

Letters from our readers

4 December 2012

On “UAW sanctions ‘alternative’ work schedule at Chrysler”

I am a worker at Warren Truck, and this AWS thing is getting ugly. We are supposed to start this nonsense in March and it’s going to get ugly. With many rumors of wildcat strikes and sit-down strikes my question is to Chrysler, can you really afford this kind of setback and loss of production at this time; somebody better take a long hard look at this situation and ask themselves, is this worth it? They keep taking and taking no COLA, no Christmas bonus, and now no more overtime. They say they want to be the premier auto manufacturer in the world, well good luck with that, all they are going to get is poor morale, poor quality and lots of absenteeism and medical leaves, just so the big wigs can fill their bank accounts. Let’s see where Chrysler is this time next year, 2013, Japan auto capital of the world!

RF

3 December 2012

On “Silver Linings Playbook: It’s the little things in life ...”

Dear Joanne –

In your review, you said that, though director David O. Russell set his story in late 2008, his treatment of the period suggests he was “oblivious to general human circumstances” that marked the onset of the global social and economic catastrophes associated with the collapse of Wall Street. “Most likely”, this was not a purposeful evasion on Russell’s part. I’d like to examine this point.

The WWSW has been consistently providing accurate insights into how wealth isolates people of Russell’s economic class from reality. But one can’t help but

detest, if not the man, at least some of the comments he made to the *Chicago Tribune*.

The significance of “2008” was made perfectly clear at the recent Second National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP). David North, National Chairman of the SEP, declared: “...the crisis of 2008 represent[s], no less than 1914, 1929 and 1939, a turn in world history.”

Two thousand and eight—“2008”—has not yet been properly assigned the sinister connotations it deserves among the US working class. No major political organization, financed by big business, can frankly identify it as a failure of capitalism.

Most Americans have little idea what threats—and real opportunities—exist in the period we are living through. What does, in fact, the audience who attends his movie know about the social and political conflicts of the day? Actually, quite a lot: The escalation of the of war in Afghanistan with a 36,000 personnel “surge” and mass casualties of PTSD, the massive bailout of corrupt financial institution with trillions of public funds, the nature of the Iraq war from the “Collateral Murder” video, the phony election campaigns by Democrats and Republicans, the launching of surveillance drones in the US to monitor the citizenry, and mass unemployment, that about 10 percent of the US population controls 90 percent of the money, property and investments...

Consider the novelist, F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940), who also worked on screenplays in Hollywood during the 1930s. If Fitzgerald “set” a scene in October 1929, or alluded to the date, his readers knew what circumstances the characters were facing, linked to his description of their social class (*The Great Gatsby*, *Tender is the Night*). When novelist and screenplay writer James M. Cain wrote about contemporary life during the Great Depression, he offered details about the struggles of wage earners and

small business owners (*Mildred Pierce*, *Serenade*). Both these writers signaled their audience that the drama unfolding was inextricably linked to the events of the day, and were careful to reveal the disparities in wealth that influenced every social interaction. Without being didactic, they automatically endowed their stories with historical significance.

David O. Russell sets his story in late 2008—and filmed it from the perspective of 2012, possessing four years of hindsight. It revolves around two wage earners experiencing “debilitating” emotional problems, then places them, like a couple of puppets, in a canoe heading for Niagara Falls and says, so to speak, “Look at these damaged people in 2008; they don’t know what they’re in for!”

Moviegoers, attempting to find some escape from the realities that have devastated their personal lives in the past few years, may nevertheless discern Russell’s contempt for their predicaments.

That might, in itself, provide a “silver lining” to this story.

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