

World Socialist Web Site Review: March-May 2005 issue now available

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The March-May 2005 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 12 months. The expanded 80-page edition contains insightful essays on the historical significance and implications of the recent US election as well as detailed articles on key political developments in Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Commenting on George W. Bush's inauguration, the *Review's* editorial notes that his second-term administration is "the most reactionary government in United States history," emphasising, however, that a "sober evaluation" must be made of its prospects.

"The turn by American capitalism to the use of military force as its primary instrument of foreign policy—summed up in the Bush doctrine of preventive war—is ultimately a reflection of the economic decline of the United States and its loss of industrial and financial hegemony.

"A desperate ruling elite," the editorial continues, "seeks to reverse its declining world position, or at least retard the rate of decline, through provocation and military violence." Its recklessness would produce inevitable catastrophes for masses of people and open up a new period of social struggles.

David North, national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (US) and chairman of the international editorial board of the *World Socialist Web Site*, explores the historical roots of the Bush administration's agenda in a detailed report to Socialist Equality Party members in January this year.

Entitled "Marxism, the International Committee, and the science of perspective: an historical analysis of the crisis of American imperialism", North reviews the collapse of the post-World War II political and economic arrangements and the long-term decline of US capitalism. "The reference point of the Marxist

party," he explains, "is always the broader historical process."

North then outlines the essential requirements for the development of a revolutionary program and the central theoretical principles that have guided the political struggle of the International Committee of the Fourth International over the past half-century. Extensive statistics demonstrate the unprecedented—and growing—social inequality in the US that underpins the huge gulf between official politics and the lives and concerns of millions of ordinary Americans.

Barry Grey examines the US election results in detail and exposes the role played by the Democratic Party and its allies in diverting the mass movement against the Iraq war behind the pro-war candidate John Kerry. The campaign by Kerry, Grey writes, was a study in evasion and duplicity. "Kerry simply embodied, in a particularly acute form, the contradiction between the public persona and the essential class being of this party of US imperialism."

Grey draws out the historic decline of the Democratic Party and the American trade unions and clarifies the historic necessity for working people to break with these organisations. The most important task of the SEP election campaign, he stresses, was the political education and development of the working class and to explain "what the election portended for the future development of the class struggle."

The central plank of the SEP election campaign was internationalism. On that basis the SEP's US presidential candidate Bill Van Auken addressed meetings in Sri Lanka and Europe as well as North America. The latest WSWS Review contains Van Auken's speech at public meetings in Sri Lanka and his statement on the glaring political contradiction between contemporary Fourth of July celebrations in the US and the real purpose of the 1776 American Revolution,

which was to overthrow colonialist oppression and advance the struggle for democratic rights.

The magazine also contains polemics by David Walsh against University of Massachusetts linguistic professor Noam Chomsky and an open letter to antiwar filmmaker Michael Moore from the SEP's candidate for Michigan's 15th Congressional District Jerry White. Chomsky and Moore both claimed that the only alternative to the Bush administration was the Democrats and John Kerry. Walsh and White expose the dangers of this perspective.

The magazine features crucial articles on the Asian tsunami; the Butler inquiry cover-up of the Blair administration's campaign of lies to justify participation in US-led occupation of Iraq; US meddling in the Ukrainian election; and a detailed comment by Nick Beams, SEP (Australia) national secretary on the reelection of the Howard government in 2004 and the role played by the Australian Labor Party.

Beams also has a major essay in this issue of the *Review* appraising American political economist Paul Sweezy, who died in February 2004. Although Sweezy was critical of attempts by Stalinist theoreticians to turn Marxism into a dogma, he rejected Marx's fundamental analysis.

Beams examines Sweezy's revisionism—his denial of the tendency of the rate of profit to decline and other decisive discoveries by Marx—and its debilitating impact on layers of youth politically radicalised during the 1960s and 70s.

Other detailed obituaries published in this issue review the lives of Palestinian Liberation Organisation Chairman Yasser Arafat (1929-2004) and Livio Maitan (1923-2004) leader of the Italian Pabloite movement.

In addition, the *World Socialist Web Site Review* contains several thought-provoking arts reviews. These include Michael Moore's powerful *Fahrenheit 9/11*, Martin Scorsese's *The Aviator*, an historically dishonest film about Howard Hughes, and *The Passion of the Christ* directed by Mel Gibson.

Arts editor David Walsh probes some of the underlying reasons for the popularity of Gibson's deeply reactionary film and states: "Whatever the immediate fate of Gibson's work, its reception underscores, above all, the increasingly unstable social and moral state of American capitalist society,

inexorably coming face to face with its own peculiar Passion." The magazine also features an essay on New Zealand film *Whale Rider*, directed by Niki Caro, and its promotion of identity politics.

The March-May 2005 *World Socialist Web Site 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 WSWWS.

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