

On the Hurricane Katrina disaster

24 September 2005

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

On “Bush reassures American ruling class: Tax cuts to continue, social programs to be slashed in wake of Hurricane Katrina”

This is the kind of stuff that makes me angry—no, check that, *mad*. Spitting, mean dog mad. Here I am, 32 years old, working without health coverage (for UPS!) and I’m sick to death of all these fat cats and running dogs who take and take and take, then smile and lie and take some more. Are there any others out there ready to give up the creature comforts of materialism and strike back for the working class?

ML

21 September 2005

On “Religion, science and Hurricane Katrina”

Given that Dominion Theology is operating quite well within the Bush administration it comes as no great surprise that Mr. Bush would use religion as a means of deflecting attention from real problems. I am more surprised that he has not used the “God’s punishment” argument, but maybe someday soon after the population has been gullible enough to accept any explanation other than the right one—that being an explanation based on verifiable facts.

The Council of Nicea set up in the fourth century heralded in Christianity, a Council comprised of various religions including paganism. All were “unified” under the Catholic Church, which set about destroying all references to the pagan origins of Christianity as well as pre-biblical cultures and the Alexandria texts that contained huge amounts of incredible works of science, law and literature. The Catholic Church and Her supporters became extremely wealthy while the common citizen wallowed in physical and mental squalor. Over 1000 years of human cultural/mental/emotional evolution ground to a halt.

The Chiefs and their Shamans wish to rule again; so now they are again trying to immerse the public in pathetic, infantile superstitious belief systems designed for only one purpose—supply unlimited wealth to the few at the unlimited expense of the many. An educated public, a public well versed in critical thinking, scientific literacy, is a dangerous public—but only to the elite who over centuries have initiated such successful scams as to have remained in positions of power.

Socialist philosophy has always prized education, which is why it has always been hated by the anti-intellectuals, whether they are the churches, dictators or right-wing organizations such as the Nazis. It is why the churches have so often been aligned with right-wing politics despite the mythical Jesus Christ teaching socialist principles. We have to get this right. We have to challenge our most deeply held beliefs against their historical origins and their

errancies. If we do not become rational beings in very short order, we will have the same fourth century minds in complete control, only this time it won’t be arrows going through the heart of a man; it will be great destructive forces of nuclear/chemical/biological origins going through the heart of mankind instead.

Socialism has never targeted any one race, religion, or culture as the problem in society. It has correctly identified a ruling elite as the problem, an elite that will use any means at hand to create religious, political, racial or cultural dogma and dysfunction to keep its wealth and therefore its power. In short, they create the problem, stand back and watch the fight, then offer solutions that inevitably, without fail, benefit them. Socialism has been the monkey-wrench in the works and even here, under Stalinism, the elite have tried to degrade its basic tenets. Stalinism has made socialism a “dirty word” enabling capitalism, with its “dirty politics,” to dominate the world and making the philosophy of socialism a difficult sell to the general public.

We have lots of work ahead of us and not much time.

SN

Powell River, Canada

19 September 2005

Since Katrina, the letters section of our local paper (*The Oregonian*) has been rife with “God talk.” One man went so far as to write two letters—one exhorting us all to return to the “God of our patriarchs,” as it was obvious that He was angry, and one clarifying that the devil, not God, was responsible for Katrina—thereby trying to have it both ways, both wrong.

The backwards thinking of such people is being encouraged by the current administration, we know. This is a common tactic.

Let’s for a moment, though, go with God. So, Cain slays Able, God (of our patriarchs) asks where Able is and Cain says, “I’m not my brother’s keeper,” in effect throwing the blame onto God, who is taken to be the keeper of us all in his mind. God’s not buying it, and Cain is sent to wander, a marked man. (Note he is not given the death penalty!) From this we can learn: Our actions have consequences. Oh, dear. On Earth. Oh, dear indeed! That didn’t work out as Bush would have hoped!

There are a lot of religious people who are not buying the Bush line. Why? Because they actually read the source material (no pun intended), something which I doubt Bush has done more than skim for the naughty parts. They also believe that works, not faith alone, will build a better world. Oh, yeah, and they realize that science is *not* the devil’s work and should be looked at forthrightly. A lot of them also despise Bush and his cohorts for making them look like fools in the eyes of the world.

We secularists also do not appreciate it.

CMS

Portland, Oregon
19 September 2005

On “Bush’s vision for New Orleans: a profiteer’s paradise”

With the catastrophe in the Gulf states caused by Katrina, George W. Bush is now going to rebuild the damaged sites. Bush and his administration knew the levee could only hold a force 3 hurricane years before but did absolutely nothing because the folks in the Gulf states that were affected were not his type of people, the haves and have mores. Then the outcry from the American and international communities about the administration’s non-immediate action suddenly gave the Emperor such a shock for his criminality that he is now trying to give his belated efforts some sort of credibility.

Keeping the people pissed, poor and uneducated is a brutal reminder of what all capitalist administrations are all about, till now over 400 bodies have been found because they were too poor to travel.

From the illegal Iraq invasion to Katrina, the WSWS has been at the forefront in exposing the Bush administration’s crimes against humanity and for what they really are all about. Keep up the great work. Let us all hope that these poverty stricken humans will have better places to live, long after Bush goes down in history as the most incompetent and ego-driven president in the history of the US.

RC
Central Coast, Australia
16 September 2005

*What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore— And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat
Or crust and sugar over—
Like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
Like a heavy load.
Or does it explode?*

—Langston Hughes

The WSWS militants going out to meet New Orleans people displaced all the way to Michigan are making precious contact and should keep the news flowing from the far-flung citizens. The efforts to self-organize back in New Orleans need to be seen in the light of the hundreds of thousands who were displaced blindly.

The poem above is strikingly on the mark, I think it is like direct reporting from the arena of action on the ground now.

RP
16 September 2005

On “The New York Times and Bush’s New Orleans speech”

You write, “There was no criticism of the Gulf Opportunity Zone, although it is well understood that its purpose is to transform the Gulf Coast into a low-wage, high-profit arena of exploitation for corporate America.” The whole thing is disgusting, but I thought New Orleans and the Gulf Coast already was kind of a Gulf Opportunity Zone, hence so many people living in poverty, even those with jobs. I guess they could make it more efficient and more de-humanizing though. I bet a lot of the old “poor” neighborhoods in New Orleans become gentrified once all the

detainees are safely settled in their “camps.”

RK
British Columbia, Canada
17 September 2005

Your excellent article did not note one minor but significant detail. The *New York Times*’ decision to impose subscription on its op-ed columnists really was in the works before Katrina, but it also has the effect of imposing a repressive lid on the one part of the *Times* that has given a home to dissenting and occasionally intelligent pieces on recent crises. A coincidence, yes, but a telling one.

DC
Guerneville, California
17 September 2005

On “Hurricane Katrina: a public health and environmental disaster”

You have an extraordinary grasp of health hazards in New Orleans. It was an excellent report. The “mainstream media” would do well to use your concise, graphic technique. For a site that is on the left-wing fringe and biased according to “mainstream media,” the objective, concise but detailed reporting simply shows how wrong and biased the “mainstream media” is. If truth vividly and starkly presented is propaganda—so be it. Mr. Levine, I am favorably impressed by your reporting skills. I hope to see your work often. Thanks!

LL
Whitehall, Pennsylvania
21 September 2005

On “New Orleans and poverty: a damning admission from the New York Times”

Outstanding article. America’s poor have been virtually ignored for so long, as politicians and the media celebrate “welfare reform” and “job expansion” (failing to note the percentage of new jobs that are part-time/minimum wage, the lack of transportation and child care, lack of medical care for so many, etc.).

DF
Wisconsin
19 September 2005



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