

# **GMC, Firestone, Neoliberalism & the Dead of New Orleans**

by  
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Had a hurricane such as Katrina or Rita struck a hundred years ago, and had there been advanced warning, it is unlikely that there would have been a death toll such as we are seeing now in New Orleans. The chances are that there would have been an orderly evacuation. The railways would have been called into service. Passenger trains would have shuttled to the location, loaded with evacuees, and departed inland. An orderly evacuation of a populated area simply is not possible without mass transportation.

For this reason, I hold that General Motors and Firestone share some of the blame for the deaths in New Orleans, and for the disorderly evacuation from Houston. We should not have traffic jams on the expressways leaving Houston. We should not have thousands of people stuck on the open road as a powerful hurricane approaches. And if we had adequate mass transportation, we would not have these problems.

Mass transportation is not a privilege; it is a right and a necessity in a civilized nation. We can add this failure to evacuate to the death toll from traffic accidents. It is one more way in which the privatization of transportation results in the further subjugation and victimization of the poor.

Hurricane Katrina has given us a demonstration of the failure of neoliberalism, and the danger in privatization of social services. Yet the neoliberals are already beginning to run grand experiments of fascism in New Orleans, under the guard of their armed mercenary squads.

Cuba has suffered as many hurricanes as the US. Some storms have hit the island nation with even more force than the storms striking the shores of the continent. Yet Cuba does not have a death toll similar to New Orleans. This is because in Cuba they have adequate public transportation, and they are take care not to leave anyone behind.

As our economic system slowly fails us in the years to come, it is the poor and the marginalized who will suffer first, followed by the entire working class. As our economic system grows more and more desperate, neoliberalism will show itself for what it truly is: fascism.

## **Concerning Allegations that Recent Hurricanes were Intentionally Created**

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The idea that this season's hurricanes were intentionally created by the US government is absurd. The increasing hurricane activity of recent years is in part due to the cyclical nature of hurricane seasons in the Caribbean. The last period of increased hurricane frequency was nearly a century ago. In the intervening decades, the Gulf coast was developed. The civil development that took place in this area, and the energy ports and offshore energy facilities which were built there, all transpired during an era when hurricanes were a relatively minor concern. Because of the long spell of decreased activity, the cyclical nature of hurricane seasons was overlooked or forgotten. Unfortunately, now we are entering an active period, and neither the region nor the nation planned for this.

Furthermore, the waters of the Gulf of Mexico are warming faster than the Atlantic, due to global warming and other factors. As a result, when hurricanes enter the Gulf, they pick up energy from the warm waters. This accounts for the ferocious intensity of storms in recent years.

The idea that the US is using some form of weather control technology to generate these storms for their own evil purposes is as foolish as wearing a blindfold in a bowling tournament. There is simply no way to direct a storm from the Caribbean to the location of your choosing. Generating storms in the Caribbean would be an exercise in random lunacy.

