

Protesters say 'Proud Boys out of New York!'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 11, 2021



SLL photo: Greg Butterfield

Jan. 10 — Early on this chilly morning, hundreds of people gathered at the statue of Cuban national hero José Martí in Central Park to say, "Proud Boys/Far Right Out of New York!" They had responded to a call from the United Against Racism and Fascism coalition to confront a planned event by white supremacist, misogynist groups.

In December, the Proud Boys attacked Black churches in Washington, D.C., while rallying for Donald Trump's plot to steal the election. And on Jan. 6, they participated in the fascist coup attempt at the U.S. Capitol. In the aftermath, the Proud Boys quietly cancelled plans for their New York event.

But New Yorkers, mostly young people, came out anyway to make sure the racists would be challenged if they tried to rally. United Against Racism and Fascism was well prepared to confront attacks from fascists and cops alike. As the march stepped off, dozens of activists wearing helmets and carrying shields led the way, while others on bicycles rode along either side of the route to protect the march.

Banging drums and chanting "Whose streets? Our streets!" "Black lives matter!" and "No cops! No KKK! No fascist USA!" the anti-fascists marched down Manhattan's Seventh Avenue, through Times Square and Herald Square, to cheers from onlookers and street vendors.



Iran and Iraq demand Trump's extradition

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 11, 2021

A year before his abortive coup attempt in Washington, Donald Trump ordered the murder of Iran's Gen. Qassem Soleimani in cold blood. Eight others died with the general in the Jan. 3 drone strike at Baghdad International Airport. Among them was Majdi Abu Muhandas, deputy commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units. Now both Iran and Iraq have filed requests for Trump's extradition.

General Soleimani's funeral was one of the largest in history. Millions turned out as his coffin was carried across Iraq and Iran to his final resting place in his hometown of Kerman. He was loved for leading the fight against ISIS, Al Qaeda and other U.S.-backed terrorists in Syria and Iraq and his role in driving U.S.-Israeli forces out of Lebanon. His murder was a "crime against peace" under international law, an attempt to start a war. The U.S. should honor Iraq and Iran's just requests and send Trump to face justice.



NYC: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Action, Jan. 18

written by Struggle - La Lucha
January 11, 2021

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

National Day of Action

**Reclaim his legacy of Struggle and Action:
Educate, Agitate, Organize where people work, study, and live!**

Harlem Speakout

125th Street and Adam Clayton
Powell Blvd
3pm-5pm

Car Caravan

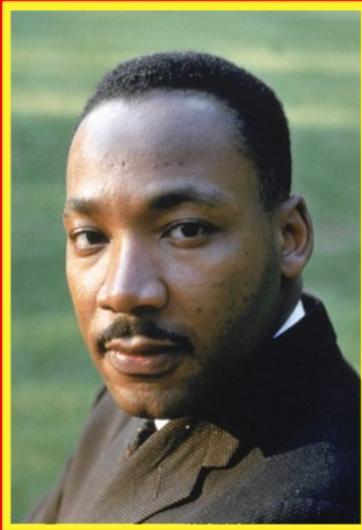
Start at the Audubon Ballroom
(B'way & W 165th St.)
Ends at Harlem State Office Bldg
2 pm

Live Facebook &

Youtube Show

The People's TV; on the People-Pueblo
Party Facebook and Youtube pages.

8 - 9 pm



**Monday
Jan.
18th
2021**

Sponsored by

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Harlem, New York City: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Action

Reclaim his legacy of struggle and action:

Educate, agitate, organize where people work, study and live!

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021

Harlem speakout

Harlem State Office Building

(125th Street and Adam Clayton Powell Blvd)

3pm - 5pm

Car caravan

Start at the Audubon Ballroom

(Broadway and 165th Street)

Ends at Harlem State Office Building

2pm

Live Facebook & YouTube show

The People's TV; on the People-Pueblo Party Facebook and YouTube pages

8pm - 9pm

Sponsored by The People's United Front



Before the attack on the U.S. Capitol: Trump's Wisconsin coup attempt

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 11, 2021

After a fascist mob was allowed to take over the U.S. Capitol, Trump's attempts to overturn the election can't be dismissed as a clown show. It should have been obvious weeks before.

Wisconsin showed how serious it was. Trump lost the state by just 20,682 votes, a little more than six-tenths of a percentage point. It was still a significant victory against racism.

Trump's campaign was nonstop racism. It [spent millions on racist Facebook ads](#) attacking the Black Lives Matter movement.

The ads targeted both Minnesota and Wisconsin, where two of the biggest anti-racist

rebellions took place. Minneapolis exploded after the police torture murder of George Floyd on May 25.

Demonstrations began in Kenosha, Wis., after Jacob Blake had been shot at seven times by policeman Rusten Sheskey on Aug. 23. The unarmed Black father was shot while getting into his own car. Some of Blake's children were in the back seat.

Kenosha County District Attorney Michael Graveley outrageously announced on Jan. 5 that no charges would be brought against Shesky, who left Jacob Blake paralysed.

Trump himself came to Kenosha. He didn't visit Blake's family or offer condolences. The White House klansman spewed hate at a racist pep rally instead.

Trump's supporters defended Kyle Rittenhouse, who killed two anti-racist activists in



Kenosha.

YouTube ads ran claiming "lawless criminals terrorize Kenosha."

Trump lost Wisconsin, but he didn't give up. The Trump campaign spent \$3 million on a recount only to see its margin of defeat increased.

Despite this recount, Wisconsin's state Supreme Court voted on Dec. 14 by just a 4-3 margin to uphold the election results.

Three of the justices wanted to throw out hundreds of thousands of votes in Milwaukee and Dane counties. (Dane County includes the state capital of Madison.)

More than three-quarters of the state's Black population live in these two counties.

The deciding vote was cast by a right-winger, Brian Hagedorn. He's such a bigot that he [founded an anti-LGBTQ2S private elementary school](#), the Augustine Academy in Waukesha.

Hagedorn wasn't seeking redemption. The judge's decision was on behalf of the national ruling class, most of whom think it's politically dangerous to throw out so many votes.

They feared millions of people taking to the streets as over 20 million people did during the Black Lives Matter demonstrations.

That prospect didn't prevent three state Supreme Court justices from wanting to overturn the election results and declare that Black votes don't matter.

Racism and union busting

Behind the three judges who were willing to risk another people's uprising were a series of Badger State billionaires.

Among them are Richard Uihlein and Elizabeth Uihlein, who together own the nonunion Uline business supply outfit. They [gave nearly \\$40 million](#) to racist candidates in the 2018 elections.

Liz Uihlein claimed "[the media is overblowing COVID-19](#)" in a March 13 email. Eight months later, [both the Uihleins contracted the coronavirus](#).

Then there's [the Kohler family's \\$8.3 billion](#) toilet-making fortune. It took over 60 years for Kohler workers to get a union.

An 1897 strike was smashed. So was [the 1934 strike](#) in the family's company town of Kohler — just west of Sheboygan — where two workers were killed.

Only after a strike starting in 1954 and lasting more than six years was Kohler forced to sign a union contract with [Local 833](#) of the United Auto Workers. Two members of the Kohler strikebreaking family were Wisconsin governors.

Milwaukee was the last big manufacturing city in the U.S. that the Great Migration of African Americans came to. By 1970, many of Milwaukee's factories were dependent on Black labor.

Among them was A.O. Smith, which manufactured a quarter of the auto frames used by General Motors. The 360-acre facility was known as "the plant" in the local Black community because so many African Americans were employed there.

Capitalism's need for Black workers didn't prevent Milwaukee from being the most segregated city in the United States. Every year, Vel Phillips, the first Black member and first woman member of Milwaukee's City Council, would introduce a fair housing ordinance.

It would be voted down unanimously. Father Jim Groppi led nightly "open housing" marches in 1966 and 1967, some of which were violently attacked by racists.

The local fair housing law was only passed after Milwaukee's Black rebellion in 1967, in which four people were killed.

Destroying jobs and filling prisons

The big Allen-Bradley plant on the city's South Side refused for years to hire Black or Latinx workers. That's the reason super racist Lester Maddox came to campaign there when he ran for president in 1976.

Maddox had closed his Atlanta chicken shack so he wouldn't have to serve Black people. The fascist handed out ax handles to his white customers to attack Black people.

The Bradleys sold their electrical controls company to Rockwell International in 1985. Much of the proceeds went to the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, which now has over \$800 million in assets.

All of it is used to promote hate. Among its recipients is Charles Murray, co-author of "The Bell Curve," which claimed there were differences in intelligence between Blacks and whites.

This is Hitler stuff and Murray got a \$250,000 prize [from the Bradley Foundation](#) for it in 2016. Harry Bradley was [a founding member](#) of the John Birch Society, whose headquarters are located in Appleton, Wis.

Between 1977 and 1992, 55,000 factory jobs were destroyed in Milwaukee County according to the [Census of Manufactures](#). Most of them were union jobs.

But there was an increase of 66,000 manufacturing jobs in the rest of the state, which is overwhelmingly white. Big capital wanted to get away from Black workers and unions.

Instead of Black workers getting jobs in the big plants, they were being railroaded to big prisons.

The 53206 ZIP code touches the now-closed A.O. Smith plant where over 7,000 workers used to be employed. Sixty-two percent of the Black adult men there [are either incarcerated or have been in prison](#).

In 2010, [slightly more than one in 25 Black people](#) in Wisconsin were locked up. Billionaire families like the Uihleins and the Bradleys have increased the prison population by eight times since the early 1960s.

This is the viciousness that was rejected by poor and working people in Wisconsin.



¡Alto a la guerra contra los vendedores ambulantes!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Los hombres desempleados vendieron manzanas durante la Gran Depresión. Noventa años después, muchas aceras de la ciudad están llenas de comerciantes informales que intentan vender comida, ropa y equipo de protección personal.

¿Por qué estos hombres y mujeres están dispuestos a estar de pie en todo tipo de clima durante 10, 12 horas o más al día? Porque tienen que hacerlo.

Esa es la única forma en que los vendedores pueden comer y pagar el alquiler, no solo para ellos, sino también para sus hijos. Muchos comerciantes ambulantes envían dinero a sus familias en otras tierras, manteniéndolos así con vida.

Incluso durante los períodos de “prosperidad” capitalista, millones están desempleados. La discriminación en la contratación, particularmente contra los indocumentados, impulsa a muchos inmigrantes a vender en la calle. La actual

pandemia y crisis económica del coronavirus ha aumentado su número.

La pérdida de millones de puestos de trabajo en las fábricas es otra razón. Muchos trabajadores negros que solían tener trabajos sindicales ahora se ven obligados a convertirse en vendedores ambulantes. Solo en la ciudad de Nueva York, los capitalistas destruyeron 900.000 puestos de trabajo de manufactura.

Ninguno de estos trabajadores es delincuente, sin embargo, son víctimas de la policía. El “generoso” Ayuntamiento de Los Ángeles votó a favor de prohibir la venta ambulante sin licencia.

El mismo gobierno de la ciudad otorgó a los desarrolladores inmobiliarios y propietarios de hoteles de Los Ángeles mil millones de dólares en exenciones fiscales.

Odio de larga data

Donald Trump siempre odió a los vendedores informales. Trató de expulsar a veteranos discapacitados que vendían cerca del Trump Tower en la elegante Quinta Avenida de Manhattan.

Los soldados pueden ser saludados, exhibidos y enterrados después de que regresen de otra guerra por las grandes petroleras. Pero cuando intentan ganarse la vida, los policías los arrestan.

No era diferente hace un siglo en el Lower East Side de Manhattan, hoy Loisaida. Las calles se llenaron de carritos de mano operados por personas pobres del este y sur de Europa que intentaban sobrevivir.

La policía disparó 41 veces contra Amadou Diallo el 4 de febrero de 1999, asesinando a este inmigrante desarmado de Guinea. La partidaria de Trump, Heather Mac Donald, llamó a la víctima africana “un vendedor ambulante de videos

pirateados y calcetines”.

¿La venta de calcetines merece la pena de muerte? Hitler solía atacar a los vendedores ambulantes judíos.

Los propietarios quieren deshacerse de los vendedores ambulantes porque no les pueden cobrar alquiler. Lo mismo ocurre con los bancos donde están las hipotecas de los propietarios.

Es Amazon, no los vendedores ambulantes, lo que está arruinando miles de tiendas minoristas. Es el propietario Jeff Bezos, con su fortuna de 194.000 millones de dólares, el responsable de vaciar los centros comerciales.

¿Qué tiene para vender?

En una sociedad capitalista como Estados Unidos, todo el mundo tiene que vender algo. Para la gran mayoría de la población, esto significa vender la capacidad de uno para realizar un trabajo.

Karl Marx, el fundador del socialismo científico, llamó a esta capacidad “fuerza de trabajo”. La mano de obra calificada está compuesta de mano de obra más simple.

Millones de agricultores en Estados Unidos, incluidos los aparceros, han sido expulsados de la tierra desde la Gran Depresión. Pero no todo el mundo pudo encontrar trabajo.

Eso incluye a activistas que fueron incluidos en listas de “no contratar”. Martin Irons, líder de una huelga de ferrocarriles de 1886, se vio obligado a vender maní en las calles de St. Louis para sobrevivir. El organizador comunista negro Hosea Hudson tuvo que vender productos de afeitado durante la caza de brujas anticomunista de la década de 1950.

Las decenas de millones que venden su fuerza de trabajo a los capitalistas y los millones de personas que se ven obligadas a vender en las calles son aliados naturales.

La defensa de los vendedores ambulantes va de la mano con la lucha contra el terror policial. Es parte de la misma lucha como luchar por la atención médica y detener los desalojos. ¡Manos Fuera de los vendedores informales!



Coup attempt: Is the danger over?

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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The world watched while armed fascists carrying Confederate flags and metal battering rams breached metal detectors, smashed windows and were escorted out of the building without initial arrests

Jail Trump, his fascist mob, and killer cops

The storming of the U.S. Capitol by white supremacists incited by President Trump, which temporarily halted the certification vote, had to have the collusion of multiple federal police agencies. It is implausible that there was no preparation when these very events [had been telegraphed for months](#) by Trump himself. [“Civil War January 6, 2021”](#) was printed on the MAGA sweatshirts; this was no secret. The only way that the racist mob could freely occupy the Capitol is if the police made a deliberate decision to let them.

The world watched while armed fascists carrying Confederate flags and metal battering rams breached metal detectors, held Congress hostage, took over offices, smashed windows, openly carried ladders to scale the Capitol, posed for selfies with police and were eventually escorted out of the building without initial arrest.

Two pipe bombs were confiscated, along with weapons and ammunition, and five people are reported dead. A KKK-inspired noose was erected on the west end of the Capitol.

This was reminiscent of how the Alabama authorities allowed the Klan to attack the freedom riders in Anniston, Ala., on May 14, 1961, nearly killing several people. Local police did nothing for at least 15 minutes.

The storming of the Capitol was consciously in the tradition of the previous overthrow of the democratically elected, majority-rule Reconstruction governments in South Carolina, Mississippi, Louisiana and the rest, which culminated in the coup and massacre in Wilmington, N.C., in 1898.

Contrast this with Kenosha, Wis. In anticipation of community anger at the refusal to indict police in the shooting of Jacob Blake, streets were shut down and the National Guard was mobilized in advance of the acquittal.

What happens next, is the danger over?

Biden's extremely weak response is deeply problematic in terms of pushing back the fascists and what it means for the future. Rather than making a call for disbanding the fascist thugs, the racist mob or arresting Trump, Biden called for unity.

Unity with who and for what?

Here was an opportunity for Biden and the Democrats to strike a definitive blow against Trump and the movement he has spawned. He could have called for Trump's arrest or made an appeal for people to mobilize against the racist and reactionary threat. He didn't.

In many respects it was a betrayal of the Black voters, especially in Georgia, who courageously resisted racist threats to vote against racism and reaction.

The timidity of Biden and the Democrats is not surprising.

What underlies these developments and girders the fascist reaction is the contraction of the capitalist economy and the deep decay and crisis of the system. While seemingly hidden, it supersedes the will of capitalist politicians who attempt to represent one section or another of the ruling class.

It is an important lesson. The capitalist class, regardless of its divisions, has no will to put these racist scum in the dustbin of history. Like the bankers and businesses that were financing Hitler up to the last bullet, they are hedging their bets. They are reluctant to crush them.

Danger of imperialist war in the next 14 days

We would be seriously amiss to not state the obvious threat of imperialist war most immediately aimed at Iran, but ultimately — regardless of which administration is in

office — directed at any country that seeks to chart an independent course from imperialism — whether it is Venezuela, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Cuba or Zimbabwe. [See the call for emergency response actions.](#)

There are still over a week before the Jan. 20 inauguration. Just as we demand the jailing of killer cops, we must mobilize the movement to call for the immediate arrest of Trump and stop the white supremacist mobs.

Trump should not only be arrested but also extradited for war crimes. Trump is now [wanted by Iraq](#) for ordering the assassination of Iranian Gen. Qassim Soleimani and Iraqi Commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis; Iran has also [issued an arrest warrant](#) through Interpol (International Criminal Police Organization) for the same crime.

The antidote to fascism is workers' solidarity and socialism

While billionaires are raking in unprecedented profits, cashing in while the deaths of COVID victims piles up, the vast majority of the people are finding themselves living in deeper misery. Capitalist governments have not been able to stop the COVID pandemic and have failed miserably at providing health care for the vast majority. Widespread unemployment threatens not only low wage workers but also the middle class. Millions are facing evictions, foreclosures and utility shutoffs.

Traditionally it is the middle class, the small business owners, and others like them who are isolated and in despair, who are duped by fascist ideology. It is only a strong, united anti-capitalist and anti-racist working-class movement that can pull them away from such an destructive dead end.

“Such a situation can only exist in periods of extraordinarily acute social crisis when the capitalist state is so torn by accumulating inner contradictions and weakened by its inability to overcome its social crisis that it inevitably gives way to extra-parliamentary, extra-legal forms of rule,” [Sam Marcy said](#) of the struggle against

fascism.

It will take the organization of the broad working class and the leadership of its most oppressed, Black, Brown, Latinx, Indigenous, Arab, Asian, women and LGBTQ2S people, to both develop a defense of its own class interests and place socialism on the agenda.



Fascist violence and the form of the state

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 11, 2021

Below is an excerpt from an article by Sam Marcy, a leading Marxist thinker and fighter of the second half of the 20th century. It was written shortly after Ronald Reagan's inauguration in 1981 — that is, at the beginning of the long period of reaction that is peaking today.

Marcy argues for the importance of Marxist clarity on the difference between violence by the bourgeois-democratic state, however brutal, and that of fascist

organizations, "particularly when they are armed and supported materially by right-wing, disaffected, but powerful elements of the ruling capitalist establishment, constitute a threatening parallel form to the legal (bourgeois-democratic) capitalist state."

What is completely left out of consideration is that the spread of fascist organizations takes place in a vastly different, if not wholly new, social, political, and economic situation. The entire social environment in which the spread of this evil disease takes place imparts to it a significance which far surpasses the numerical strength of these organizations.

It is this which adds a really new dimension to the perilous growth of this virulent disease. Fascist violence has been endemic to the maintenance of the domination of the ruling class in the U.S. for a number of decades. It is, however, exceptionally important to distinguish between the violence which emanates directly and openly from the capitalist state, and the extra-legal, extra-governmental violence of fascist organizations.

The capitalist state is itself, of course, the main generator of force and violence. In its role as an instrument of capitalist domination over the working class and the oppressed, it operates as an organ of suppression in order to maintain and secure its rule over the masses.

Differentiate between government and extra-legal violence

Violence practiced upon the working class and the oppressed is therefore a concomitant element of the rule of the oppressing and exploiting bourgeoisie. Notwithstanding the viciousness, ferociousness or magnitude of the violence which the ruling class visits upon the oppressed, it must nevertheless be considered as violence within the framework of the bourgeois legal ("democratic") system.

Such violence must be differentiated from, and not be confused with, the extra-legal, extra-governmental violence which is the essential characteristic of fascist organizations of the type under discussion. It is, of course, absolutely true that both legal and extra-legal violence have coexisted along with the bourgeois state since the very inception of the state itself.

In the U.S., legal and extra-legal violence have existed side-by-side for longer than a century. Ku Klux Klan violence is a principal example of how extra-legal violence visited upon the oppressed masses coexists with the legal forms of the capitalist state, and how one promotes the other.

Anti-labor violence employed on a huge scale for many decades by individual employers and industries has been of an extra-legal character. Most particularly noteworthy are strike-breaking organizations and the employment of underworld mobsters. "Right-to-work," open-shop states are frequently the very same states which have either clandestinely or openly supported the Klan.

The pogroms visited upon oppressed nationalities in Czarist Russia are another example of how extra-legal forms of violence are carried out alongside with and encouraged and promoted by the legally constituted government. Pogrom violence in old Russia didn't differ much from the massacres carried out by the Night Riders in the U.S.

Every capitalist state tolerates and occasionally promotes this sort of extra-legal violence. The difference, however, between fascist violence and other forms of illegal violence practiced by the government should be made clear.

For example, police brutality is frequently as vicious and as violent as that carried out by the fascists, and on occasion goes beyond legal limits (usually characterized by the bourgeois press as "excessive"). The two should not be confused even though the police may, and often do, collaborate with the Klan, neo-Nazis and other fascist

and neo-fascist organizations.

Fascist groups threaten bourgeois-democratic state

Fascist organizations in their embryonic form, particularly when they are armed and supported materially by right-wing, disaffected, but powerful elements of the ruling capitalist establishment, constitute a threatening parallel form to the legal (bourgeois-democratic) capitalist state.

While receiving encouragement and sustenance from the capitalist state, embryonic fascist forms at the same time rival and stand in antagonism to the bourgeois democratic state. If historical conditions favor them, they have the propensity and organic tendency to overpower the bourgeois-democratic form of the capitalist state.

Such a situation can only exist in periods of extraordinarily acute social crisis when the capitalist state is so torn by accumulating inner contradictions and weakened by its inability to overcome its social crisis that it inevitably gives way to extra-parliamentary, extra-legal forms of rule.



Wall Street's New Year's party: Dancing on the backs of poor workers

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 11, 2021

"Wall Street sets new highs to end 2020," the Associated Press reported on Jan. 1, 2021.

"Wall Street closed out a tumultuous year for stocks with more record highs on Thursday, a fitting coda to the market's stunning comeback from its historic plunge in the early weeks of the coronavirus pandemic," AP reported.

Look at the economy. Some [19.5 million workers](#) are officially unemployed, four times as many as last year at this time. At least [another 10 million are unemployed](#) but not included in the official count. Jobs continue to be cut as rising coronavirus infections keep many people at home and state and local governments reimpose restrictions.

Over one-third of the adult population in the U.S. [faces eviction or home foreclosure](#) in the next two months according to new data from a U.S. Census Bureau survey. South Dakota, South Carolina, Georgia and Oregon have more than a half of all the households facing eviction or foreclosure.

In some states, food bank lines stretch for miles. Even before the pandemic hit, 13.7 million households, or 10.5% of all U.S. households, experienced food insecurity at some point during 2019, [according to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture](#). Convert household numbers to people numbers and you get 35 million who couldn't get enough food. That number doubled during the last year, according to researchers at Northwestern University.

Tens of millions of working-class people have fallen into poverty and hunger or are near that edge. Stimulus money has mostly gone to big corporations. Over 160,000 small businesses have closed.

The rich got richer

Meanwhile, the richest 500 people on the planet added \$1.8 trillion to their combined wealth in 2020, accumulating a total net worth of \$7.6 trillion, according to the [Bloomberg Billionaires Index](#).

Walmart and Target [reported record sales](#). Amazon [tripled](#) its profits. Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Microsoft [now make up 20%](#) of the stock market's total worth. The tech industry has achieved an unparalleled level of wealth and dominance.

So Wall Street is having a party.

With huge injections of credit by the Federal Reserve Bank at interest rates near zero, and the massive government stimulus payments to big business, the large corporations stockpiled the government-backed money, buying back their own

shares or other financial assets. The stock market rocketed to an all-time high.

Wall Street bets on austerity, reduced wages

Wall Street's rise is betting that the pandemic and mass unemployment, general poverty, hunger and homelessness will force workers to return to work at much lower wages. This will raise the ratio of unpaid to paid labor, leading to a higher rate of profit as business returns to normal.

Then Wall Street expects that dividends will rise and with it stock market prices. In anticipation of the good times they see coming — for the capitalists, that is — stock market speculators have bid up the prices of stocks.

In the 1920s after the end of the “Spanish” flu epidemic — it actually first appeared in the U.S. — the stock market shot up to new highs, much like what is happening now. Profit rises were even higher, as productivity substantially exceeded real wages. Wealth inequality soared to the greatest level ever seen, with 0.01% owning 25% of the total wealth in the U.S. That was an inequality level not seen since — until now. Some call it [the return of the Roaring Twenties](#).

Of course, the Roaring Twenties ended with the Great Crash in the stock market of 1929-1930 and the ensuing Great Depression of the 1930s.

Inequality of wealth and income, poverty, homelessness and hunger rule the land while the stock market booms. That's the current Roaring Twenties.



Dispatches from the housing war

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 11, 2021

Jan. 1 — Millions of renters and homeowners received a last-minute reprieve when President Donald Trump finally signed the (pitiful, inadequate) congressional stimulus bill on Dec. 27 after several days' delay. The measure extended the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) eviction ban for another month, through Jan. 31, 2021 — just in time to put off a spate of New Year's evictions amidst the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Census Bureau survey released just before the holidays found that an incredible 35.3% of adults in the U.S. are “living in households not current on rent or mortgage where eviction or foreclosure in the next two months is either very likely or somewhat likely.”

“The survey found that residents of Washington, D.C., are the most likely to face eviction or foreclosure, with 67.3% of adults living in households where the prospect is at least somewhat likely,” [Newsweek reported](#). “States with a majority of adults also likely to lose their homes include South Dakota, South Carolina, Georgia and

Oregon."

Desperate workers and families, faced with being thrown into winter streets, could finally take a breath when the stimulus bill was signed — but only just. The CDC eviction ban was extended for just another month, during which time high unemployment and the ravages of disease are unlikely to improve.

And the measure still requires that all back rent and mortgage payments be paid to the landlords and banks — meaning the massive debt crisis facing workers is only getting worse.

"The Federal stimulus bill extends the flimsy CDC ban on evictions (the one that requires you to swear to pay your landlord everything you can) to the end of January," noted the [Crown Heights Tenants Union](#). "All this moratorium does is require tenants to beg judges not to evict them.

"It did not, for example, stop the 'legal' eviction of public school teacher Clianda Florence-Yarde and her three children in Rochester, N.Y., on Friday night."

Florence-Yarde, a Black woman, was jailed, [as were 15 housing activists](#) who attempted to block the family's forcible eviction on Dec. 18. Florence-Yarde had withheld payments because of awful conditions and numerous code violations, which her landlord refused to correct.

Diane Yentel, president of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, told National Public Radio, "One of the flaws is that [the CDC ban is] not automatic, and so renters need to know that the protection exists and they need to know what actions to take in order to receive that protection."

"The order is also being treated differently by judges around the U.S.," notes NPR, "so outcomes vary wildly depending on where people live or what court they end up in," citing the case of [Tiffany Robinson, a Texas mother of three](#), who was evicted

despite doing her best to fulfill the CDC requirements.

A quick survey of local news media across the U.S. is enough to show that this is a deep, widespread, countrywide crisis, not limited to the most expensive coastal cities. From [Tampa, Fla.](#), to [Youngstown, Ohio](#), the story is the same: working-class families with few resources facing eviction, landlords hungrily preparing for mass evictions as soon as restrictions are lifted, and already overburdened tenants' advocates unable to meet the massive need for legal and material support.

Not a new crisis

As the [Lower Hudson news site reported Dec. 21](#), "Before the pandemic, 48% of rental households in the nation were already 'rent burdened,' or paying more than 30% of their income towards rent, according to the 2018 American Community Survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

"The majority of renter households below the poverty line spent at least half of their income toward rent in 2018, with one in four spending over 70% of their income toward housing costs, according to 2018 U.S. Census Bureau data."

No wonder that the fight for housing rights has been among the most widespread working-class struggles in recent years, along with the movement to defend Black lives from police violence. Because of widespread housing discrimination, racist redlining by banks and [attacks on public housing residents](#) by white supremacist politicians, these struggles also overlap to a great extent.

Even before the current economic crisis, Black women were twice as likely to be evicted as white people in at least 17 states, according to Sandra Park, senior attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union Women's Rights Project.

"Unfortunately, the fallout will be borne most by women of color, who have also had to bear so much of the fallout of the pandemic and economic crisis overall," Park

told [The 19th News](#).

Here are a few current hotspots in the housing struggle.

Portland: Red House defense

In early December, police in Portland, Ore., attempted to raid a house in the gentrified North Portland neighborhood and evict the Kinney family. Their home, known as the Red House, is one of the few remaining Black and Indigenous-owned homes in what was once a predominantly Black neighborhood.

Activists supporting the Kinneys, who have camped out near the house since September, managed to fight off the cops. An [“eviction blockade” has been established](#) around the house, including barricades and spikes on the street, with 24-hour people’s patrols to keep cops out. The defense of the Red House is being carried out in the militant spirit of the Black Lives uprising that has kept up a nightly presence in Portland since late May.

Bankers and developers have been attempting to steal the Kinney’s house — owned by the family since 1955 — using Oregon’s policy of “nonjudicial evictions” that allows for automatic foreclosures without the protections that would be present in a court case. The Kinneys and their supporters explain that this is just a modern version of Portland’s long history of segregation and theft of Indigenous lands.

“Known white supremacists continue to illegally brandish arms without consequences,” the Kinney family said in a statement. “We refuse to be characterized as a violent movement when our leadership is rooted in an Afro-Indigenous ethic of land reclamation.”

For more information, visit [RedHouseOnMississippi.com](#).

New Yorkers win stronger eviction ban

New York City is notorious for its exorbitant rents. Workers and families are forced to double, triple or quadruple up in cramped apartments, often owned by slumlords who refuse the most basic repairs for health and safety. According to the [Coalition for the Homeless](#), nearly 60,000 New Yorkers were homeless on any given night in October 2020 — many of them children. That's twice as many as 10 years ago.

Politicians in City Hall and the New York state Capitol in Albany, including Mayor Bill de Blasio and Gov. Andrew Cuomo, are beholden to the interests of big landlords and real estate developers.

So it was an important victory for fighters for housing justice and all New York state residents when the state Legislature and Cuomo were forced to enact a strengthened ban on evictions during a special session Dec. 28.

Under the measure, most evictions will be halted until May 1, 2021, as long as tenants and homeowners [sign a declaration](#) stating that “they have lost income or dealt with increased costs, or if moving would put them or a member of their household at higher risk of COVID-19 due to an underlying medical condition.”

“An eviction moratorium is only a temporary solution,” said Cea Weaver of the [Upstate-Downstate Housing Alliance](#). “Between now and May 1, we have to come together as a movement, stronger than ever before, to ensure that all back rent accrued during the crisis is cleared. New York’s leaders need to fund social and supportive housing, and make a real plan to end homelessness.”

“Now we have to ORGANIZE, continue to build the [#RentStrike](#), to [#CancelRent](#) by May Day so that no one owes any rent and all cases are permanently dismissed on May Day. We won this victory on the eviction ban by persistent struggle in our buildings and the streets. We can and WILL cancel rent by May Day,” [vowed the Crown Heights Tenant Union](#).

Los Angeles: Families seize empty houses

A pitched battle between houseless families and the vicious California Highway Patrol (CHP) on Nov. 25 made national headlines. The families and supporters were attempting to [occupy 19 empty homes](#) in the El Sereno neighborhood of Los Angeles.

The homes are owned by the California Department of Transportation, which acquired them decades ago as part of a since abandoned plan to extend the 710 Freeway. In March 2020, the Reclaiming Our Homes movement, led by homeless Black and Latinx women, seized 13 of these long-vacant homes, inspired by the 2019 Moms 4 Housing takeover in Oakland, Calif.

“During a press conference in March 2020, Reclaimer Ruby Gordillo stood on the porch of the modest bungalow she occupied with a banner that read ‘shelter from the storm.’ She told a crowd of news media that reclaimers were calling on officials to open the homes for Angelenos experiencing houselessness, reported [Bitch Magazine](#).

“With this health crisis and this housing crisis, we need every vacant house to be a home for those who don’t have a safe and stable place to sleep in,” Gordillo said.

Taken off guard by the bold action, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Los Angeles Housing Authority allowed them to stay. But there are 200 vacant houses in all. Now CHP stormtroopers patrol the area to prevent further attempts to house people in need, like the one in November.

A homeless census released in June 2020 counted [more than 66,000 unhoused people](#) in Los Angeles County, a 12.7% increase over 2019. But that’s only part of the story. Downtown Los Angeles has one of the country’s largest concentrations of homeless people, while families in the suburbs cram into garages rented out as

“apartments.” In July 2019, the L.A. City Council cruelly reinstituted a ban on sleeping overnight in cars, criminalizing thousands for using their only shelter.

