

USSF STARTER KIT



POWER



STANDING WITH THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD

Workshop Starter Kit

GOALS OF THE SESSION

- Expose the role of the U.S. and its government in exacerbating the global crisis
- Deepen our commitment to Internationalism and International Solidarity
- Explore what it looks like to be an Internationalist in the United States
- Explore why working class communities of color have an interest in being Internationalist

MATERIALS

- "POWER - Standing with the People of the World" digital presentation downloadable on this workshop's [BuildTheWheel.org](http://www.buildthewheel.org) page as either an Apple Keynote or PowerPoint presentation:
 - Apple Keynote: http://www.buildthewheel.org/download.php?file_id=618
 - PowerPoint: http://www.buildthewheel.org/download.php?file_id=619
- "Mike_Pryser" video file which can be downloaded as either an MP4 or FLV using the links provided on this workshop's [BuildTheWheel.org](http://www.buildthewheel.org) page:
 - "Mike_Pryser.mp4"
http://www.schoolofunityandliberation.org/downloads/ussf_starter_kit/Mike_Pryser.mp4.zip
 - "Mike_Pryser.flv":
http://www.schoolofunityandliberation.org/downloads/ussf_starter_kit/Mike_Pryser.flv.zip

CHECK-IN

15 minutes

- Name? How are you doing?
- What excites most about attending the US Social Forum in Detroit?



REVIEW

15 minutes

Review the various facets of the global crisis covered in SOUL's "[USSF Starter Kit: Converging Crises](#)" (also available for download on [BuildTheWheel.org](#))

- This is a period marked by CRISIS:
 - Economic Crisis
 - Ecological Crisis
 - Imperialist Crisis
- But this is also a period marked by opportunity to make permanent changes because more and more people are seeing through the lies
- A large part of what we'll be doing is looking to develop ideas that we can bring to other organizers and activists at the USSF in Detroit

WHO'S TO BLAME? – THE U.S.

45 minutes

Ask: If it is our goal to resolve this crisis in a way that humanity will be saved and that our communities can flourish, what are some things that we'd want to know?

- Take some responses from the group.
- Add—or underscore—that we should know **WHAT OR WHO IS MAKING THESE PROBLEMS GET WORSE?**

Ask: If you had to guess, what or who would you say is making to these problems getting worse?

- Take some responses from the group.
- Add—or underscore—that it is the U.S. government and the people of the United States who are making these problems worse and worse?

Explain: We're now going to look at the role of the United States in each dimension of these crises.

ACTIVITY: 20 CHAIRS

Objective: To establish fairness based on proportion

- Assemble 20 chairs in the front of the room and explain that this represents the wealth of the world
- Ask for 20 volunteers and explain that these 20 people represent the world's population
- Ask: What should this mean for the distribution of the world's resources? If there are \$20, what is the fairest way to divide them up amongst these people? Should someone get more, even if that means that someone else will get less?
- Point out: U.S. population is 4.54% of the world's population—based on that, what would be the fair % of usage of the world's resources?

**ACTIVITY: THE FACTS DON'T LIE** (Like "Over Under..." game from TV's "The Price is Right")

- Divide the group into two teams; then ask one representative from each team to come up. Each team will offer an answer. Person closest to the right answer without going over wins points for their team. Play until all of the questions have been answered.

ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

- With less than 5% of the world's population, the U.S. population consumes about 30% of the world's fossil fuels (oil, coal, natural gas).
- In the United States, there are more private vehicles than there are licensed drivers.
- The United States is the only industrialized nation to not sign the Kyoto Protocol.
- Worldwide, the average energy usage person is 72.4 BTU. In average usage for people in the United States is 334.6 BTU.

<http://74.125.155.132/search?q=cache:R5UVayNjbr0J:www.eia.doe.gov/pub/international/ieal/f/tablee1c.xls+per+capita+energy+consumption+world&cd=4&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>

IMPERIALIST CRISIS

- The United States' military budget is more than the next 15 countries combined.
<http://www.warresisters.org/pages/piechart.htm>
- Number of Civilian Casualties for U.S. (0) v. Iraq (95,755) and Afghanistan (8,309)
- Number of U.S. Bases in Foreign Countries (737 in 130 countries) v. Number of Foreign Bases in the U.S. (0)
- Each year, the people of the U.S. spend three times more money on cosmetics, jewelry, and pet food than what it would cost to provide education, clean water, and medical care to everyone in the world who needs it. (Osvaldo Martinez, speech at WSF, 1/2003, as qtd. by POWER)

ECONOMIC CRISIS

- The richest 1% in the world own 40% of the world's wealth. The richest 10% own 85% of the world's wealth. (UN University, 2/2008)
- Last year, the top 25 hedge fund managers raked in \$25 Billion.
- In 2005, the official percentage of people out of work was 5%. Because the economic crisis, the unemployment rate went to more than 10%, but it was almost 20% for African Americans and Latinos.
- Of the 6.8 billion people living in the world, 2.6 billion people live on less than \$2 per day. Because of the economic crisis, prices for food staples like rice and flour have more than doubled because of the beginning of the economic crisis.



TELESCOPING PRIVILEGES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Ask: What can we learn from the facts in this game?

Take a few responses from people, then make/underscore the point that the United States has an unequal relationship to the rest of the world.

Show: The digital presentation slide with Martin Luther King, Jr. (Slide 4)

Ask: Who is this?

After a correct answer, reveal digital presentation slide with MLK and the quotation: "The United States is the greatest purveyor of violence in the world." (Slide 5)

Show: Video of Mike Prysner from Iraq Veterans Against the War. It should be placed into the digital presentation in the space provided. (Slide 6)

- *Due to size restrictions of the website, the video file can be downloaded in this workshop's links section on BuildTheWheel.org in either MP4 or FLV format and placed onto the placeholder slide within either the Apple Keynote or PowerPoint presentation (see "Materials" above).*

Ask: Who is the violence of the United States directed towards?

Take a few responses from people, then make/underscore the point that the violence of the United States is not JUST directed towards people in the Global South. It is also directed towards poor people and people of color INSIDE the United States.

Refer to the digital presentation's "Telescoping Privileges/Responsibilities" Slide (Slide 7), and ask people what it shows us.

Close: Mention that although it is not all equal, all people in the United States bear some responsibility—and generally more than people from all other countries

**HOW CAN AMERICANS DO THIS? – THE HYPOCRISY OF U.S. EXCEPTIONALISM**

15 minutes

Ask: What is U.S. exceptionalism?

Take some responses from the group, and then offer the following definition:

“U.S. exceptionalism is the idea that the United States so it is the greatest country in the world and because of that, it should be treated differently than other countries.”

EXAMPLES OF U.S. EXCEPTIONALISM

Show: The digital presentation slide of George Bush (Slide 9).

Ask: Who is this?

Show: The digital presentation slide (Slide 10) with the quotation from Bush: “America is the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world.”

Show: The digital presentation slide (Slide 11) of Andy Stern

Ask: Who is this?

Explain: If no one knows him, his name is Andy Stern and he is the head of the Service Employees International Union, one of the largest and probably the most powerful union in the country.

Show: The digital presentation slide (Slide 12) with the quotation from Stern. “The good news is this isn't Rwanda or Darfur or— or some impoverished country. This is the greatest country on earth.”

Large Group Discussion: Based on these quotations and other things that you've heard or seen, what are some of the dangers of U.S. exceptionalism?

**WHAT CAN WE DO? – INTERNATIONALISM IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST****25 minutes**

Show: The digital presentation slide (Slide 14) of Samora Machel.

Ask: Who is this?

Explain: If no one knows, his name is Samora Machel and he was one of the leaders of the liberation movement in Mozambique and later he became the president of that country before he died in a plane crash.

Show: The digital presentation slide (Slide 15) with the quotation from Machel: "International solidarity is not an act of charity. It is an act of unity between allies fighting on different terrains toward the same objective."

Ask: What does this quotation mean to you?

Small Group Discussion: Break the group into three small groups to answer the following questions:

What does international solidarity look like for us?

Why do working class communities of color have an interest in being internationalist?

Bring the groups back together after 10 minutes. If there is time, ask each group to share one point that came up in their conversation.

Explain: One of the major tasks for us and all of the people attending the U.S. Social Forum is to think about how are our struggles contributing to the global struggle for justice. As we've seen, the United States and the people in the United States already get an unfair share of the world's resources. We do not want to fight for a situation where we get an unfair share of justice. Justice is something that should be shared by everyone. So as we continue to think about preparing for the U.S. Social Forum, we should be thinking about how we can support, participate in and see ourselves as a part of the liberation struggles that are happening around the world. And to help us with that, we've got some principles of what Internationalism means.

Pass: Pass out the Principles of Internationalism handout and ask someone to read each of the points. After the last one, ask if there are any questions and then move to the closing.

CLOSING**5 minutes**

- Make sure that everyone has signed in on the sign-in sheet.
- Thanks people for coming and close with the Unity Clap.



Principles of Internationalism

- Demand Global Equality and Reject Privileges of the Empire
- Connect Local Struggles to Struggles Happening in Other Places
- Assist Liberation Struggles around the Globe
- Stop the U.S. Government from Interfering with Other People's Liberation



Principios del Internacionalismo

- Demanda la Igualdad Global y Rechaza Privilegios del Imperio
- Conecta Luchas Locales con las Luchas Que Están Sucediendo en Otros Lugares.
- Ayuda Las Luchas de Liberación Alrededor del Globo
- Ponle Fin a la Interferencia del Gobierno de los Estados Unidos en la Liberación de Otras Personas



CRISIS ECOLOGICA

- Con menos del 5% de la población mundial, la población de los Estados Unidos consume cerca del 30% del combustible fósil del mundo (aceite, carbón, gas natural).
- En los Estados Unidos existen más automóviles privados que conductores con licencia.
- Los Estados Unidos es la única nación industrializada que no firmó el Protocolo de Kioto, el primer acuerdo internacional sobre parando le crisis ecológica.
- El promedio de energía usado por persona a nivel mundial es de 72.4 BTU. El uso promedio por persona en los Estados Unidos es de 334.6 BTU.

CRISIS IMPERIALISTA

- El presupuesto militar de los Estados Unidos es más que el de 15 países combinados.
- Número de bajas civiles para los Estados Unidos (0) v. Iraq (95,755) y Afganistán (8,309)
- Numero de Bases de los Estados Unidos en Países Extranjeros (737 en 130 países) v. Numero de Bases Extranjeras en los Estados Unidos (0)
- Cada año, la gente de los Estados Unidos gasta tres veces más dinero en cosméticos, joyas, y comida para mascotas que lo que costaría proporcionar educación, agua potable, y cuidado médico para toda persona en el mundo que lo necesiten.

CRISIS ECONOMICA

- El 1% de los más ricos del mundo poseen el 40% de la riqueza del mundo. El 10% de los más ricos poseen el 85% de la riqueza del mundo.
- El año pasado, los gerentes de los 25 principales fondos de cobertura recibieron \$25 mil millones.
- En el 2005, el número oficial de personas sin empleo fue 5%. Debido a la crisis económica, la tasa del desempleo aumento a más del 10%, pero casi 20% para los Afro Americanos y Latinos.
- De los 6.8 mil millones de personas que viven en el mundo, 2.6 mil millones de personas viven con menos de \$2 por día. Debido a la crisis económica, los precios de los alimentos básicos como el arroz y la harina se han más que duplicado desde el comienzo de la crisis económica.

“Los Estados Unidos es el proveedor más grande de violencia en el mundo.”

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

“América es el rayo más brillante de libertad y oportunidad en el mundo.” – George W. Bush

“Las buenas noticias es que este no es Ruanda o Darfur o algún país empobrecido. Este es el gran país del mundo.” – Andy Stern

“La solidaridad internacional no es un acto de caridad. Es un acto de unidad entre aliados que luchan en terrenos diferentes con el mismo objetivo.” – Samora Machel