Letters from our readers

1 November 2012

On "Massive hurricane hits Northeastern US"

Hurricane Sandy is the type of extreme weather event that will increase in frequency and strength this century. Global warming cannot simply be pointed to as the cause of the storm; however, it is probable that it had a strengthening effect of some kind.

This article from the WSWS mentions the inability of capitalism to upgrade infrastructure to prepare for these foreseeable disaster events. Of equal significance, deserving just as much anger is the fact that capitalism is incapable of addressing the contradictory relationship between society and nature.

Both the Republican and Democratic parties have avoided the issue. This is criminal. Their lips are closed dare they draw attention to their naked neglect—their obvious inability to even begin to address the issue.

Has Obama mentioned it once in his election speeches?

This retreat from even mentioning it is predictable.

Capitalism will continue to inadequately address the long-term sustainability of agriculture, industry, and transport. As time goes on the situation will worsen and lead to a gross and foul exacerbation of misery: flooding, severe storms, salinization of swathes of land, etc. Prevention of global warming is too costly for capital. Energy saving, and other things that don't dampen profits might be taken up, but nothing serious enough to prevent warming beyond 2 or 3 Celsius.

Nations like the United States will likely use disaster and refugee-type situations to further beef up their military and police apparatus. They will seize upon calamity as proof that the populace should fear and seek protection.

A socialist revolution would forge the democratic, rational, and need oriented production that could ameliorate this condition. Piece-meal reform is not just a wishful fantasy, the royal road to class betrayal, it is an ecological deathtrap that ignores the urgency of the scientific consensus.

Gabe E
30 October 2012

On "US third party debate presents no alternative for working class"

By the way, I also "tweeted" Amy Goodman to include SEP candidates in her similar post-debate format shows (a tweet was the only way I could see to make contact with their staff), to resounding silence. She did include the lunatic Constitution party candidate for "balance" I guess.

It seems the only thing more frightening to the foundation-funded "left" than the Tea Partiers are genuine Marxists who promote independent working class formations.

Stu
30 October 2012

On "Arbitrage: False advertising"

Just a few quick comments about the film *Arbitrage*. One issue that may be peripherally relevant is the effect of capitalism on people who if not compelled to cut other people's throats to make a profit might be decent human beings. There are hints the Richard Gere character might at one time have had a core of decency (he does seem to genuinely care for his children) though it has long since been liquidated by the profit

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motive.

There are two other quirks in the film, one of which is unintentionally hilarious. Gere and the lawyer he has retained to represent his accomplice in the cover-up of his mistress' death discover that a photograph of the accomplice's license plate is a forgery (a key piece of evidence in the prosecution's case against the accomplice necessary to "flip" him against Gere.) They make this discovery by comparing paper copies of the police photograph to an actual photograph that they have taken themselves.

In reality, because the picture is generated by a computer-operated surveillance system, it constitutes a form of electronically stored information. Any even borderline competent defense attorney would have demanded the police authenticate the photograph with the underlying metadata (i.e., showing that it was actually taken when, where and by whom the police claimed). The actual metadata would clearly have proved the photo was a fake. Granted a technical flaw, but given the amount of money that obviously went in to the production of this movie, it should have been picked up.

The other flaw is the filmmaker's choice of the actor to play the Gere character's personal attorney: Stuart Margolin. Older readers may remember him as the wily private investigator Jim Rockford's low-life running buddy in the TV series "The Rockford Files." Imagining him as high-powered Manhattan lawyer is an unintentionally hilarious comment on Wall Street morality.

Sincerely,

Peter L
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30 October 2012

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