

Letters from our readers

28 April 2011

On "Budget austerity and democracy"

Very nice summary. The continued funding needed to keep huge corporations (mostly financial) afloat will come from the working class. The administration is clearly eying all retirement programs, Social Security.

Banks themselves are even more creative, allowing people to sell life insurance before death, so that in their deaths, the bank can collect.

What is clearly happening is a desperate grab for capital, as accumulation with the normal means becomes increasingly difficult. Along with this process, bigger firms are stripping smaller firms. Mergers, bank takeovers are happening which serve to move large amounts of capital to fewer numbers of owners. As the new smaller numbers of owners amass large bases of capital, a very cheap labor pool is created due to the absolutely drastic cuts meted out to the working class along with high levels of unemployment. This cheap labor can then be used to further add value to the large capitals that have been accumulated under stress.

That, indeed, is the plan of the capitalists and their servant state. However, a great sea of workers will inevitably oppose these unlivable measures and the outcome will depend on this struggle, the struggle of two rights—the right to live for the masses, and the right to exploit them for the few.

Thushara
22 April 2011

On "US steps up pressure against Syria"

Syria is an interesting example of a major problem of Western imperialism in the Middle East. The imperial powers may know in an abstract way what their interests are; they may know particularly with respect

to certain commodities, gas, oil etc. And here their interests are likely to conflict. But they have no idea at all about the medium- to long-term effects of the military implements that they employ. Will it bring compliant regimes into existence or spread "Islamic fundamentalism"? Etc. And given the total absence of a Western force able to determine these outcomes, indecision and paralysis are likely to dominate Western governments. To paraphrase Long John Silver, "Those who refuse the invitation will be the lucky ones."

Chris
Ireland
26 April 2011

On "Sidney Lumet, director of 12 Angry Men and Dog Day Afternoon, dead at 86"

Thank you for your detailed and insightful article on the late Sidney Lumet. You are quite correct in your assessment that for whatever reasons (commercial appeal etc.) some of his films touch on highly significant historical issues without providing a truly insightful political analysis. For example the film *Running on Empty* obliquely hints at but does not analyze the difference between the "new left" and the "old left". Judd Hersh, portraying the father of the Pope family, refers to a phone conversation he had with his father after he and his wife planted the bomb in the napalm manufacturing plant, the explosion of which turns the Pope family into "criminals". Hersh refers to himself as a "red diaper baby" during the phone conversation with his father.

This term refers to the children of 1930s radicals who believed that social and economic justice issues—the right of workers to unionize; eight hour work day; overtime pay; occupational safeguards for workers [think the Halfway to Hell Club of workers who built

the San Francisco Bay bridge]; protection for working and middle class people from evictions; jobs with living wages for all and universal health care were the paramount issues of the day. The contrast between these groups and the “New Left” including the latter’s splintering into identity politics is never explored in the film.

Finally there is *The Deadly Affair*. This film, based on John LeCarre’s novella *Call for the Dead* should confront two exceptionally important political issues: the role of the Communist underground in Nazi Germany operating as the only effective resistance force during WWII and the fact that only the Communist underground provided both a refuge and a way for German Jews to fight the Nazi war machine. The role of the Communist underground, almost always aided primarily or exclusively by the USSR in defeating Hitler is completely absent in American popular culture.

Secondly, and most controversially, the film touches on the fact that not every Jew was a victim of the Holocaust. A few chose the Communist underground to actively resist the Nazi regime through sabotage and espionage. This illustrates the fact that the allied victory in WWII was inextricably bound up with the sacrifices and efforts of the USSR (later denounced as the “evil empire”) and that the tendency of contemporary Hollywood to wallow in the stereotype of the Jew as victim (*Sophie’s Choice* etc.) is only one part of the story of that hellish time.

Peter L
Connecticut, USA
25 April 2011



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact