

# Mass Poverty, Social Inequality and the Thirdworldization of America

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Center for Economic and Policy Research co-director [Dean Baker](#) calls poverty America's "new growth industry." The state of today's America is deplorable.

In his latest May 3 analysis, economist [John Williams](#) said "April "employment and unemployment data were nonsense: the economy remains in serious trouble."

About 23% of Americans wanting work can't find it. Most jobs are temp or part-time low pay/poor or no benefit service ones with no futures. Conditions are getting worse, not better.

Federal, state and local government jobs were lost. Construction shed 6,000 jobs. Zero manufacturing jobs were created. Most good ones are overseas. They've been offshored to low-wage countries.

Economist David Rosenberg called April a "potemkin payroll report. Where's the income hiding," he asked? Average wage-based income declined 0.4%. It was the biggest drop since last October.

Market analyst [Graham Summers](#) discussed "a truly horrible economic reality" beneath April's headline job numbers. The average workweek declined by 0.2 hours. The average manufacturing workweek was down 0.3%.

Fewer overall hours worked subtracts 15 minutes per week. Applied to private sector employment, it's "the equivalent of over 21 million work hours lost in one month."

It's the biggest decline since April 2009. At that time, the economy was "absolutely imploding. It's numerical equivalent of firing 718,000+ people."

It's how companies begin dealing with downturns. "They don't start laying people off en masse. They start cutting work hours bit by bit."

Mass layoffs arrive during "full-blown recessions. The first stage "is already happening." Clear signs show it.

Markets are euphoric. They're hitting new highs. Economic contraction is ignored. It happened in 2000 and 2008. Warning signs look ominously like earlier.

Peter B. Edelman co-directs Georgetown University's Center on Poverty, Inequality, and Public Policy. He calls "low-wage work" in America "pandemic."

America “descended into poverty,” said [Paul Craig Roberts](#). Growing millions struggle to get by. Many are “one medical problem or lost job away from homelessness.”

Some colleges and universities offer adjunct professorships. They pay “\$10,000 per year or less.” Education was once “touted as the way out of poverty.” Increasingly it reflects it. So do military enlistments. They’re a desperate way to find work.

America’s wealth disparity is deplorable. The top 1% owns over half the nation’s wealth. The bottom 90% has a decreasing share. Social inequality defines today’s America. It’s unprecedented or close to it.

It matches or exceeds 19th century harshness. Protracted Depression conditions affect growing millions. Poverty, unemployment, homelessness and hunger approach record levels.

Socially destructive government policies bear full responsibility. Wealth and privilege alone matter. Ordinary households are sacrificed. Popular needs go begging.

Inequality is institutionalized. Around 100 million working age Americans are jobless. Most others are underemployed. Millions struggle to pay rent, service mortgages, cover medical bills, heat homes, and manage other daily expenses.

America’s 1% has more wealth than the bottom 95%. Income inequality is greater than in all other developed countries. Over three-fourths of Americans live from paycheck to paycheck.

Neoliberal harshness is policy. Bipartisan complicity force-feeds it. It’s institutionalized when vital aid is needed. Doing so wages financial war on millions.

Obama exceeds the worst of George Bush. He’s wrecking growing millions of households. He’s doing so to serve monied interests. They own him. Whatever they want they get.

Obama’s thirdworldizing America. He’s ideologically over-the-top. He’s waging war living standards. He’s targeting the nation’s social contract.

He’s dismissive of growing needs. He’s heading America for tyranny and ruin. He’s banana republicanizing it.

It’s already a kleptocracy. It’s run by corporate crooks. Bipartisan complicity lets them have things their way. Profits are privatized. Losses are socialized. Bankers are at the top of the pecking order.

Ordinary people are exploited. A democratic facade masks New World Order harshness. Its holy trinity is eliminating public services, predatory capitalism writ large, and cracking down hard on non-believers.

Freedom’s fast disappearing. Inside the bubble, it’s paradise. Outside it’s dystopian hell. America never was beautiful. It’s worse than ever now in modern times.

Monied interests run things. Electoral politics doesn’t work. Washington is too pernicious, corrupt and dysfunctional to fix. Privilege is institutionalized. Beneficial social change isn’t tolerated. Police state harshness prevents it.

Force-feeding inequality defines immorality. It's also destructive economics. America's been declining for years. Private wealth is pitted against popular interests. It's been winning for decades.

Younger generations are worse off than older ones financially. Wages haven't kept up in real terms. High-paying jobs disappeared. Low-paying ones replaced them.

Deplorable social inequality exists. A race to the bottom continues. Future prospects look grim. America appears headed for what most of humanity faces.

At least 80% live on less than \$10 a day. Over three billion people live on less than \$2.50 a day. More than 80% live in countries where income disparity is increasing.

The poorest 40% of world population has 5% of global income. The bottom fifth has 1.5%. The top 20% has 75%.

According to UNICEF, 22,000 impoverished children die daily. They "die quietly in some of the poorest villages on earth, far removed from the scrutiny and the conscience of the world. Being meek and weak in life makes these dying multitudes even more invisible in death."

An estimated 28% of children in developing countries are underweight, malnourished and/or stunted.

Tens of millions of impoverished children aren't in school. At the start of the new millennium, nearly a billion people were illiterate.

Less than 1% of what's spent on weapons globally can provide universal primary education.

Preventable infectious diseases claim millions of lives annually. Unsanitary water and lack of basic sanitation affect half the world's population.

Diarrhea and other water-related illnesses claim at least 1.8 million child deaths annually.

Nearly half the population in developing countries, at any given time, experience water and/or sanitation related health problems.

Around one-third of children in developing countries have inadequate shelter. One in seven have no access to health care. Most with it get too little.

In 2003, 10.6 million children died before age five.

Rural areas account for 75% of people living on less than \$1 dollar a day. About half the world's population live in urban communities. In 2005, about one-third lived in slum conditions.

Around 1.6 billion people have no electricity. Billions lack basic necessities overall. It's reflected in lower than average life expectancy, as well as high infant and child mortality rates.

America's future may resemble what most of the world now faces. Its race to the bottom assures it for growing millions.

Force-fed austerity increases their numbers annually. Things keep getting worse, not better.

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*His new book is titled "Banker Occupation: Waging Financial War on Humanity."*

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