

# More letters on Hurricane Katrina

12 September 2005

*The following is a selection of letters sent to the World Socialist Web Site on Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath.*

On “The politics of the ‘blame game’: Bush rejects responsibility in Hurricane Katrina disaster”

Bush’s remark to Pelosi of “What didn’t go right?” indicates that he is satisfied with the end result of the Katrina disaster. Do you think it could have been all planned and actually did go as he wanted it to? I put nothing past this morally bankrupt administration.

BE

9 September 2005

I was reading the *Wall Street Journal* (according to the adage, “Know Thine Class Enemy”). On page 1, September 8, there is an article entitled “Old Line Families Escape Worst of Flood and Plot Future” I cite one section in particular (from page A12): “The power elite on New Orleans—whether they are still in the city or have moved temporarily to enclaves such as Destin, Fl., and Vail, Co.—insist the remade city won’t simply restore the old order. New Orleans before the flood was poor, burdened by a teeming underclass, substandard schools and a high crime rate. The city has few corporate headquarters. The new city must be something very different, Mr. Reiss says, with better services and fewer poor people.

“ ‘Those who want to see this city rebuilt want to see it done in a completely different way: demographically, geographically and politically,’ he says. ‘I’m not just speaking for myself here. The way we’ve been living is not going to happen again or we’re out.’ ” Mr. Reiss is a part of Mayor Nagin’s administration, and gained his wealth as a supplier of electronic systems to shipbuilders. According to the *WSJ* report, when things got ugly in New Orleans after Katrina, he helicoptered in a security company to guard his and his neighbors’ houses in the exclusive, gated Audobon Place. The whole article is disgusting, but I did want to draw your attention to this specific bit. When people claim that class does not play a part in this whole thing, that class and race do not play a part in American politics—I point to the Reisses of the upper echelons and I say, “Oh?” Mind you, this is the *Wall Street Journal* we’re reading here, not some fly-by-night entity. The very voice of capitalism in America feels free enough to quote this man and the others in the

article, as they feel free enough to spew hatred, class and race. I doubt sincerely that they plan to change the demographics of New Orleans by employing the poor residents at fair wages or volunteering to exempt themselves from tax cuts in order to fund the school system. Rather, the places where the poor, mostly African-American people used to live will be opportunistically rebuilt for better-heeled new residents. The “way” they’ve “been living” during Katrina has been in their mansions, dry. Their water service has been returned. As the *WSJ* puts it: “The Mostly African-American neighborhoods in New Orleans are largely underwater.... But in many of the predominantly white and more affluent areas, streets are dry and passable. Gracious homes are mostly intact....” It is too bad that gracious hearts do not occupy them.

CMS

Portland, Oregon

9 September 2005

I wanted to suggest that someone there write an article on some of our troops fighting the war to liberate Iraq and protect our nation against the great threat of “terrorism” that have been greatly affected by Hurricane Katrina. Whether they have lost homes, have lost contact with displaced families, how they feel about the reaction from our leaders prior to, during and after one of the greatest natural disasters of our time. After all, these people who volunteered to fight these war profiteers’ greedy war are being totally screwed if they have homes affected or family affected by this. What a slap in the face they must feel when our leaders will throw billions and billions of hard-working Americans’ dollars into a war so they and their friends can become more filthy rich than they already are. The people fighting their war and risking their lives have to stay the course while their homes, families and friends face death, disease, homelessness, poverty, crime right on our own soil. While Bush and Cheney vacationed, nonetheless. Now, that is a true crime against the people!

BP

Annandale, Minnesota

9 September 2005

On “New Orleans: the specter of military dictatorship”

Thank you for being the first Trotskyist organisation, to

my knowledge, to take seriously the current machinations of the US imperialists to test the waters on the eventual militarisation of major US cities. I say this with the sole reservation that my knowledge of many of the European languages is limited and of non-European languages practically nil, so that I might have missed some important analysis in those idioms. I take so-called “conspiracy” theories seriously when they have a basis in material fact and reflect the desperation of national ruling classes to test new measures to protect their threatened interests or to seek transnational alliances to defend the global system that is based on wage slavery and predatory war. We should expect that the threat to this system from ever-explosive internal contradictions and exposure of carefully crafted myths will prompt the defenders of the system to improve on lessons of the past: more sophisticated versions of the Reichstag Fire, Operation Phoenix, etc. An updated analysis of Lenin’s theory of imperialism and Trotsky’s analysis of fascism (as found in *Whither France?*, for instance) is sorely needed. While there is to date no transnational (“globalist”) ruling class; there do exist, nevertheless, transnational formations of a far more sophisticated nature than the secret organisations that operated under the umbrella of the Anti-Comintern Pact. Some of these formations have historical roots in those very organisations of the past. A lot of good investigative journalism in this area now seems to be available on the Internet and in book format—but unfortunately confused by adherence to discredited theories that are alien to the class interests of the workers. The ICFI has not faltered in offering on its website a dialectical materialist, class-based analysis as an alternative to the usual dead-end speculations of the popular religious and impressionistic conspiracy sites. For this, the ICFI has shown its readiness to lead the working class as its true vanguard.

BB

Atlanta, Georgia

10 September 2005

*On “New Orleans becomes a war zone: A dress rehearsal for martial law?”*

Does anyone doubt that one consequence of the forced total evacuation of poor in New Orleans will be the confiscation of their property? Many otherwise poor inhabitants of New Orleans and other cities have managed to acquire the houses in which they live. Now that these properties can safely be condemned by authorities as worthless, how likely is it that they will be simply handed over to wealthy developers for “improvement” with little or no compensation to those who had naively believed themselves to be protected by the sacred rights of ownership? New Orleans is under martial law, all inhabitants

are being forcibly expelled, and news reporting within the flooded city is being severely restricted. Yet certain “fine people,” to use a Southern phrase, are exempt from all the restrictions. How, in America, could anything but massive fraud be hatching along with the mosquitoes under such perfect conditions? Seek and ye shall find....

FG

8 September 2005

This forced evacuation has got to be bogus. There are many areas of the city that are not water-damaged and whose residents are well supplied with what they need to survive in their homes. They don’t need military with guns breaking into their houses. Give them supplies if they need them, but forcing them out of their homes has got to have an underlying scheme. Maybe the military has been told that they don’t want any witnesses to the numbers of dead that will be found. Maybe they just want to bulldoze the part of the city that is low-income. There’s undoubtedly an ulterior motive. The residents seem to recognize that once out of their homes, they may never see them again.

I just hope that there are many, many survivors of this tragic event and that they all remember how to vote—and that doesn’t mean voting for Democrats, who are no better than the Republicans.

CS

8 September 2005

*On “Bush administration snubs Cuban hurricane offer”*

The Canadian and American media need to be transmitting this information when discussing blame. Why are they not talking about the invaluable contribution that the Cubans are willing to make?

PG

Toronto, Canada

9 September 2005

*On “British media fears political consequences of Hurricane Katrina”*

Another example of outstanding WSWs reporting on Katrina. I hope to see the implicit and explicit predictions of change.

LL

Whitehall, Pennsylvania

9 September 2005



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