

Alice Lovelace: Organizer & Poet

The National Lead Organizer for the US Social Forum

The path our nation has chosen is tragic. Our job is to support each other and increase the ranks of truth tellers. We must figure out how to invade every city, every neighborhood in this land in order to tell the stories that are waiting in the shadows to be told. Like the story of MOVE in Philadelphia, the story of the Laotian immigrant, as well as stories from Black and White Appalachia.

In the face of hurricane Katrina, we in the United States now understand what other people in the world live with everyday. We understand that to be at the mercy of government is to be left hanging, a kind of lynching. The tragedy that played out along the Gulf Coast opened eyes across this nation. People began to look around their city, their neighborhood, and lo and behold the same offenses we decry in New Orleans were all around them. Now that our eyes are wide open, will we stay awake or go back into a big sleep?

You see this little light of mine, this one life of mine; I'm gonna let it shine. I look out and I see your lights shining. Our task is to open as many people as we can reach, reach as many hearts as we can, until more people let their lights shine, and the lights shine through the lies and things change.

Not just for the people of Iraq. Not just for the displaced people of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, but for all the people living in the USA. We do this for the people in South America, Central America, and the Caribbean; for those on the continent of Africa, Asia, in Europe. Because the truth is once I saw the drama around the hurricanes play out on television, I realized that we are all refugees, we are all temporary residents, and the powers that be are ready and willing to evacuate us at their pleasure.

~ from the Closing Keynote at the 21st Annual Meeting
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