

# HAITI & USA RECONSTRUCTION

Of the People  
By the People  
For the People

# URBAN SOCIAL FORUM/ FORUM SOCIAL URBANO

Rio de Janeiro

March 2010

# Disaster Images















*Not Haiti.*

*Not post-Katrina New Orleans.*

*These photos are from Philadelphia,  
Pennsylvania.*

*They could be from almost any city or  
town in the USA.*



*This is not to compare poverty in the USA to poverty in Haiti or elsewhere in the world. . .*

*It is to say that we have a common basis for struggle to end it.*

**“Another world is possible!**

(World Social Forum)

**...Another US is necessary!”**

(adds the US Social Forum)

# Haiti & NOLA/Gulf Coast: some commonalities

- Experienced two interrelated disasters:  
“natural” and economic
  - pre-existing poverty
  - pre-existing degradation of environment
- History of French slave trade/slavery
- Racist “explanations” for /response to disaster
- Superexploitation of workers by corporations/tourist industry

## Commonalities, cont.

- Government response is “relocation” of people, promotion of private property interests
  - Katrina “diaspora;” planned communities in Haiti, Gulf Coast
  - Recovery resources channeled to private sector elites
- Military presence to protect private property
- Followed by government-corporate “partnerships” for recovery

## Commonalities, cont.

- Shared context of global political economy/neoliberalism
  - Privatization
  - Abandonment of public responsibility to alleviate suffering, meet human needs
  - Legal protection of rights of private property; ascendancy of corporate “persons”
  - Lack of mechanism of accountability to the people

## Commonalities, cont.

- Both peoples have given the world magnificent music, dance, art, and other cultural traditions
- Both have a history of rising up to throw off the yoke of oppression and exploitation
- We can learn from and inspire each other!

# Solidarity with the People of Haiti. . .

We can. . .

--Send aid

--Go to help

--Monitor "aid" groups

--Lobby the US  
government

--Investigate corporate  
domination

. . .and many more  
forms of direct aid and  
advocacy, but most  
important

# *Another US is necessary. . .*



*Is another US possible?*

The conditions are  
right and history says  
yes.



AP / Eric Gay





A photograph showing a demolition site. In the foreground, a white banner with black and red text is attached to a chain-link fence. The banner reads "HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT". Behind the fence, a large pile of rubble and debris is visible, with a yellow excavator working on a partially destroyed brick building. The sky is blue with some clouds, and a tree is visible on the left side of the frame.

**HOUSING IS A  
HUMAN RIGHT**



*The Poor Have Remained Poor while Income Disparities Have Soared. . .*

**Average After-Tax Income by Income Group, 1979-2005  
(in 2005 dollars)**

<b>Income Category</b>	<b>1979</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>Percent Change 1979-2005</b>	<b>Dollar Change 1979-2005</b>
Lowest fifth	\$14,400	\$15,300	6%	\$900
Top fifth	95,700	172,200	80%	76,500
Top1 Percent	326,400	1,071,500	228%	745,100

Source: Congressional Budget Office, Effective Federal Tax Rates: 1979-2005, December 2007.

***“Can America survive if poor people exist on islands of poverty in this ocean of material wealth?” --Martin Luther King***

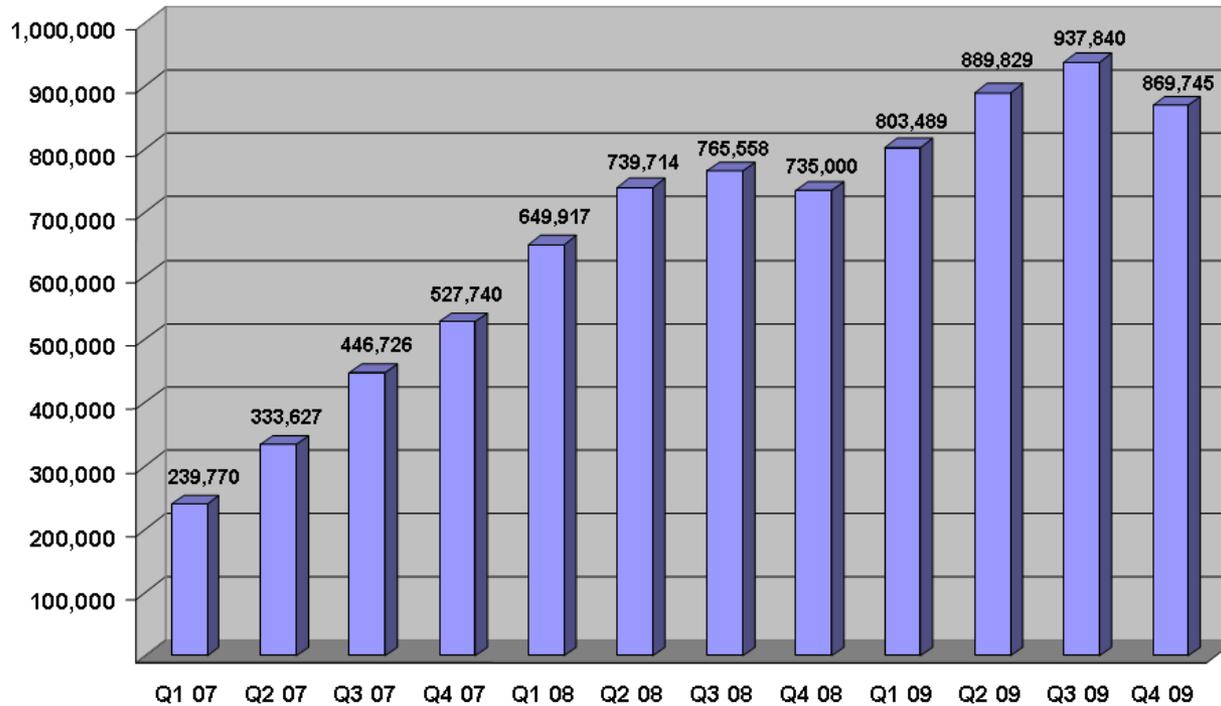
Workers' "real wages" have not increased since the 1970s, while productivity has soared.

$P-W = \text{profit}$   
(some loaned back to workers at interest)

# Foreclosures in just one city



## U.S. Properties with Foreclosure Activity



Source Data: RealtyTrac Press Releases of "U.S. Foreclosure Market Report"

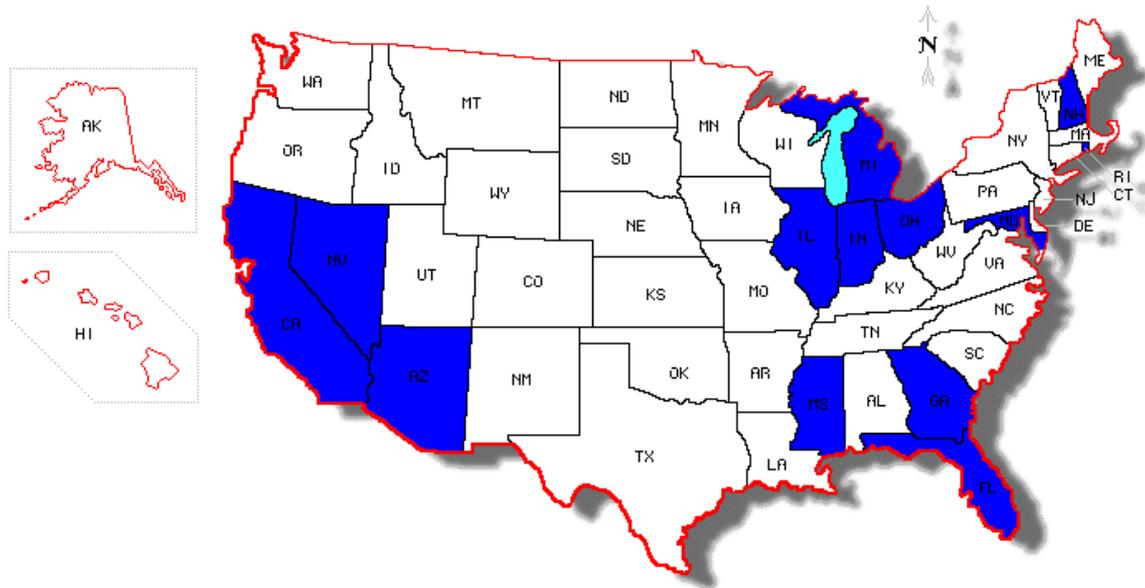
5 to 8 million more are  
"eligible"

*SOME WERE “TOXIC LOANS,”  
BUT MOST ARE RELATED TO  
UNEMPLOYMENT*

<http://money.cnn.com/news/storysupplement/economy/gapmap/index.htm>

# States with Foreclosures over 9%

STATES WITH FORECLOSURE RATES OVER 9%



NOTES:

Foreclosure Rates in 4th Quarter 2009

3-12-10



About Half of US Mortgages Are  
Expected to be “Underwater” by 2011.

Affordable rentals are increasingly  
hard to find.

Landlord have less money for  
maintenance but can charge  
“whatever the market will bear.”



# Homelessness is “criminalized.”

The US already has the world’s highest % of its people in prison.





This image helps explain homelessness.



# Homelessness in “post-industrial” USA

- Note the closed factories
- Note the abandoned homes of unemployed or “underemployed” workers who could no longer afford them.
- Note the deteriorated infrastructure.
- The “safety net” has been shredded.
- In the “new economy,” a huge sector of working people have been discarded.
- The basis for the “social contract” of the industrial age is no more.

What happens when the “ruling elites” break their own rules-- when the nature of the economy changes and the “contract” between classes is abandoned?

*“if you’re not exploitable, you’re expendable.”*

This is our moment...



"There are millions of poor people in this country who have very little, or even nothing to lose. If they can be helped to take action together, they will do so with a freedom and a power that will be a new and unsettling force in our complacent

# Learning New Ways of Struggle

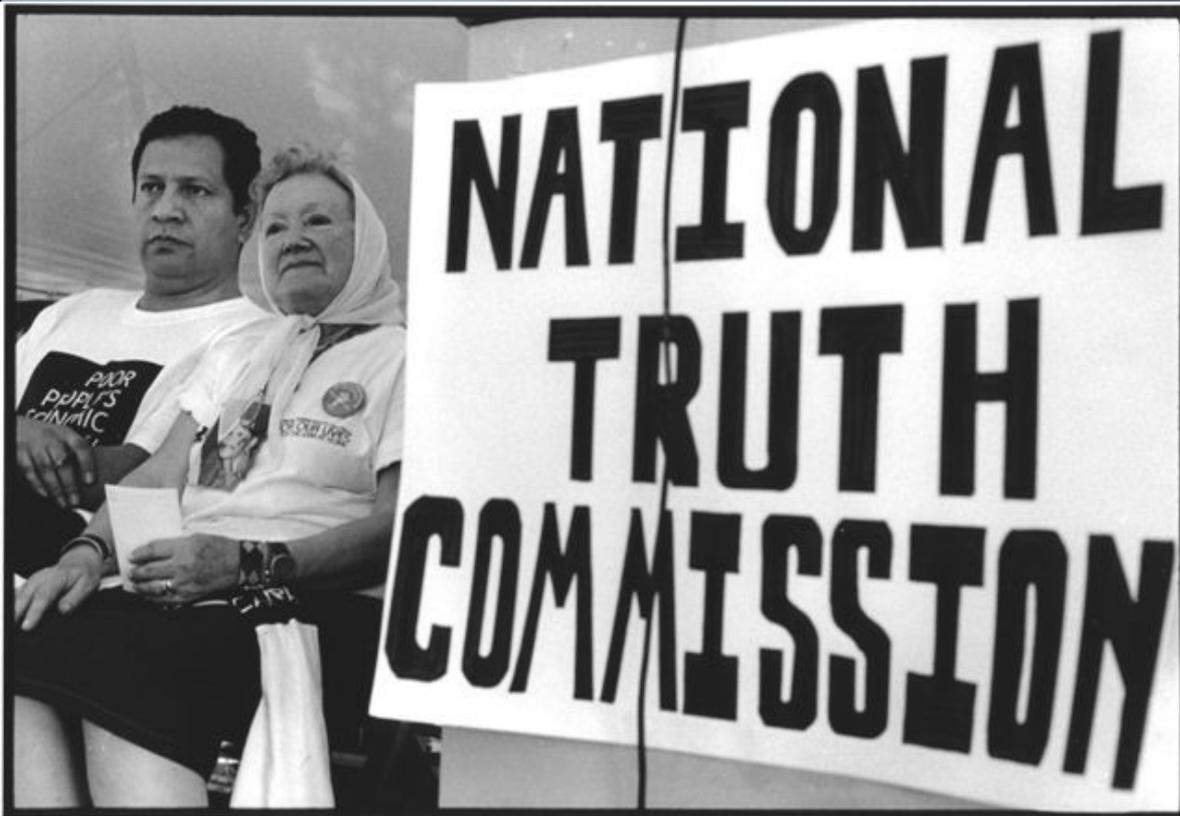




**Power to  
Katrina  
Survivors!**



# Putting Poverty on Trial







STOP  
THE WAR  
On Poor

POOR PEOPLE'S ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

**MARCH FOR OUR LIVES**

STOP THE WAR AT HOME

[www.economichumanrights.org](http://www.economichumanrights.org)

# Educate, agitate, organize!



- “I freed a thousand slaves. I could have freed a thousand more if only they knew they were slaves.” – Harriet Tubman



*Another world is possible. . .*



*Another US is necessary. . .*

For Haiti, for the world's people,  
for the planet.



Another *US* is possible!





09/02/2008

An invitation to  
our international  
friends. . .

# March to Fulfill the Dream to the US Social Forum

**MARCH TO FULFILL THE DREAM**

**APRIL 4 - JUNE 22, 2010**

**HEALTH IS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT**

the poor people's economic human rights campaign

**STOP THE WAR ON POVERTY**

**FLINT, MI**  
**DETROIT, MI**  
**CLEVELAND, OH**  
**TOLEDO, OH**  
**SANDUSKY, OH**  
**DAYTON, OH**  
**COLUMBUS, OH**  
**CINCINNATI, OH**  
**LEXINGTON-FAYETTE, KY**  
**LOUISVILLE, KY**  
**NASHVILLE, TN**  
**KNOXVILLE, TN**  
**MEMPHIS, TN**  
**CHATANOOGA, TN**  
**MARKS, MS**  
**GLENDORA, MS**  
**BIRMINGHAM, AL**  
**FRENCH CAMP, MS**  
**MONTGOMERY, AL**  
**SELMA, AL**  
**MOBILE, AL**  
**WAVELAND, MS**  
**NEW ORLEANS, LA**

**2300 MILES**  
**24 CITIES**  
**12 WEEKS**  
**JOIN US TO END POVERTY!**

**POOR PEOPLES ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN**  
**WWW.ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS.ORG**

**DISAPPEARED IN AMERICA**  
hiding the poor

**March to Fulfill the Dream:  
[www.economichumanrights.org](http://www.economichumanrights.org)**

**[www.USSF2010.org](http://www.USSF2010.org)**

- **See FAQs for Visa**
- **International Day-special sessions on Haiti**
- **First gathering of the USAI!**