



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

NYC transit fares have risen 58 times since 1948

written by Stephen Millies
July 31, 2023



Transit and rent hikes are wholesale robberies

The Metropolitan Transportation Agency is [raising the fare](#) on New York City's buses and subways to \$2.90 on Aug. 20. Transit fares are also going up in the Washington, D.C. area and on the BART system serving San Francisco Bay communities.

Until July 1, 1948, New York City's subway fare was a nickel. Since then, the fare will have increased 58 times.

Nobody's wages have risen like that. Certainly not those of the Metropolitan Transportation Agency's employees, 177 of whom [died of the coronavirus](#) while keeping the region moving.

At the same time, rents are going through the roof across the United States. Despite protests, New York City's Rent Guidelines Board has [authorized 7% rent increases](#) over two years in a million apartments. Gotham's landlords can charge whatever they want in another million unregulated dwellings.

Median rents have increased over six times in California since 1980, from \$283 per month to \$1,750 in 2021. (Median means half the rents are below these figures and half are above.)

[Rent hikes](#) in the Golden State are 43% above the average inflation rate. That's criminal. No wonder California has [28% of the homeless people](#) in the United States.

Wage increases don't mean much if your landlord can steal most of it. Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve System banksters are jacking up interest rates on mortgages.

The Fed's chairperson, [Jerome Powell](#), worries that there are not enough people who are unemployed and living in misery. He actually thinks wage increases cause inflation, not the price fixers in the corporate boardrooms.

So why did President Biden appoint Powell to another term in charge of the country's central bank?

Dead animal capitalists and other [food industry monopolists](#) have taken advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to raise their prices by 20% since 2020. These rip-offs are the reason [53 million people](#) had to use food banks in 2021.

Roll back prices, rents and fares!

We need a rollback in prices on everything we need to live. Let's start with the price of public transportation.

Transit Workers Union founder Mike Quill — who died of a heart attack after being jailed for leading a strike — once called for free fares.

For a worker going to and back from their job five days a week, the new \$2.90 fare is a weekly \$29 wage cut. Making the fare free means a \$29 weekly wage increase or about \$1,500 annually.

Already New York City, Boston, and Kansas City, Missouri, have experimented with [free bus routes](#). This should be made a national program.

The White House and Congress have spent at least [\\$77 billion](#) on a bloody war in Ukraine provoked by the United States and its NATO allies. Instead of spending this money to kill people, why not use it to have free transit programs across the United States?

That would be a big help to the lowest-paid workers as well as students and the unemployed. It could create thousands of jobs.

While transit fares in New York City will be 58 times as much as they were 75 years ago, the capital of capitalism is the only city in the world with fewer transit lines

than it had in the 1940s.

That's because elevated lines like the Third Avenue El in Manhattan and the Bronx were torn down without being replaced by subways. Service on some commuter railroad routes — such as the West Shore line along the Hudson River — were abandoned.

Only a tiny portion of a Second Avenue subway planned a century ago has been opened.

In contrast, the socialist [People's Republic of China](#) built 62 new metro lines in 35 cities in 2021.

Despite the conflict in Ukraine, Moscow's subways are still gleaming. We need peace with the Russian Federation and China and free fares on buses, subways, and streetcars.

