

# Letters from our readers

6 November 2012

*On “New York’s Staten Island hit with death and destruction”*

Thank you for the continuing coverage—I hear almost nothing on the radio now about Sandy and the aftermath, and certainly nothing in the way of interviews with people in the areas hardest hit. What little is broadcast is spun in relation to the election—“Will it hurt Obama?”

My heart she bleeds for the prospects of the Obama campaign—such hardships they face because of this tragedy!

It will be very interesting to find out what the actual death toll is—I agree with those on Staten Island who question the official toll. In such a densely populated area, and especially with such a lack of emergency response, it is doubtful that only 20 lives have been lost.

Christie S  
Washington, USA  
5 November 2012

*On “New York City public housing without lights, heat or water after storm”*

It is no different anywhere. Rich are given complete care by the authorities, while poor have to fend for themselves... Reflected even in the attitude of defense authorities, who carry out the criminal “war on terror” or “war for democracy” or whatever they want to call it. It is merely like hitting a fly for them. Meaning not a human being, but merely a pestering carrier or low-level creatures, a reserve army of human barriers, which can be dispensed of for the sake of the privileged few.

Regards,

Sathish

3 November 2012

*On “Anger boils over at lack of US storm relief”*

And, if all the problems mentioned in the article weren’t enough, it turns out that carbon monoxide poisoning is a serious threat, both through the use of gasoline-powered generators and using indoor gas stoves to provide warmth, now that we are getting into the cooler months. See the local news reporting from TV station WTNH.

CH

Houston, Texas, USA  
3 November 2012

*On “Storm’s damage to aging infrastructure leaves New York City paralyzed”*

It is painful but very interesting to witness in art the pride America’s artists once took in New York’s technology as it had been at the turn of the last century, a human and artistic achievement with a liberating international dimensions, not the enormous burden below 35th street in Manhattan and all over New Jersey that it had become.

No less than three great poets from three different countries, Hart Crane, Federico Garcia Lorca and Vladimir Mayakovsky, sang the praises of the Brooklyn Bridge, while John Marin rendered an immortal painting of it. Alfred Stieglitz’s photograph of a locomotive has the instructive title, “The Hand of Man”. Georgia O’Keefe’s “Radiator Building at Night” pulses with hope and energy—electrification. That is the context of Lenin’s famous saying how the collectivization of production plus electrification of the world’s second largest country plunged in darkness equals communism. Charles Demuth’s ramble in his last days through his hometown of Lancaster, Pennsylvania in the throes of the Depression painting

machinery lying idle still captures all the hope brought about by the “machine age”, My own favourite of this series, “ My Egypt”, can be found by googling.

In their Precisionist phase, Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler “photographed” a 1921 film, *Manhatta*, deserving comparison with Walter Ruttmann’s modernist *Berlin in Symphony of a Metropolis* or Dziga Vertov’s tribute to modernist Odessa, *A Man With a Movie Camera* (1929).

You can catch it on YouTube beginning with a quotation from Whitman testifying on what they meant by “American” when it was quite a brand name in the world. From Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* addressed to Manhattan’s masses on the screen: “City of the World/ (For all the world is here)/ city of tall facades/ Of marble and iron”, a sweep of New York in the film the absolutely startling horizon rising before a craft in motion straight ahead. Then Whitman’s sharp ear hears a welcoming sound “When million footed Manhattan descends/ to its pavement.” In come the masses massed astonishingly on the Brooklyn Ferry. The streets are full of life, great modernist architecture all about, powerful machinery. Watch how people move full of life and purposively in the film, those machines a testament to the human spirit and the content of very great art.

This is tough art, street-smart, full of confidence in what has become worn, depleted, living hell after the de-industrialization demanded by capital in our times, as everyone suffering the recent disaster on the East Coast could testify.

It is well worth asking how it all went wrong as your excellent web site does daily. Thank you.

AL  
Toronto, Canada  
3 November 2012

*On “UK Conservative coalition suffers defeat on European Union funding”*

Thank you Julie for yet another fine piece of writing. As always, your article is most instructive and illuminating. Having spent the last seven years in

Germany, I can only confirm your reporting of the widespread attitude there that the UK is irrelevant to the EU. Your analysis underlines the sheer ludicrousness of any claim that the EU under capitalism represents anything more than an attempt by dominant European ruling classes to collaborate in driving down wages and securing trading advantages within the euro zone.

Ed Miliband’s opportunist capitulation to widespread anti-EU sentiment in the UK only underlines the bankruptcy of social democratic reformism in Britain and its increasing resort to petty nationalist illusions.

I will read your article again now to achieve a deeper understanding of the issues involved. Your writing sets a standard for me to aspire to!

Rev. greetings,

Ginny  
East Sussex, UK  
3 November 2012



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