

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 on the left side of the image.

**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)**

Income Category	1979	2005	Percent Change 1979-2005	Dollar Change 1979-2005
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

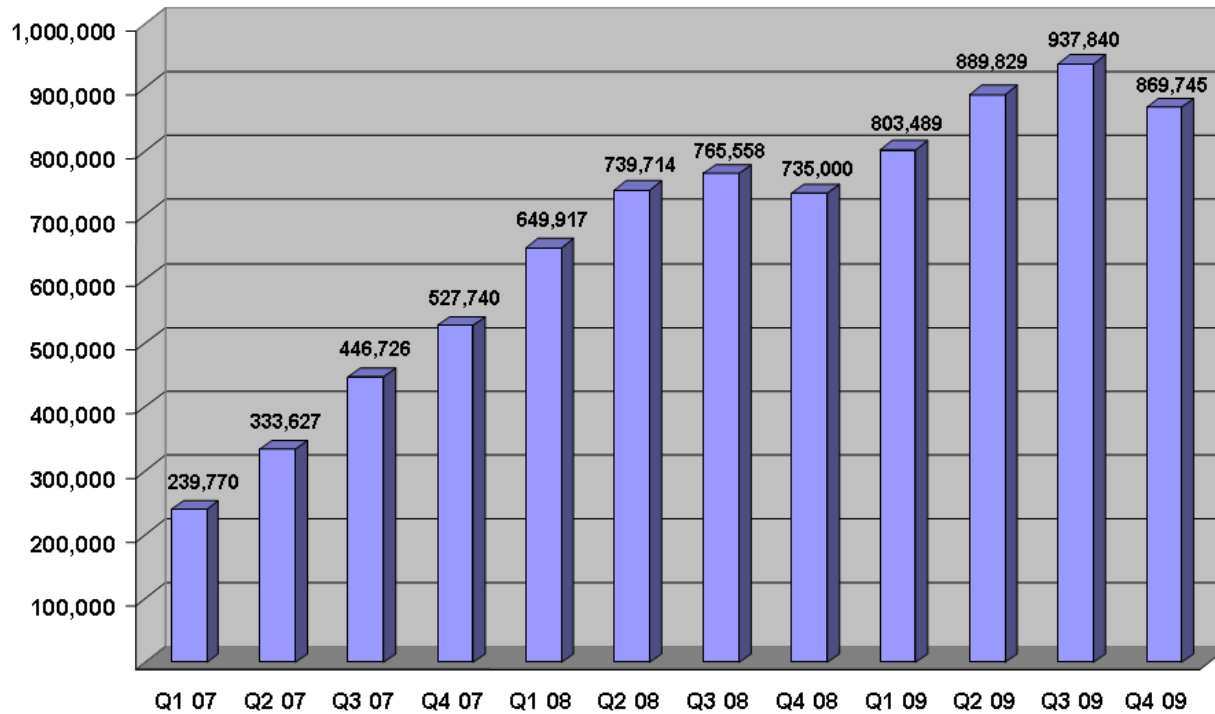
Workers' "real wages" have not increased since the 1970s, while productivity has soared.

$P-W = \text{profit}$
(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"

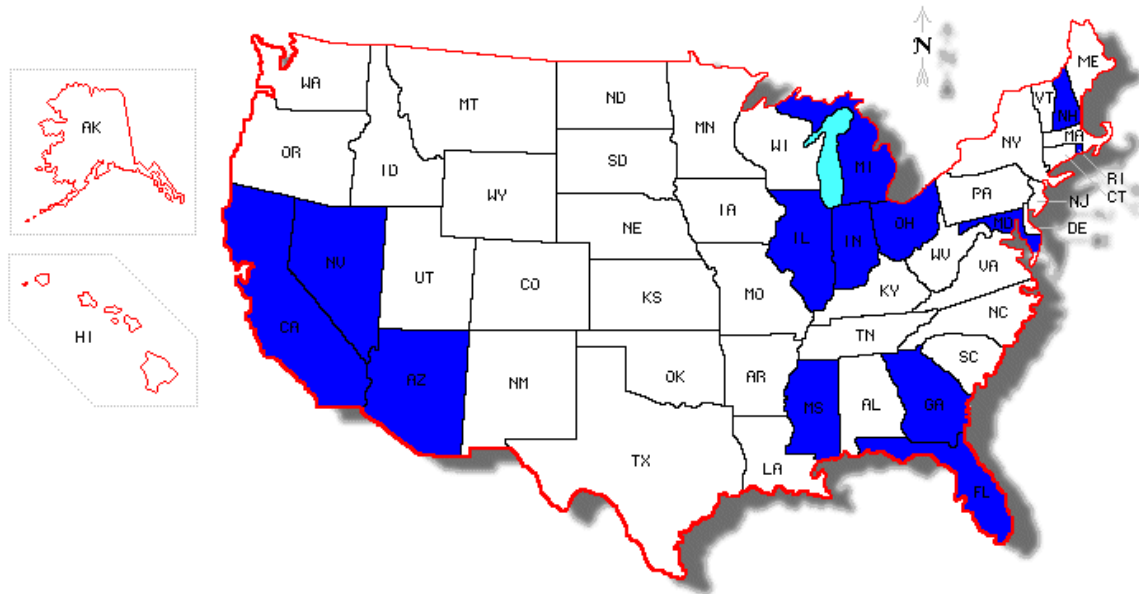
5 to 8 million more are
"eligible"

*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%



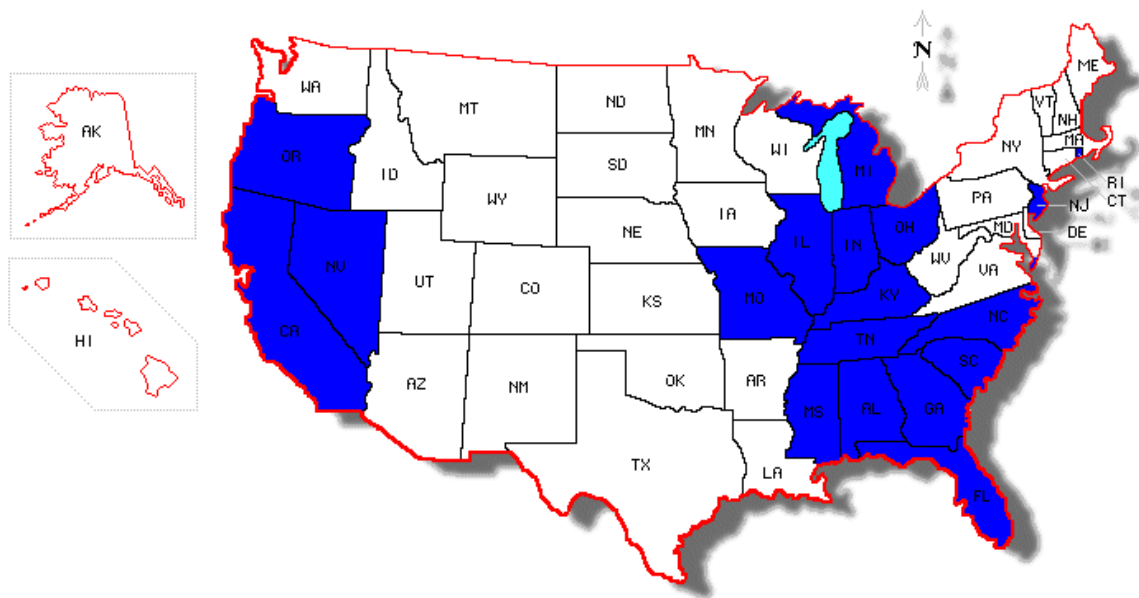
NOTES:

Foreclosure Rates in 4th Quarter 2009

3-12-10

States with Unemployment over 9.5%

STATES WITH UNEMPLOYMENT RATES OVER 9.5%



NOTES:
Bureau of Labor Statistics unemployment
rates November 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

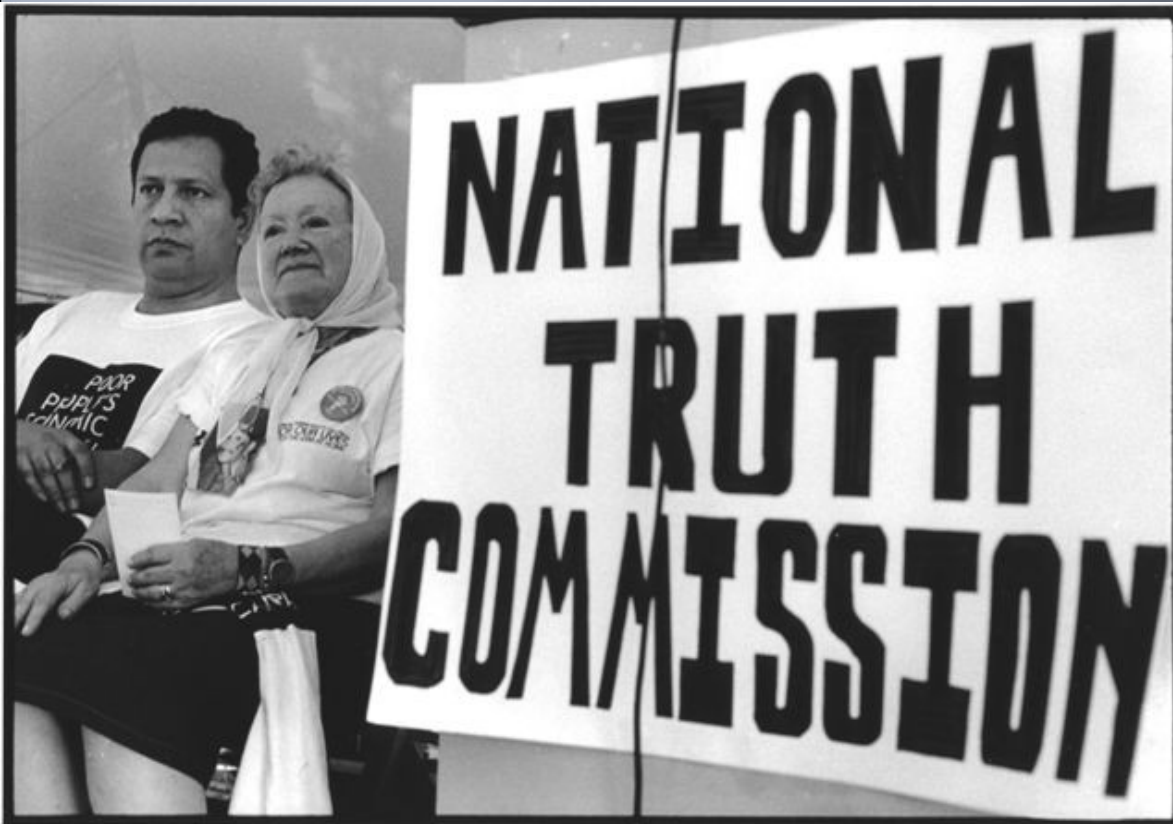




**Power to
Katrina
Survivors!**



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

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**

www.USSF2010.org

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