

Kristina Betinis

“Recognizing the historic tasks to be carried out could not but make a forceful impact on my political consciousness”

14 February 2013

I was introduced to the *World Socialist Web Site* in 1999, through an article on the reactionary character of racial politics in the United States. The article “Simpson, Dreyfus and Spartacist” criticized the comparison made by Spartacist of those supporting O.J. Simpson's acquittal with the supporters of French army captain Alfred Dreyfus. It was distributed as supplementary reading in a course on 20th century history and politics.

That week, the third week of my freshman year in college, I became a regular reader of the WSWS. I would not become a contributor for another 8 years. What was decisive for that was how heavily I would rely on the WSWS. As a young socialist in the South experiencing the remarkable lack of serious political organizations on campus, the WSWS was the only place to find clear and careful analysis from a genuinely Marxist political perspective. Of the countless things that have changed in the intervening years, that has not. Whenever major events occurred and had to be comprehended—the Kosovo War, 9/11 and the “War on Terror”, the stealing of the 2000 election and the rapid decay of American democracy, the financial crises of 1997-98 and 1999-2000—the defining events of the late 1990s and early 2000s, I found myself turning to the WSWS first. It is extremely impressive to me how well these analyses have held up over the years.

By no means did I always find myself in agreement with the perspective I found on the WSWS, particularly on the issue of the trade unions, which were prohibited in many sectors in the area where I grew up, and which I believed would have offered protection against

worker exploitation. What I did not know about was destruction of workers' living standards that had been taking place under the watchful eyes of union leaders in places like Chicago, Detroit, Findlay, Pittsburgh and Joliet. I would soon learn. But this realization did not depend simply on having a little more life experience. In fact, there were major theoretical and political issues at stake. Why had this gone on? What did it mean for the future?

I would wrestle with those questions for two years, until I came across a polemic on the WSWS from 1998, entitled *Globalization and the International Working Class*. It dealt with the implications of the economic shifts characterizing the globalization period for world capitalism and for the working class, in response to the orientation of Spartacist (again).

Agreement with that work was a defining moment in my political development, and that is because the perspective put forth there constituted a major development for Marxism as a science. Read it if you haven't. It plainly spelled out the implications of the new situation, one of the most important of which is that young people today and those soon to be come have an enormous, a potentially epoch-making, opportunity to revolutionize social relations—the kind of opportunity that does not exist for every generation. In order to be prepared politically, we had to understand that we were entering a period of wars and revolutions, and that immense challenges lay ahead. Recognizing the historic tasks to be carried out could not but make a forceful impact on my political consciousness, and I was not alone.

It is a liberating moment for any member of the

working class to be relieved of the weight of unending conciliation with the ruling class, to throw off the yoke of the old organizations, and freely and fearlessly build a movement that will fight for socialism, so powerfully attractive for the promise it holds for the future.

It is not often that one reads a description of their own generation and has no quibble with what is said. When it is said the *World Socialist Web Site* educated a generation of socialists in classical Marxism since coming online in 1998, I am one of tens of thousands who know that it is their tale being told. The WSWS has and will continue to be the most powerful instrument current for educating, preparing politically, and building the knowledge and confidence the working class requires to break with bourgeois politics and cut a path to social equality for the world's people.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact