

# World Socialist Web Site Review: July-September issue now available

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The latest edition of the quarterly *World Socialist Web Site Review* magazine is now available. The July-September 2002 issue reproduces some of the seminal commentary presented on the *World Socialist Web Site* over the past three months, focusing in particular on the mounting political crisis of the Bush administration, the threat of nuclear war on the Indian sub-continent and the recent presidential elections in France.

The magazine's editorial "Bush's new Department of Homeland Defense: the scaffolding of a police state" and a statement by the WSWs Editorial Board, entitled "Cover-up and conspiracy: The Bush administration and September 11" review the significance of the spiraling revelations that the Bush administration had substantial information, prior to September 11, about Al Qaeda plans to hijack commercial jets in the US. The articles highlight the fact that the day before the terror attacks—September 10—a National Security Decision Directive calling for all-out war against Al Qaeda and the invasion of Afghanistan "was sitting on Bush's desk, waiting for his signature". The statements demonstrate that by stepping up his "war against terror," both at home and abroad, Bush is seeking to distract public attention from these revelations, while accelerating moves toward a presidential dictatorship.

The editorial concludes: "All the evidence suggests that, far from September 11 being unpreventable, it was foreseen by the US intelligence apparatus and permitted to happen. The most innocent explanation—though not the most plausible—is government negligence on a colossal scale, rising to the level of criminal negligence. The more plausible explanation is deliberate complicity. A significant faction within the American state viewed a major terrorist atrocity as a reasonable price to pay to obtain the necessary pretext for a war in the oil-rich regions of Central Asia and the Middle East."

While all sections of the mass media, including traditional liberal outlets such as the *New York Times*, have trivialised the controversy over what the White House and American intelligence agencies knew before September 11, the WSWs has continued to expose and analyse the criminality and

reactionary political agenda of the Bush administration. In an important analysis, Bill Vann and David North examine the historic shift in US foreign policy to a "first strike" doctrine of pre-emptive military attacks, warning of its potentially catastrophic implications for the world's people.

Two comprehensive lectures presented to an international summer school in Sydney, Australia review the underlying economic, social and political driving forces of the war in Afghanistan and the reaction in European capitals. Barry Grey traces the sources of the Bush administration's gangsterism and militarism in the deep-seated crisis of American and global capitalism, the growth of social inequality within the US and the protracted decay of American democracy. Peter Schwarz examines the conflicts building up between the US and Europe on several fronts and concludes that "Looked at from the basic facts of world economy, a clash of American and European interests is inevitable... and the struggle for geopolitical influence and economic interests will more and more assume openly militaristic forms."

Another Editorial Board statement warns of the calamitous implications of one of the most significant consequences thus far of the US war drive—the danger of a nuclear conflict on the Indian subcontinent. "Washington's declaration of a 'global war on terrorism,' followed by its invasion of Afghanistan, has plunged existing relations in the region into disarray, stirring up deep-seated antagonisms and encouraging the ruling elites to take aggressive military initiatives to realise their long-held ambitions." The statement outlines a socialist strategy to end the threat of war, based on the unified struggle of the working class and masses throughout the region for a Socialist United States of the Indian Subcontinent.

This issue of the WSWs Review records the powerful intervention carried out by the International Committee of the Fourth International and the WSWs into the French presidential elections. Following the first round of voting, which saw a collapse in support for the traditional government parties and a sharp polarisation, with nearly three million votes cast for parties claiming to be Trotskyist,

the ICFI issued a call for “French workers, youth and intellectuals to boycott the May 5 presidential runoff election that pits the neo-fascist National Front candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen against France’s right-wing president Jacques Chirac.”

The boycott, the ICFI statement explained, would “deny legitimacy to the electoral fraud and provide a means for translating mass discontent into effective political action.” The ICFI followed its call with an open letter to the Lutte Ouvrière (LO), the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) and the Parti des Travailleurs (PT) proposing that these organisations, insofar as they claimed to defend the working class, had an historic political responsibility to campaign actively for the boycott. Only such a policy could politically educate the masses and expose the lies of the entire official political establishment—“the governmental right and governmental left, as well as the media—who claim that a vote for Chirac represents the defence of democracy, the salvation of France’s ‘honor,’ the creation of an ‘anti-fascist front,’ and so on.”

In the event, all three parties refused, advocating instead either direct support for Chirac or passive abstentionism. Their opportunist, pessimistic and fatalist positions played a key role in shoring up the bankrupt political order and delivering an electoral victory to Chirac. Interviews and correspondence with representatives of the LO and LCR, reproduced in this issue, provide a vital case study in the politics of centrism.

Two articles and an exchange of letters on the Middle East crisis lay bare the horrors of the Jenin massacre carried out by the Sharon regime and the record of calculated provocations conducted by the Zionist government to provide the pretext to reoccupy the West Bank and dismantle the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority. By examining the chronology of Sharon’s actions over the past two years, an Editorial Board statement establishes in detail that “this assault is not a sudden reaction to the latest series of suicide bombings but rather the implementation by the Sharon government of a long-planned strategy” to render impossible the establishment of a Palestinian state. Replying to two correspondents, the Editorial Board emphasises that despite the Marxist movement’s well-known opposition to the methods of individual terror, it nevertheless refuses to morally equate the recent suicide bombings with the military brutality of the occupying Zionist forces.

Watch David North’s remarks commemorating 25 years of the *World Socialist Web Site* and donate today.

One of the features of this issue of the magazine is a tribute delivered in Moscow by WSWs Editorial Board chairman David North to the late Russian historian and sociologist Vadim Rogovin, on the occasion of what would

have been his 65th birthday. The meeting celebrated the publication of the seventh and final volume of Rogovin’s *Was there an alternative to Stalinism?*, a history of the struggle of the Left Opposition, led by Leon Trotsky, against the betrayal of the October 1917 Revolution.

Replies to WSWs readers by North and Nick Beams, also a member of the Editorial Board, provide important insights into the history and theory of the socialist movement. North strongly refutes attempts to blackguard Karl Marx as an anti-Semite, while Beams clarifies the profoundly democratic character of socialism against the lies, confusion and distortions created by Stalinism and its bureaucratic apparatus.

Finally, in the Arts section, the WSWs Review includes coverage by WSWs arts editor David Walsh of the Buenos Aires 4th International Festival of Independent Cinema, as well as his highly critical review of *Iris*, Richard Eyre’s film about the mental deterioration of British novelist Iris Murdoch. Also included is an in-depth review of Peter Jackson’s *The Lord of the Rings*, based on the well-known fantasy epic by J.R. Tolkein.

The latest WSWs Review again provides, in a durable and attractive form, some of the best of the critical Marxist analysis presented daily on the *World Socialist Web Site*. We encourage all our readers to subscribe to the WSWs Review and to 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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