

# The role of the World Socialist Web Site in educating a new generation of revolutionaries

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1 November 2020

First of all, I just want to say that I am honored to be speaking today alongside so many leading comrades with decades of experience in our movement, many of whom were involved in the initial launch of the *World Socialist Web Site* and from whom I've learned so much.

For myself and for a whole new generation of comrades, our entire political lives have been guided and shaped by the *World Socialist Web Site*.

My generation, the millennial generation, has come into political life under conditions of unprecedented economic, social and political crisis. We were graduating from high school just as the 2008 financial crash was taking place. And now, just over a decade later, we are living through a second worldwide catastrophe, the coronavirus pandemic.

The youngest generation, Gen Z, is entering political life under even sharper conditions. Consider for a moment that those just coming into political life in the past year have been confronted with miles-long food lines in the US, a president who is talking about refusing to leave office, and protesters denouncing police violence being beaten in the streets outside the White House, among many other critical experiences.

Even before the current crisis, young workers were living under the conditions created by 40 years of social counterrevolution, which produced staggering levels of inequality, mass unemployment and the lack of basic needs such as health care and retirement.

It was upon these conditions that the pandemic acted, exacerbating all the social ills created by the capitalist system. And now the brutality of the ruling class is on full display before the world, as governments everywhere embrace the policy of herd immunity, that is, sacrificing workers' lives to protect private profit.

These are mass experiences on a scale never seen

before. Nearly every person on the planet is aware of the coronavirus and has been impacted in some way.

Under these conditions, it is hardly surprising that a defining feature of this period is the immense radicalization of the working class, and, in particular, young people.

One statistic that begins to demonstrate this comes from this year's annual survey conducted by youGov, which found an increase in support for socialism over the last year among youth who are part of Gen Z (ages 16-23) of nearly 10 percentage points. *Over the course of a single year*, support for socialism among these young people rose from 40 percent in 2019 to 49 percent in 2020. This statistic reflects massive shifts in consciousness.

What the last year—and really the years before the pandemic as well—has shown is that young people do not lack anger, they do not lack a willingness to fight, and they have a deep desire to change the world. We have seen this in the mass demonstrations against police violence and many other eruptions of social protest.

However, what is so critically needed is a political perspective and program rooted in historical knowledge and an understanding of the experiences of the past.

Young people looking for answers to all of the pressing questions of today are coming to find that there is no greater resource than the WSWS.

I know I speak for a whole layer of young people when I say that the WSWS is responsible for not only my political education, but, in many ways, my formal education. It is where I learned about art and culture, about science, history, economics and philosophy. It is where I first found a counter to the postmodernist and racist poison promoted and pushed in the universities.

Like countless youth in the party, when I was first introduced to the website I spent months going through the archives, reading what the movement wrote about every major political event in my lifetime: the stolen election, the events of 9/11, the Iraq War and the protests against it, the emergence of WikiLeaks, the persecution of Julian Assange, the 2008 financial crash and countless other developments.

The real strength of the new site is how comprehensively it is able to bring forward this powerful archive. One can go back and read what the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) wrote the day after the September 11 attacks. The level of political clarity with which the movement responded is unparalleled.

One can find comments like “Anti - Americanism : The ‘ anti - imperialism ’ of fools ,” which takes a principled stand against all those demoralized middle-class elements who responded to the September 11 attacks with vulgar anti-Americanism in the place of principled anti-imperialism. The WSWS explained that it was the American ruling class, and not the American population, that was carrying out imperialist policies throughout the world.

Young people who have been profoundly impacted by the wave of school shootings can find in the archives of the WSWS comments like “ The Columbine High School massacre... American Pastoral , American Berserk ,” which rooted the horrific events of April 1999 in an analysis of the nature of American society and the consequences of social inequality and endless war.

If there are young people watching who have not read these pieces and related pieces, I strongly encourage you to do so.

These are only two examples of issues I know have impacted young people so deeply in the past two decades. However, this exercise can be repeated for every significant political and social event and phenomenon in recent history.

Perhaps most importantly, in the archives of the WSWS young people will find the history of the working class—that is, their own history. It is a history that is kept from workers, distorted and obscured to serve the interest of the ruling elite.

They can learn about the Enlightenment, Marx, Engels, Trotsky, Lenin, and the advent and

development of Marxism. They can learn about the Russian Revolution, the development of the Left Opposition, the immense class battles of the 1930s and 40s, including the extraordinary history of the American working class.

They can, and really must, learn about the history of the fight for socialism, which is contained within the history of our movement.

For the ruling class, the WSWS poses the most imminent threat. It is desperate to cut young people off from knowledge of the history of working-class struggle, of revolution, expressed most consciously in the history of the Marxist movement.

It is because of its powerful perspective that the *World Socialist Web Site* is unlike any other website in the world. It is an organ of education and struggle that will serve to arm workers and youth with the tools they need not just to understand the world, but to change it.

I encourage young people and workers who are listening to this call and who are not already a part of the ICFI to join today, to explore the new website, to help fund the new website, to understand it as your own, to contribute to it and promote it. Dedicate yourselves to a study of history and get involved in the fight for socialism today.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**