSWS

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My introduction to the WSWS, and socialism in general, came as the result of being a public school teacher. I was a teacher for nine years, and every year I saw declines—whether it was in the form of increased classroom size, laying off of teachers and support staff, reductions in salary and benefits, or reduction of class options for the students.

I started off as a liberal, seeing the Republican Party as the party to blame; but it did not take long to realize that the Democrats were putting forward policies that were equally destructive to public education, including their continual support of the thinly-veiled for-profit charter schools and high-stakes testing.

However, the most egregious actions came from those who claimed to be the stalwart defenders of the teachers—the union. Every year we saw declines, but instead of vigorously fighting the system that was bringing about these declines, the union engaged in activities whose actions I can only surmise were designed to isolate and pacify the people they were supposed to defend. All the different working groups (secretaries, administrators, custodial, etc...) negotiated their contracts separately and at different times. When other, nearby districts were getting bad contracts we were told there was nothing we could do. When a bill that attacked teachers was proposed, we were told to “contact our legislator.” When we were offered a contract with cuts, we were told to wear black and hold up placards before and after school. Everything was designed to make our actions as feckless as possible and never was there any talk about joining forces with other groups, let alone a strike.

I could see all these things going on but I could not explain why it was happening. The typical explanation that I would get was that people, especially politicians, were just “being stupid.” It was not until I started reading the WSWS that I came to an understanding of

the class forces at work and the tie-in of what was going on in public education to the broader world in which capitalism has propped up a parasitic layer that was determined to maintain its power at the expense of the working class. It was only the WSWS who could intelligently address my questions about why the “American dream” had failed. It was only the WSWS who could explain how unpopular wars based on lies could be propagated by the whole political system. In a world where news is filtered by financial interests, I have learned to depend upon the WSWS to provide the unfiltered version of events.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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