

World Socialist Web Site Review: April issue out now

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The latest edition of the quarterly *World Socialist Web Site Review* magazine, which reviews the six months since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, is now available. The April-May 2002 edition contains several statements and articles analysing the widening US war in Central Asia, the Bush administration's assault on democratic rights at home and the reaction of the European powers to Washington's militarism.

WSWS Editorial Board statements expose the US massacres in Afghanistan, the administration's flouting of the Geneva Convention in its treatment of prisoners of war and it plans to launch war against Iraq. In a statement, "State of the Union speech: Bush declares war on the world," the Editorial Board warns: "One would have to go back to the diatribes of Adolf Hitler to find comparable bellicosity in the public declarations of a major world power, and comparable cynicism in the lies and provocations employed as justifications for military aggression."

In stark contrast to the mass media outlets, which have worked hand in glove with the White House and Pentagon, the WSWS has systematically probed the underlying driving forces and political agenda behind the US war. A number of statements and articles, including "The Taliban, the US and the resources of Central Asia," demonstrate that, above all else, Washington's aggression is directed at securing domination over the strategically located and resource-rich Central Asian region following the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union.

Several statements, including the WSWS Review editorial, "The shadow of dictatorship: Bush established secret government after September 11," demonstrate that the Bush administration, itself installed undemocratically, has seized upon the "war against terrorism" to implement longstanding plans to

overturn basic civil and political rights and move toward erecting a military-police dictatorship.

An important article by Patrick Martin, originally published in four parts, exposes the official claim that the vast US national security apparatus was entirely unaware of the activities of the September 11 hijackers. While failing to conduct any investigation into how the terrorist attacks were allowed to proceed, the government and the media are asking the American people "to give their blind trust for an unlimited and open-ended campaign of military action by a government which either permitted, or proved incapable of preventing, the slaughter of thousands of its own citizens".

Several articles outline and demarcate the socialist response to the September 11 events. "The bin Laden videotape: the reactionary politics of terrorism," condemns and exposes the political bankruptcy of terrorism, as expressed by Osama bin Laden's television tape gloating over the World Trade Centre atrocity. In "Pacifist moralizers rally behind the US war drive," David Walsh examines the evolution of former leftists, radicals and liberals who have fallen in behind the Bush administration's war and cemented their relationships with the American ruling elite, embracing Bush's references to combatting the "forces of evil". The article explains: "Socialists condemn the September 11 attack not because it is 'evil' in some abstract moral sense, but because it is politically reactionary. It is detrimental to the development of a unified and politically conscious struggle of the international working class."

Two key comments by WSWS Editorial Board chairman David North examine the political questions raised by the murder of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl by Pakistani terrorists and a statement issued by 60 right-wing academics and public policy

experts professing to present a philosophical and moral defence of the US war drive. Both comments attracted considerable appreciative correspondence from WSWS readers. The latter, “Political reaction and intellectual charlatany: US academics issue statement in support of war,” tears apart the contradictions, inconsistencies and hypocrisy that riddle the academics’ statement. North explains that the purported appeal to abstract, ahistorical and dubious moral precepts to justify the war—precepts that the US government daily violates at home and around the world—provides a thin mask for Washington’s predatory, imperialist appetites in Central Asia.

Another section of the magazine features articles on the collapse of the energy trading giant Enron, a meltdown that not only directly involves key figures in the Bush administration but also expresses the parasitic and decayed character of American and global capitalism. As the articles indicate, it is this crisis, in the final analysis, that lies behind the lurch to war and dictatorial forms of rule.

A further section of the WSWS Review examines events in Europe and the Middle East. Articles probe the mounting criticism of Bush’s policy in European capitals, the anxiety of the European powers to counter the military and economic hegemony of the US, the show trial of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic in The Hague and the opposition by Israeli reservists to the Sharon regime’s offensive against the Palestinian people. After reviewing the opening days of the proceedings against Milosevic, WSWS Editorial Board member Chris Marsden predicts: “It is certain that the longer the trial goes on, the more awkward facts will emerge exposing the efforts of the Western powers to conceal their own responsibility for the ongoing tragedy they have inflicted on the Balkan peoples.”

In the Arts Review section of the magazine, arts editor David Walsh assesses the implications of the agreement of all the major Hollywood studios and film industry unions to contribute their resources and propaganda talents to the “war on terrorism”. Walsh also reviews *Gosford Park*, American director Robert Altman’s latest movie, which studies class relations and their cruelties in 1930s Britain.

The WSWS Review concludes with two obituaries. One of Dave Van Ronk, the acclaimed blues and folk

artist, traces his achievements and influence to his lifelong identification with the working class, hatred for capitalist exploitation and sympathy for socialism, which included membership of the Workers League, the forerunner of the Socialist Equality Party, the American Trotskyist party. The second obituary, of the veteran Sri Lankan Trotskyist Sabaratnam Rasendran, a member of the Colombo editorial board of the WSWS before his untimely death at the age of 54, outlines his courageous and dedicated fight for the principles of socialist internationalism.

The April-May WSWS Review again provides in an enduring and convenient form, a sample of the critical Marxist analysis presented daily on the *World Socialist Web Site*. We encourage all our readers to visit the WSWS regularly, become a subscriber to the WSWS Review and send comments and correspondence to the site.

Current and back issues of the *WSWS Review* can be ordered through Mehring Books at sales@mehring.com in the US for \$US5 per issue, sales@mehringbooks.co.uk in the UK for £2.50 per issue and mehring@ozemail.com.au in Australia for \$A6.50 per issue. Annual subscriptions (four issues) are available for \$US30 in the US, £12 in Britain and \$A30 in Australia.



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