

Wednesday, August 17, 2005

### Intelligentsians blockering förklarad

Per Ahlmark förklarar i sin *Det är demokratin, dumbom!* (s. 101), utan att själv inse det, sin egen och andras blockering - eller förnekelse - inför det som nu sker: Vi har sett det förr under de senaste nittio åren. Inte kan väl miljontals människor ha blivit tokiga och anslutit sig till en sjukligt fanatisk politisk åskådning? Det var utgångspunkten för dem som hyllade Sovjetkommunismen, också under dess värsta år, eller rättare sagt: speciellt då. Att Stalin av ren galenskap utrotade hela folkgrupper genom utsvaltning eller deportationer, nej, det lät alltför osannolikt! Troligare var naturligtvis att Stalin hade rätt när han skyllde konflikterna på borgerliga propagandister eller trotskistiska sabotörer. Ty världen kan inte ha förvandlats till ett irrationellt slakteri. Se fortsättningen av citatet på <http://life.lege.net/viewtopic.php?p=107#107>, där du även kan diskutera det, och där det finns fler länkar.

Ahlmark talar själv om döds Kult och att se andra folk som "undermänniskor". Han tycks inte se att den närmast religiöst fanatiska flygeln i hans eget älskade USA själva driver en döds Kult. Se t ex *The Trojan Horse of Nuclear War* av Leuren Moret, på <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/MOR407A.html>. Läs mer på <http://life.lege.net/viewtopic.php?p=107#107>. William Blum har i en av sina böcker skrivit att oavsett hur paranoid och konspirationsteoretiskt lagd du är så är det som den amerikanska regeringen verkligen gör värre än du kan föreställa dig...

Inlagd av Leif Erlingsson i *Demokratiskt arbete, Förnekelse, Konspirationsteorier, Gemensam berättelse / myt, Demokrati, Absurditeter gör ohyggligheter, USA, Nyliberalism* kl 12:40

Detta med "undermänniskor" har ju blivit väldigt tydligt med hur flyktingar i New Orleans bemöttes. Se t ex denna ögonvittnesskildring av ett gift par som blev fast i New Orleans i samband med en konferens - ett kortare utdrag har publicerats här:

[http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/news/archives/2005/09/08/they\\_lied\\_to\\_us\\_to\\_get\\_us\\_to\\_move.html](http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/news/archives/2005/09/08/they_lied_to_us_to_get_us_to_move.html)

Men den nedanstående versionen kommer via en mailinglista:

Sept 5, 2005

Hurricane Katrina - Our Experiences

by Larry Bradshaw and Lorrie Beth Slonsky

Two days after Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans, the Walgreen's store at the corner of Royal and Iberville streets remained locked. The dairy display case was clearly visible through the windows. It was now 48 hours without electricity, running water, plumbing. The milk, yogurt, and cheeses were beginning to spoil in the 90-degree heat. The owners and managers had locked up the food, water, pampers, and prescriptions and fled the City. Outside Walgreen's windows, residents and tourists grew increasingly thirsty and hungry.

The much-promised federal, state and local aid never materialized and the windows at Walgreen's gave way to the looters. There was an alternative. The cops could have broken one small window and distributed the nuts, fruit juices, and bottle water in an organized and systematic manner. But they did not. Instead they spent hours playing cat and mouse, temporarily chasing away the looters.

We were finally airlifted out of New Orleans two days ago and arrived home yesterday (Saturday). We have yet to see any of the TV coverage or look at a newspaper. We are willing to guess that there were no video images or front-page pictures of European or affluent white tourists looting the Walgreen's in the French Quarter.

We also suspect the media will have been inundated with "hero" images of the National Guard, the troops and the police struggling to help the "victims" of the Hurricane. What you will not see, but what we witnessed, were the real heroes and sheroes of the hurricane relief effort: the working class of New Orleans. The maintenance workers who used a fork lift to carry the sick and disabled. The engineers, who rigged, nurtured and kept the generators running. The electricians who improvised thick extension cords stretching over blocks to share the little electricity we had in order to free cars stuck on rooftop parking lots. Nurses who took over for mechanical ventilators and spent many hours on end manually forcing air into the lungs of unconscious patients to keep them alive. Doormen who rescued folks stuck in elevators.

Refinery workers who broke into boat yards, "stealing" boats to rescue their neighbors clinging to their roofs in flood waters. Mechanics who helped hot-wire any car that could be found to ferry people out of the City. And the food service workers who scoured the commercial kitchens improvising communal meals for hundreds of those stranded. Most of these workers had lost their homes, and had not heard from members of their families, yet they stayed and provided the only infrastructure for the 20% of New Orleans that was not under water.

On Day 2, there were approximately 500 of us left in the hotels in the French Quarter. We were a mix of foreign tourists, conference attendees like ourselves, and locals who had checked into hotels for safety and shelter from Katrina. Some of us had cell phone contact with family and friends outside of New Orleans. We were repeatedly told that all sorts of resources including the National Guard and scores of buses were pouring in to the City. The buses and the other resources must have been invisible because none of us had seen them.

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We decided we had to save ourselves. So we pooled our money and came up with \$25,000 to have ten buses come and take us out of the City. Those who did not have the requisite \$45.00 for a ticket were subsidized by those who did have extra money. We waited for 48 hours for the buses, spending the last 12 hours standing outside, sharing the limited water, food, and clothes we had. We created a priority boarding area for the sick, elderly and new born babies. We waited late into the night for the "imminent" arrival of the buses. The buses never arrived. We later learned that the minute they arrived at the City limits, they were commandeered by the military.

By day 4 our hotels had run out of fuel and water. Sanitation was dangerously abysmal. As the desperation and despair increased, street crime as well as water levels began to rise. The hotels turned us out and locked their doors, telling us that the "officials" told us to report to the convention center to wait for more buses. As we entered the center of the City, we finally encountered the National Guard. The Guards told us we would not be allowed into the Superdome as the City's primary shelter had descended into a humanitarian and health hellhole. The guards further told us that the City's only other shelter, the Convention Center, was also descending into chaos and squalor and that the police were not allowing anyone else in. Quite naturally, we asked, "If we can't go to the only 2 shelters in the City, what was our alternative?" The guards told us that that was our problem, and no they did not have extra water to give to us. This would be the start of our numerous encounters with callous and hostile "law enforcement".

We walked to the police command center at Harrah's on Canal Street and were told the same thing, that we were on our own, and no they did not have water to give us. We now numbered several hundred. We held a mass meeting to decide a course of action. We agreed to camp outside the police command post. We would be plainly visible to the media and would constitute a highly visible embarrassment to the City officials. The police told us that we could not stay. Regardless, we began to settle in and set up camp. In short order, the police commander came across the street to address our group. He told us he had a solution: we should walk to the Pontchartrain Expressway and cross the greater New Orleans Bridge where the police had buses lined up to take us out of the City. The crowd cheered and began to move. We called everyone back and explained to the commander that there had been lots of misinformation and wrong information and was he sure that there were buses waiting for us. The commander turned to the crowd and stated emphatically, "I swear to you that the buses are there."

We organized ourselves and the 200 of us set off for the bridge with great excitement and hope. As we marched past the convention center, many locals saw our determined and optimistic group and asked where we were headed. We told them about the great news. Families immediately grabbed their few belongings and quickly our numbers doubled and then doubled again. Babies in strollers now joined us, people using crutches, elderly clapping walkers and others people in wheelchairs. We marched the 2-3 miles to the freeway and up the steep incline to the Bridge. It now began to pour down rain, but it did not dampen our enthusiasm.

As we approached the bridge, armed Gretna sheriffs formed a line across the foot of the bridge. Before we were close enough to speak, they began firing their weapons over our heads. This sent the crowd fleeing in various directions. As the crowd scattered and dissipated, a few of us inched forward and managed to engage some of the sheriffs in conversation. We told them of our conversation with the police commander and of the commander's assurances. The sheriffs informed us there were no buses waiting. The commander had lied to us to get us to move.

We questioned why we couldn't cross the bridge anyway, especially as there was little traffic on the 6-lane highway. They responded that the West Bank was not going to become New Orleans and there would be no Superdomes in their City. These were code words for if you are poor and black, you are not crossing the Mississippi River and you were not getting out of New Orleans.

Our small group retreated back down Highway 90 to seek shelter from the rain under an overpass. We debated our options and in the end decided to build an encampment in the middle of the Pontchartrain Expressway on the center divide, between the O'Keefe and Tchoupitoulas exits. We reasoned we would be visible to everyone, we would have some security being on an elevated freeway and we could wait and watch for the arrival of the yet to be seen buses.

All day long, we saw other families, individuals and groups make the same trip up the incline in an attempt to cross the bridge, only to be turned away. Some chased away with gunfire, others simply told no, others to be verbally berated and humiliated. Thousands of New Orleaners were prevented and prohibited from self-evacuating the City on foot.

Meanwhile, the only two City shelters sank further into squalor and disrepair. The only way across the bridge was by vehicle. We saw workers stealing trucks, buses, moving vans, semi-trucks and any car that could be hotwired. All were packed with people trying to escape the misery New Orleans had become.

Our little encampment began to blossom. Someone stole a water delivery truck and brought it up to us. Let's hear it for looting! A mile or so down the freeway, an army truck lost a couple of pallets of C-rations on a tight turn. We ferried the food back to our camp in shopping carts. Now secure with the two necessities, food and water; cooperation, community, and creativity flowered. We organized a clean up and hung garbage bags from the rebar poles. We made beds from wood pallets and cardboard. We designated a storm drain as the bathroom and the kids built an elaborate enclosure for privacy out of plastic, broken umbrellas, and other scraps. We even organized a food recycling system where individuals could swap out parts of C-rations (applesauce for babies and candies for kids!).

This was a process we saw repeatedly in the aftermath of Katrina. When individuals had to fight to find food or water, it meant looking out for yourself only. You had to do whatever it took to find water for your kids or food for your parents. When these basic needs were met, people began to look out for each other, working together and constructing a community.

If the relief organizations had saturated the City with food and water in the first 2 or 3 days, the desperation, the frustration and the ugliness would not have set in. Flush with the necessities, we offered food and water to passing families and individuals. Many decided to stay and join us. Our encampment grew to 80 or 90 people. From a woman with a battery powered radio we learned that the media was talking about us. Up in full view on the freeway, every relief and news organizations saw us on their way into the City. Officials were being asked what they were going to do about all those families living up on the freeway? The officials responded they were going to take care of us. Some of us got a sinking feeling. "Taking care of us" had an ominous tone to it.

Unfortunately, our sinking feeling (along with the sinking City) was correct. Just as dusk set in, a Gretna Sheriff showed up, jumped out of his patrol vehicle, aimed his gun at our faces, screaming, "Get off the fucking freeway". A helicopter arrived and used the wind from its blades to blow away our flimsy structures. As we retreated, the sheriff loaded up his truck with our food and water. Once again, at gunpoint, we were forced off the freeway. All the law enforcement agencies appeared threatened when we congregated or congealed into groups of 20 or more. In every congregation of "victims" they saw "mob" or "riot". We felt safety in numbers. Our "we must stay together" was impossible because the agencies would force us into small atomized groups.

In the pandemonium of having our camp raided and destroyed, we scattered once again. Reduced to a small group of 8 people, in the

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dark, we sought refuge in an abandoned school bus, under the freeway on Cilo Street. We were hiding from possible criminal elements but equally and definitely, we were hiding from the police and sheriffs with their martial law, curfew and shoot-to-kill policies.

The next days, our group of 8 walked most of the day, made contact with New Orleans Fire Department and were eventually airlifted out by an urban search and rescue team. We were dropped off near the airport and managed to catch a ride with the National Guard. The two young guardsmen apologized for the limited response of the Louisiana guards. They explained that a large section of their unit was in Iraq and that meant they were shorthanded and were unable to complete all the tasks they were assigned.

We arrived at the airport on the day a massive airlift had begun. The airport had become another Superdome. We 8 were caught in a press of humanity as flights were delayed for several hours while George Bush landed briefly at the airport for a photo op. After being evacuated on a coast guard cargo plane, we arrived in San Antonio, Texas.

There the humiliation and dehumanization of the official relief effort continued. We were placed on buses and driven to a large field where we were forced to sit for hours and hours. Some of the buses did not have air-conditioners. In the dark, hundreds of us were forced to share two filthy overflowing porta-potties. Those who managed to make it out with any possessions (often a few belongings in tattered plastic bags) we were subjected to two different dog-sniffing searches.

Most of us had not eaten all day because our C-rations had been confiscated at the airport because the rations set off the metal detectors. Yet, no food had been provided to the men, women, children, elderly, disabled as they sat for hours waiting to be "medically screened" to make sure we were not carrying any communicable diseases.

This official treatment was in sharp contrast to the warm, heart-felt reception given to us by the ordinary Texans. We saw one airline worker give her shoes to someone who was barefoot. Strangers on the street offered us money and toiletries with words of welcome. Throughout, the official relief effort was callous, inept, and racist. There was more suffering than need be. Lives were lost that did not need to be lost.

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