MSM MYOPIA

The Cruelty of Blue

Years of false promises, years of "compassionate government", years of ignoring arithmetic, comes to this: Puerto Rico in the grip of a massive, man-made disaster. The *New York Times*:

> Angel González, a retired schoolteacher facing a 10 percent cut to his pension, is beginning to wonder whether his three-person household will have to cut back to one cellphone and take turns using it.

> Santiago Domenech, a general contractor with $2 million of his savings tied up in bonds Puerto Rico just defaulted on, once had 450 employees. Now he has eight. His father-in-law, Alfredo Torres, owns Puerto Rico's oldest bookstore, but it has been going downhill for two years.

> "The government is bankrupt," said Bernardo Rivera, 75, a private bus driver who sometimes earns only $40 all day. "Everyone is bankrupt. There is nothing left. People who do not have jobs do not take the bus to work."

This could have been avoided by sensible and timely cuts, by turning a deaf ear to public sector union demands for wages and salaries, by a series of small but definite steps away from the blue model, welfare state governance. But the press, certainly including the *NYT* which is now reporting the disaster, would have attacked any politicians taking these steps as "harsh", or "cruel to the poor".

Now Puerto Rico is in a deeper hole, with much more suffering than any of the moderate cuts would have imposed.

Unfortunately, a number of cities and states on the mainland are walking down the Puerto Rican highway toward bankruptcy and disruptive adjustment. There, the liberal press is still hailing the politicians who are willing to plunge their cities and states into chaos for the sake of popularity: the press often calls them bold, innovative and visionary. They have a lot of ideas about the things they want to do with other peoples' money, while people who insist that budgets must be cut, and that pension obligations be met, are still being attacked for everything from racism to sadism.

It is a lot of fun until the music stops.

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