

# World Socialist Web Site Review: March-May 2004 issue now available

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The March-May 2004 issue of the *World Socialist Web Site Review* is now out, making available in magazine format some of the most important articles from the WSWs over the past months. The expanded 80-page edition focuses on critical elections to be held this year—in the United States, Sri Lanka and in Europe—and includes political statements of the independent socialist campaigns being conducted by the WSWs and Socialist Equality Parties in the three different parts of the world.

The editorial, “The rise and fall of Howard Dean: An object lesson in Democratic Party politics,” provides a detailed analysis of the Democratic presidential nomination race. It examines why America’s ruling elite was deeply concerned about Dean’s candidacy and how he became the target of a hostile media campaign. It opposes the conception that the task facing American workers is to elect anyone but President Bush, and concludes: “The fundamental lesson of Dean’s political rise and fall is precisely the opposite. The essential question confronting American working people in the fight against the policies of the Bush administration is the need for a political alternative outside of and in opposition to the bourgeois two-party system”.

The SEP’s election statement introduces presidential candidate Bill Van Auken and vice-presidential candidate Jim Lawrence, and provides a detailed overview of the political and historic background to the 2004 elections. It emphasizes that the axis of the SEP’s campaign is internationalism.

“Given the global impact of the United States, it would be entirely appropriate to allow the citizens of every country to participate in the election of an American president,” the statement declares. “As that is not yet possible, the SEP candidates will utilize the elections to develop a conscious sense of international

unity among American working people and their class brothers and sisters all over the world.”

The statement highlights the deep-going crisis of American and world capitalism and explains that this is what lies behind the eruption of US militarism. In a powerful exposition of the necessity for a new mass socialist party it makes clear that the SEP’s campaign aims to “raise the level of political debate within the United States and internationally, to break out of the straightjacket of right-ring bourgeois politics and present a socialist alternative to the demagoguery and lies of the establishment parties and the mass media. Our campaign is not about votes. It is about ideas and policies.”

Also in this issue are a number of articles on the deepening US quagmire in Iraq, the lies about WMD and the complicity of the UN with the US occupation. An important essay—“Guantanamo Bay, habeas corpus and the Texan who would be king”—details the legal implications of the Bush administration’s incarceration of hundreds of POWs without charge or basic rights in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Other articles on the Americas deal with the political situation in Haiti, Canada’s new government, the California recall election results and the Michael Jackson tragedy.

On Europe, the magazine carries a statement from the German Socialist Equality Party (Partei für Soziale Gleichheit—PSG) announcing its decision to run six candidates in the forthcoming elections for the European Parliament. In opposition to the European Union, based on the banks and giant corporations, the PSG calls for a united socialist Europe based on the unification of the European and international working class.

In addition to analyses of developments in France, Georgia, Russia and Germany, the *World Socialist Web Site Review* contains a seminal article on the Respect-

Unity coalition, an opportunist formation based on sections of the antiwar movement and headed by former Labour MP George Galloway in Britain. Co-authors Chris Marsden and Julie Hyland draw out the anti-working class character of the coalition, its orientation to the Muslim clergy and disaffected Tories, and the political role played by the British Socialist Workers Party in its launching. As they explain: “Respect has been founded on a perspective that is a step backwards even when compared to the founding of the Labour Party.”

From Asia, the magazine carries material on the upcoming Sri Lankan elections, including two statements by Sri Lanka’s Socialist Equality Party condemning President Chandrika Kumaratunga’s constitutional coup when she seized control of the Defence, Interior and Information ministries in November, and then, three months later, dissolved parliament, dismissing the elected United National Front government. The SEP, which is running a slate of 23 candidates in Colombo, warns: “Whatever the outcome of the April 2 elections, real power now resides with Kumaratunga, who has concentrated the key levers of the state apparatus in her own hands and thus established the basis for a dictatorial form of rule.”

In a detailed assessment, Nick Beams examines the political economy of the Sri Lankan “peace process” between the Colombo regime and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the fundamental changes in world economy that lie behind the profound political crisis within the island nation.

Other important analyses in the magazine include “The political origins of Jemaah Islamiyah,” by Peter Symonds and “Reflections on the 40th anniversary of the Kennedy assassination” by WSWs International Editorial Board chairman David North. Also by David North is a seminal speech delivered to the Sri Lankan SEP last November on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI). North’s comments are vital reading for all those seeking to understand the origins of the ICFI and the principled political and theoretical struggle waged by the Trotskyist movement during the past half century.

In its arts review section, the magazine features a comment by arts editor David Walsh on the 2003 Toronto Film Festival in which he reviews two

significant films—*Rosenstrasse* and *Crimson Gold*. These movies, he argues, indicate that certain filmmakers have begun attempting to “grapple with life as it actually is in the twenty-first century.” Other articles include Joanne Laurier’s review of Robert Benton’s film *The Human Stain*, based on Philip Roth’s book of the same name, and an obituary of Johnny Cash, one of the most significant figures in American country music, who died last September.

The March-May 2004 WSWs Review provides, in an attractive and durable form, a sample of the political, economic, social and cultural analysis presented daily on the *World Socialist Web Site*. We encourage all our readers to purchase the new issue, become regular subscribers to the magazine, and send articles, comments and correspondence to the WSWs.

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 \$A8.00 per issue. Annual subscriptions (four issues) are available for \$US30 in the US, £12 in Britain and \$A35 in Australia.



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