

Devastation in Texas: Nine Ways This Is a Crime of this System

Hurricane Harvey has devastated southeast Texas. Thirty people are already dead. One-third of Harris County, where Houston is located, is now under water. The lives and futures of millions of people are at risk.

Why has this hurricane struck with such force? Why are so many people living right in the path of hurricanes and floods? Why weren't any real plans in place to evacuate people to safety or take care of them during the kind of storm emergency everyone knew was coming? And why, even now, are the authorities unable to prevent widespread suffering and devastating losses for so many thousands of people?

This isn't just nature at work, there's a system at work in this catastrophe. Things did *not* have to happen this way.

- 1.** The system of capitalism-imperialism is fundamentally responsible for global warming, which makes storms like Harvey happen more often and hit much harder.
- 2.** Houston, a city of millions, was built up right in the path of hurricanes, on a flat plain known to be a flood disaster waiting to happen, because it was profitable to produce and transport oil and other products there.
- 3.** Toxic, dangerous oil refining, petrochemical, and pesticide plants have been built in harm's way, because capitalism's dog-eat-dog drive for profit and dominance makes this system incapable of protecting the people or the environment.
- 4.** Capitalist oil, real estate, and development industries have profited by replacing natural flood barriers like forests, meadows, and wetlands with shopping malls, freeways, and developments—making Houston's flooding far worse.
- 5.** In the last 40 years, Houston has flooded more than any other major U.S. city, but real disaster planning to evacuate, shelter, or care for people doesn't profit or serve capitalism—so it's never done.
- 6.** Those who've been exploited and oppressed to create capitalism's wealth are always the most vulnerable when disaster strikes. They don't have the money or resources to prepare for storms, escape when they hit, or recover from the devastation.
- 7.** Immigrants have been exploited and terrorized by this system, and now they could be arrested or deported for seeking shelter and safety. The Border Patrol made this viciously clear: "The laws will not be suspended, and we will be vigilant against any effort by criminals to exploit disruptions caused by the storm."
- 8.** Capitalism gets everyone to compete against each other for jobs, housing, and education and promotes look-out-for-number-one values—just look at Trump. People are not encouraged, organized, and given the resources to work together to prepare for floods and hurricanes. Instead, they're left to fend for themselves—with people trapped on roofs, the elderly huddled in rising storm waters, or families trying to wade or drive to safety through flooded streets.
- 9.** During this crisis, the rulers of this system have acted to preserve capitalist property and the social order that serves it—not meet the needs of the people.

This is not the best humanity can do—a whole other and far better way IS possible, through revolution. The know-how and resources exist right now to meet people's needs, protect the environment, and plan for emergencies. What stands in the way is the system of capitalism-imperialism and the state power that backs that up with pigs, guns, tanks, and armies. The *Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America*, by Bob Avakian, provides a vision of a society organized not to maximize the profits of a few but to move toward a world where all exploitation and oppression have been ended, and where humanity is not the plunderer but the caretaker of the environment. This IS possible; what is required is revolution.