

# NYC tenants fight billionaire land grab

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
November 11, 2025



Residents of New York public housing and their allies are taking on big financial interests in a fight to save their homes, staging a march on Nov. 8. SLL photo: Stephen Millies

## March against public housing demolition in NYC

The fight to save public housing brought people to the streets of New York City on

Nov. 8. They gathered at three Manhattan locations — the Fulton, Elliott-Chelsea and Amsterdam houses — to stop urban removal.

These communities are home to thousands of people, including seniors and people with disabilities. Real estate tycoons want to make big bucks by tearing them down to build high-priced luxury apartments.

That's what the Related Companies is seeking to do with the Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea homes in the Chelsea neighborhood. The outfit's founder, [Stephen Ross](#), who has a \$17 billion stash, is determined to extend his Hudson Yards project along the west side of Manhattan.

Ross has already gotten \$6 billion in government subsidies and wants [\\$2 billion](#) more for Hudson Yards, where the cheapest one-bedroom apartment rents for \$4,500 per month. Among these handouts was the [\\$3 billion](#) spent by former mayor and fellow billionaire Michael Bloomberg to extend the No. 7 subway line to Hudson Yards.

A rally was held inside a courtyard at the Elliott-Chelsea homes. Talks were given in English, Spanish and Chinese.

Speakers included an elderly blind man who denounced the proposed tearing down of the seniors' building, the newest structure there. A woman fighting cancer described the harassment of tenants— which includes the pounding of doors — who are being urged to leave.

"This is so painful," she said, urging people to "don't sign the lease." Developers want tenants to sign away their Section 9 subsidized apartments —which protects them from being evicted— by offering a temporary 8 lease that can be canceled.

Dr. Jesse Fields reminded people of that grand old freedom song, "we shall not be moved." "Housing for people, not for profit!" was the message of Oliver from the

Young Communist League.

Other groups and individuals helping to build the protest were the Parents to Improve Safe Transportation (PIST); trade unionists; the Party for Socialism and Liberation; and Workers World Party.

### **Marching on the billionaires and trillionaires**

Folks from the Fulton Houses, Amsterdam Houses in Harlem and the Holmes / Isaacs Houses on the East River had already arrived. It was time to start marching up Ninth Avenue to Hudson Yards.

Manhattan's West Side was once filled with workplaces that employed thousands, including the biggest Nabisco cookie factory. Around 900,000 manufacturing jobs have been eliminated in New York City since 1958.

Thousands more were employed on the docks, whose jobs were destroyed by containerization. Now the area is being seized by real estate developers who are building housing for the well-to-do.

City officials have allowed public housing administered by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) to deteriorate. A frightening example was the Oct. 1 partial collapse of a Mitchel Houses building in the Mott Haven neighborhood of the Bronx, which was probably caused by a gas explosion.

The ending rally was held across from the Related Companies H.Q. at Hudson Yards. People gathered in front of the financial octopus BlackRock, which controls over \$13 trillion in assets.

That represents around \$1,600 for every person on the planet. It's obscene that this fantastic amount of social wealth is controlled by a handful of power brokers. So is the trillion dollars being spent by the Pentagon on war, not for human needs?

Among those who spoke truth to power there were representatives from the Coalition to Protect Chinatown and the Lower East Side, who spoke in both Chinese and English. They described their successful struggle to protect the Bowery tenants.

Tenants from the Holmes / Isaacs Houses told of how they fought off attempts to seize their courtyards and playgrounds. That's what the authorities want to do with the basketball courts at the Fulton Houses.

Real estate interests consider these "infill" areas, where people can relax and enjoy themselves, to be wasted space that should be filled with luxury housing instead.

Johnnie Stevens of the Direct Action committee concluded by inviting people to join the informational picketing outside the HOU trailers. They're located on West 17th and 19th Streets and West 27th Street between 9th and 10th avenues.

Picketing is being done Mondays through Fridays, to encourage tenants to exercise their legal rights **not** to sign away their Section 9 subsidized apartments prematurely. Please sign up at [tinyurl.com/DefendHome](http://tinyurl.com/DefendHome).

Organizers will distribute signs to hold and "know your rights" pamphlets to explain why nobody has to sign anything or even enter the trailers being operated by the developers.



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# Why we should commemorate Nov. 11

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Even though Veterans Day is a federal holiday, [only 19 percent of workers](#) employed by private business get the day off. Originally called Armistice Day, it marks the end of World War I “at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month” of 1918.

Twenty million people were killed during this imperialist war, half of whom were civilians. It was waged between colonial powers that had enslaved hundreds of millions in Africa, Asia and the Americas.

[Lenin, the leader of the socialist Bolshevik Revolution,](#) called it a “war between the biggest slaveowners for preserving and fortifying slavery.”

The Belgian King Leopold II had killed as many as [15 million Africans in Congo](#) for rubber profits. British capitalists made fortunes from famines in India and occupied a quarter of the planet. Fresh from genocidal wars against Indigenous nations, the

U.S. army had killed a million Filipina/os fighting for independence.

Another 50 million people died in the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic that may have [started at U.S. Army bases](#) in Kansas.

Around 117,000 U.S. GIs died in the war. Three months after the U.S. entered the conflict, at least 100 Black people were murdered in East St. Louis, Ill., by white racist mobs.

Black soldiers returning from combat were among those killed in the race riots that swept U.S. cities in 1919. But World War I was swell for U.S. big business.

According to Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Smedley Butler in his book ["War is a Racket,"](#) "at least 21,000 new millionaires and billionaires were made in the United States during the World War. That many admitted their huge blood gains in their income tax returns. How many other war millionaires falsified their tax returns no one knows."

This was back in 1918, when the dollar was [worth 16 times as much](#) as it is now.

The du Ponts weren't even mentioned in "The History of Great American Fortunes" by Gustavus Myers, which was published in 1909. The family's vast profits from selling explosives during World War I catapulted them into the superrich.

Besides their chemical empire, the du Ponts controlled General Motors, which had been the world's largest corporation, for decades.

### **Never forget Nat Turner**

So why should poor and working people commemorate Nov. 11? Because on Nov. 11, 1831, the liberator Nat Turner was executed.

Turner led a revolt of enslaved Africans in Virginia that terrified all the slave

owners. Beginning on Aug. 21, 1831, Black people marched from plantation to plantation in Southampton County fighting for liberation. Black Panther Field Marshal George Jackson was murdered 140 years later on Aug. 21, 1971, in California's San Quentin prison.

The reaction of slave masters was merciless. They thought they were facing another Haitian Revolution.

Soldiers and sailors were mobilized to crush the rebellion. Militia members were sent from both Virginia and North Carolina.

The Rev. G.W. Powell said there were "thousands of troops searching in every direction," with many Black people killed. The editor of the Richmond Whig newspaper admitted that "men were tortured to death, burned, maimed and subjected to nameless atrocities." ("Before the Mayflower, A History of Black America" by Lerone Bennett Jr.)

Nat Turner was captured but never flinched. He was executed in Jerusalem, Va. It's named after the eternal capital of Palestine, also known as Al-Quds.

The slave masters called Nat Turner a "terrorist." That's the same term used today to smear Palestinian freedom fighters.

### **Hanged for the eight-hour day**

Labor leaders George Engel, Adolph Fischer, Albert Parsons and August Spies were hanged in Chicago's Cook County Jail on Nov. 11, 1887. Twenty-three-year-old Louis Lingg was also slated to be executed, but he was either murdered or committed suicide the day before.

These martyrs died for the eight-hour work day. Most workers in those days worked 10 or 12 hours a day, sometimes even longer.

On May 1, 1886, hundreds of thousands of workers across the U.S. went on strike to demand an eight-hour work day. Capitalists were terrified. Workers marched from factory to factory urging employees to strike.

Chicago was the center of this movement. Chicago police fired on striking workers at the McCormick reaper works — which later became part of International Harvester — on May 3, killing at least two.

The next day, a protest meeting was called at Chicago's Haymarket Square. Police attacked the crowd, and someone threw a bomb at the cops. Eight policemen died as well as possibly some protesters.

The ruling class went berserk. [Police arrested hundreds](#), but the bomber, who may have been a provocateur, was never found.

Instead, well-known labor leaders were put on trial for their lives because they supposedly incited the bombing. Years later, Illinois Gov. John Peter Altgeld courageously pardoned those who had been jailed.

Four of the five Haymarket Martyrs were immigrants. All were labeled anarchists. Trump wants us to hate immigrants while he calls anti-racist protesters “anarchists.”

As he was about to be hanged, Albert Parsons declared, “The day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today.”

Lucy Parsons, a Black woman who was Albert Parsons’ partner, continued fighting for the working class until she died in a house fire in 1942. Chicago police said that she was “more dangerous than a thousand rioters.” Lucy Parsons’ books and papers were [confiscated by the FBI](#).

May 1 became the international holiday of the working class. In Mexico, it’s known as the [Day of the Chicago Martyrs](#).

## **Long live the People's Republic of Angola!**

The People's Republic of Angola was born on Nov. 11, 1975. Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, along with his employees Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and White House occupant Gerald Ford, sought to kill it. They had the Nazi armies of then-apartheid South Africa invade the African country.

Angola's independence was historical justice that resonated around the world. Four million Angolans had been kidnapped in a slave trade that lasted four centuries. Brazil's sugar plantations were fed by Angolan slave pens.

Millions of Brazilians have Angola in their blood. So do some African Americans.

The largest prison in the U.S. is in Angola, La. The sugar plantation which became the core of the prison was named Angola because that's where the enslaved Africans working there came from.

Today, thousands of slaves work on the Angola prison's 18,000 acres. The "Angola 3" — Herman Wallace, Robert King Wilkerson and Albert Woodfox — spent decades in solitary confinement on frame-up charges of killing a prison guard before being freed.

Their real crime was forming a chapter of the Black Panther Party. Herman Wallace died of liver cancer a few days after being released.

Five hundred years of Portuguese colonialism in Angola were 500 years of resistance. The founding of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in 1956 was a decisive step. Forced labor was halted only after 50,000 Angolans were killed during the 1961 revolts.

When South Africa invaded Angola, Cuba came to Africa's assistance. As the Pan African educator and organizer Elombe Brath said, "When Africa called, Cuba

answered.” Two thousand Cuban soldiers died fighting alongside their African comrades.

The initial defeat of South Africa helped inspire the Soweto Uprising on June 16, 1976. The total defeat of the apartheid army at Cuito Cuanavale in 1988 led to Nelson Mandela walking out of prison two years later.

So let us remember Nat Turner and the Haymarket Martyrs while celebrating Angola’s independence. And be prepared to stop any new wars for the rich.



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# **Zohran Mamdani: From postcolonial legacy to the heart of empire**

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November 11, 2025

**A new generation, a deep inheritance**

The new mayor of New York, Zohran Mamdani, embodies a new political generation — but also a singular intellectual legacy: that of his parents.

His mother, Mira Nair, is one of the greatest contemporary Indian filmmakers, author of acclaimed films such as *Salaam Bombay!* and *Monsoon Wedding*.

His father, Mahmood Mamdani, is a historian, political scientist, and professor at Columbia University whose work has transformed our understanding of the relationship between colonization, modernity, and political violence.

Their son thus grew up at the crossroads of two inheritances: engaged cinema and critical thought — two forms of resistance to oblivion and to the established order.

### **The making of a postcolonial thinker**

Born in 1946 in Bombay, Mahmood Mamdani grew up in Uganda, within an Indian-origin community that had settled in East Africa during the colonial era.

He studied in the United States, at Harvard, before returning to teach in Africa, notably at Dar es Salaam, a vibrant center of intellectual ferment in the 1970s.

Exiled after the expulsion of Asians by Idi Amin in 1972, he became a central figure of postcolonial thought. His personal experience fueled his reflection: to understand how colonial power survived decolonization — under other forms — within the structures of the state, of memory, and of violence.

### **Citizen and subject**

In his major work, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (1996), Mamdani shows that the African states born from independence never truly broke with the colonial system.

Colonial power, he explains, divided societies into two worlds: urban citizens

governed by civil law, and rural subjects ruled by customary law and “administrated” chiefs.

This split between “modernity” and “tradition” — between citizen and subject — survived independence and continues to structure political and social inequality.

This book established Mamdani as one of the most lucid thinkers of African postcolonialism — an author intent on revealing the continuities of domination hidden beneath the language of freedom.

## **When victims become killers**

A few years later, in *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* (2001), Mamdani challenged the dominant interpretation of the Rwandan genocide.

Rejecting moralizing or culturalist readings, he shows that the categories “Hutu” and “Tutsi” were not ancestral identities but the product of colonial racial classifications imposed by European powers — administrative inventions that froze hierarchies and fueled violence.

Mamdani advanced a disturbing thesis: genocide is not a regression into barbarism but the culmination of a colonial modernity that naturalized difference.

Those whom the West depicts as “peoples without history” are, in truth, both the victims — and at times the products — of its own racial order.

## **Good Muslim, bad Muslim**

It was, however, with *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror* (2004) that Mamdani gained worldwide recognition.

Published in the aftermath of September 11, the book dismantles the new ideology

of the age: the “clash of civilizations.”

Mamdani demonstrates that the division between “good” and “bad” Muslims is not religious but geopolitical.

The “good Muslim” is the one who conforms to Western order; the “bad” is the one who resists it.

This dichotomy, he writes, was born during the Cold War, when the United States — seeking to weaken the Soviet Union — financed, armed, and supported the Afghan mujahideen, transforming jihad into a political weapon.

Political Islam, he argues, was created by empire before being demonized by it. The “freedom fighters” of the 1980s became, twenty years later, the “terrorists” of the War on Terror.

What Mamdani denounces is the moralization of politics. Instead of explaining violence through historical and geopolitical causes, the West attributes it to the “culture” of others — never asking what it has done, only who “they” are.

This reversal of the gaze — where the politics of domination becomes a defense of civilization — constitutes, for Mamdani, the heart of modern imperial ideology.

“When we explain the behavior of others by their culture, we justify our own by our politics,” he writes.

*Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* is therefore far more than a critique of post-9/11 Americanism; it is a genealogy of imperial lies.

Mamdani exposes the continuity linking colonial wars, the Cold War, and the so-called “War on Terror”: a single moral narrative in which the West imagines itself the guardian of reason and freedom, while the dominated peoples are reduced to primitive passions — to threats that must be civilized.

His work calls on us to repoliticize violence, to break with the discourse of fear, and to recognize the West's historical responsibility for the very disasters it condemns.

## **The struggle against amnesia**

All of Mahmood Mamdani's work can be read as a struggle against amnesia. It lays bare the persistence of colonial power within the institutions, discourses, and wars of the present.

And so we grasp the symbolic weight of the fact that his son, Zohran Mamdani — heir to such an intellectual and activist lineage — has today become the mayor of New York, the capital of global capitalism and of the American narrative itself.

It is an irony of history, but also a promise: that a world critical of empire might finally speak from its very center.

Zohran Mamdani once appeared in one of his mother's films, *Queen of Katwe* (2016), contributing to its soundtrack as the rapper Young Cardamom, later known as Mr. Cardamom.

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*Translated from the French using AI. Originally published in Investig'Action (6 November 2025). This work is distributed under a Creative Commons license (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).*

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Abbas Fahdel is an Iraqi-French filmmaker and writer. Born in Babylon, Iraq, he moved to France as a young man and studied cinema at the Sorbonne. His acclaimed documentaries *Retour à Babylone* and *Homeland: Iraq Year Zero* explore memory, war, and the enduring legacies of empire. Fahdel's work, rooted in personal experience and political reflection, has been honored at international festivals for its

anti-imperialist vision.



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# **Zohran Mamdani's win: a vote against racism, a mandate for class struggle**

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November 11, 2025

Democratic Socialist Zohran Mamdani's resounding victory for New York City mayor against billionaire-backed Andrew Cuomo was a vote against racism — and a direct rebuke to Trump's "Make America White Again."

The unabated Islamophobia in the campaign's final days was aimed at whipping up racism and division. Cuomo joined right-wing shock jocks who claimed Mamdani would "cheer for another Sept. 11." Trump called him a "communist," threatened to deport him — though Mamdani is a U.S. citizen born in Uganda to South Asian parents — and vowed to cut off federal funds to a Mamdani-led city.

The [electoral map](#) tells the story. The wealthiest neighborhoods — the Upper East Side, TriBeCa, and longtime racist enclaves like Howard Beach — voted for Cuomo. But from Harlem and Washington Heights to the South Bronx, Jackson Heights, and the Black and Caribbean heart of Central Brooklyn, the working-class vote for Mamdani was overwhelming.

Cuomo, who made \$5 million last year and lives in Sutton Place, carried his wealthy neighbors and most of TriBeCa, where homes average over \$3 million. But money couldn't buy this election.

Despite \$40 million in Super PAC spending against him, Mamdani won more than a million votes — in what analysts say was the city's largest turnout in 50 years.

### **The fight against racism is the fight for working-class power**

The problem of bigotry, racism, and white supremacy — now visible in Gestapo-like ICE raids and the militarized occupation of cities, many led by Black mayors — must be confronted head-on.

This cancer has divided the working class since the twin crimes of slavery and Indigenous genocide. Every blow against racism today is a strike at the heart of capitalist exploitation.

### **A campaign powered by workers and youth**

Mamdani's campaign spoke directly to the grinding realities of working-class life — championing hospital workers, cab drivers, bodega owners, sanitation crews, and delivery drivers who keep New York running. His platform affirmed the right to affordable housing, food, free transit, and child care.

It was these workers — joined by young people alienated by capitalism, enraged by genocide, worried about the climate crisis, and open to socialism — who powered his

victory. The campaign became a vehicle for struggle, not just for votes.

### **Gaza solidarity fueled the movement**

Mamdani's win would have been impossible without the thousands of protests against the U.S.-backed genocide in Gaza and the heroic resistance of the Palestinian people.

These mobilizations galvanized oppressed communities — especially Muslim voters — to stand up. In another era, even a whisper of sympathy for Palestine could end a political career. That Mamdani won while defying U.S. imperialism marks a seismic shift in political consciousness.

### **Wall Street won't surrender**

The struggle doesn't end with an election. Wall Street and the state that defends it — including the 50,000-strong NYPD — will fight to contain this movement.

Already, backroom deals and media spin aim to "manage" Mamdani and lower expectations among the 90,000 mostly young volunteers who fueled his campaign.

Our task is to raise those expectations, deepen them, and transform them into a fighting movement.

### **National repercussions**

This victory reverberates far beyond New York. It strengthens resistance to Trump's MAGA bloc and the billionaires it serves. It could energize the fight against ICE raids and push labor toward militant tactics — including the general strike.

We know the limits of bourgeois elections and the Democratic Party's tendency to co-opt radical energy and channel it toward imperialist war. But we also know this: Breakthroughs like Mamdani's can open doors to deeper class struggle.

## Lenin's lesson on elections

Lenin argued that revolutionaries must engage in bourgeois elections — not to glorify them, but to reach and educate the masses where they are. To abstain is to abandon the field to capitalists and opportunists.

He insisted that revolutionaries contest power even in hostile institutions, exposing their limits while organizing for something beyond them.

That's the task before us now: to use this victory to connect every reform demand to the fight for a new system — one that dismantles capitalism, ends imperialist war, and builds socialism.

As *The Internationale*, the 19th Century socialist anthem sung by workers worldwide, declares: "We have been naught, we shall be all!"



# Mamdani's win shows the tide is turning against Zionism

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November 11, 2025

In the days before New Yorkers went to the polls, Wall Street billionaires and their media unleashed a barrage of lies, branding Zohran Mamdani a "Jew-hater." It was a lie designed to destroy his campaign. And it didn't work.

Over [1,100](#) Rabbis signed a petition labeling Zohran Mamdani an enemy of the Jewish people. According to these rabbis, Mamdani opposes Jewish self-determination simply because he refuses to support a U.S.-backed apartheid terror state.

Liel Leibovitz, editor of Tablet magazine, went so far as to [declare](#) that "any congregation that will accept Zohran Mamdani over Yom Kippur is not a Jewish congregation." Such a statement is stunningly hateful — reducing the entirety of Judaism to the defense of genocide. [No Jewish congregation](#) worth its name would turn away a person based on faith, nationality, or political views.

Fascist-in-chief Donald Trump also jumped into the fray over Mamdani's supposed "antisemitism." True to form, Trump [frothed](#), "Any Jewish person that votes for Zohran Mamdani, a proven and self-professed JEW HATER, is a stupid person!!!" This from the same man who claimed there were "fine people on both sides" when neo-Nazis marched in Charlottesville. For what it's worth, the Jewish author of this article prefers to seek insight on antisemitism from someone other than a proven antisemite and demagogue.

Even with the massive propaganda blitz against him, Zohran Mamdani — a pro-

Palestine, Muslim Democratic Socialist — won [33%](#) of the Jewish vote in New York City. It's true that Andrew Cuomo carried the majority of the still Zionist-leaning community with about 60%. But the fact that Mamdani won a third of the Jewish vote, despite the lies and hysteria, reveals deep cracks in the imperialist narrative surrounding "Israel."

The fact that the Jewish community may be more [divided](#) on Mamdani — and, consequently, on Zionism — than the mainstream led us to believe became [clear](#) as the election drew closer. In response to the landslide of antisemitism accusations against the now soon-to-be Mayor Mamdani, a multitude of progressive Jewish organizations and [individuals](#) spoke out. Hundreds of rabbis and everyday Jewish people signed their own [letter](#) denouncing the attacks on Mamdani and supporting his stand against Zionist genocide.

The entire saga once again shows that the imperialist war drive to prop up "Israel" as the U.S. attack dog of West Asia has nothing to do with Judaism — and everything to do with profit. The working-class power behind Mamdani's campaign represents a real opportunity to deepen revolutionary consciousness and expose the ruling class's lies — lies like the claim that U.S. funding of a genocidal "Israel" somehow defends Jewish self-determination.

Mamdani's victory presents a powerful opportunity for revolutionary-minded Jews to continue advancing the struggle for a broader revolution — one capable of toppling U.S. imperialism and the Zionist terror project it sustains. That same opportunity exists within the wider working-class movement. Now is the time to push revolutionary socialism and anti-imperialism more boldly than ever.

*Lev Koufax is an anti-Zionist Jewish activist.*



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# **From Kaepernick to Bad Bunny: The NFL can't stop bowing to racism**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

November 11, 2025

The NFL's choice of Puerto Rican superstar Bad Bunny to headline the Super Bowl LX halftime show should have been cause for celebration. Instead, it's a reminder that U.S. colonialism still dictates who gets to be on the biggest stage in this country.

The backlash from the right was immediate. Donald Trump called the selection "ridiculous." Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem threatened that ICE would "be all over" the stadium. Conservative pundits sneered that he "has no songs in English" and is "not an American." In reality, Bad Bunny — born Benito A. Martínez Ocasio — is a U.S. citizen from Puerto Rico, a colony Washington has ruled since 1898.

The NFL's answer to the backlash was equally revealing. Instead of defending its headliner, the league quietly booked British rocker Sting to headline a Super Bowl-branded "pre-halftime" concert in San Francisco. Tickets start at \$750 — an expensive concession to soothe what one columnist called "whiny white tears."

It's not the first time the NFL has bowed to bigotry. When players like Colin Kaepernick protested police violence, the league punished dissent before pretending to make amends. Now, as it courts its fastest-growing audience — Latine fans — it's still trying to please both sides of a divide rooted in racism.



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## **While billionaires soar, SNAP funds vanish**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

November 11, 2025

Everyone knows the deck is stacked. The rich play by different rules — and they're the ones who wrote them. Every gain workers have fought for is being rolled back — wages, rights, and affordability — while billionaires grow richer by the hour.

And now, 40 million people face hunger as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) runs out of funds amid the government shutdown. Food banks across the country are swamped, trying to feed the same families the system has abandoned. In a country where billionaires measure their fortunes in hundreds of billions, tens of millions can't afford groceries.

A new report from Oxfam America, *Unequal: The Rise of a New American Oligarchy*, lays bare what millions already know from lived experience: The rich are not just getting richer — they're taking everything. The numbers confirm that U.S. capitalism has entered a new phase of concentration, a brazen revival of the Gilded Age, with wealth gushing upward in a torrent of accumulated profit and financial speculation.

### **The super-rich grew six times wealthier**

While working-class families endured inflation, layoffs, and pandemic chaos, the top 10 U.S. billionaires saw their wealth increase by 526% since March 2020. Their combined fortunes multiplied sixfold in just five years.

Elon Musk alone ballooned from \$33 billion to \$469 billion, a 14-fold rise. These fortunes didn't grow from creating new value. They grew because billionaires claimed an ever-greater share of the surplus value produced by workers everywhere — the unpaid labor that is the foundation of all capitalist profit.

Behind all the talk of "innovation," the billionaire boom was built on cutting jobs, holding down wages, and demanding more for less. The so-called recovery didn't lift workers up — it left them struggling while the rich climbed higher.

### **\$700 billion more for 10 men**

In the last year alone, those same 10 billionaires pocketed another \$700 billion. According to Oxfam, the policies of the second Trump administration "added rocket

fuel to the nation's out-of-control inequality."

Abby Maxman, Oxfam's president, put it plainly:

"The new American oligarchy is here. Billionaires and mega-corporations are booming while working families struggle to afford housing, healthcare, and groceries."

But this isn't mere greed — it's a system designed to extract and concentrate wealth at the top. Through state power, tax law, and monopoly control, capital guarantees that the fruits of social labor flow upward. The "oligarchy" is not a political accident; it is capitalism functioning as designed.

### **The 987-to-1 divide**

Between 1989 and 2022, the least wealthy household in the top 1% gained 987 times more wealth than the wealthiest household in the bottom 20%.

This didn't happen through production alone. The capitalist class has turned financial markets into engines of fictitious capital — paper wealth backed by speculation, not real value. Stocks, derivatives, and corporate bonds are claims on future profit, but they command real power over labor, housing, and resources today.

Decades of "upward redistribution" — tax cuts, deregulation, union-busting, and privatization — have ensured that more than 40% of the U.S. population now lives poor or low-income. The capitalist class has not merely accumulated wealth; it controls the means by which wealth itself is created, deciding what gets produced, who works, and who eats.

### **Who owns the U.S.?**

The Oxfam data shows the real face of class power:

- The top 0.1% own 12.6% of total U.S. assets, the highest share since records began.
- That same 0.1% control 24% of the stock market.

Roughly 100,000 people now possess six times more wealth than 64 million working-class families combined. When ownership is this concentrated, the illusion of democracy is stripped away. Political power follows economic power — and the capitalist class owns both.

### **A new Gilded Age**

The United States has officially surpassed the original Gilded Age. The richest 0.0001% — a few hundred individuals — now control a greater share of wealth than their robber-baron predecessors ever dreamed of.

As Elizabeth Wilkins of the Roosevelt Institute wrote, “Today, we are seeing the dark extremes of choosing inequality for 50 years.”

But inequality is not “chosen” by the people. It’s enforced — through law, through police, through war, and through the constant threat of unemployment. Today’s oligarchs command global production chains, extracting value from workers in every corner of the world. Their fortunes depend less on building factories than on monopolizing technology, logistics, and data — the latest form of imperialist super-profits.

The U.S. ruling class has engineered a brazen revival of the Gilded Age, one that feeds on exploitation at home and empire abroad.

### **Capitalism by design**

The rise of a new American oligarchy is not the result of chance or corruption. It is the normal operation of capitalism in its imperialist stage — a system driven to concentrate wealth and power in ever fewer hands. Every tax loophole, every subsidy, every anti-union law serves to preserve class rule.

Oxfam calls for higher taxes and antitrust action — reforms that might slightly slow the looting. But the capitalist state cannot legislate away its own class character. Real equality demands working-class power over production itself.

The data confirms what Marx wrote long ago: Capitalism “accumulates wealth at one pole” and “misery at the other.” The only real alternative is an economy where the wealth created by workers serves the people — organized for human need, not private greed.



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## Defending Columbus is an insult to

# Italian-Americans — and to history

written by Struggle - La Lucha

November 11, 2025



In New York City's mayoral race, Andrew Cuomo has made himself the loudest defender of Christopher Columbus — and of the myths that surround him. Facing Democratic Socialist candidate Zohran Mamdani, Cuomo has doubled down on his long-standing crusade to preserve Columbus statues and Columbus Day, calling them “essential symbols” of Italian-American heritage.

In a series of October 2025 campaign appearances, Cuomo accused Mamdani of “insulting Italian-Americans” for his past criticism of the Columbus statue at Columbus Circle — even pointing to a photo of Mamdani giving the statue the middle finger. Cuomo insists the monuments represent Italian-American struggle and assimilation, not the atrocities committed by the man they honor.

He promises that if elected mayor, Columbus Day will remain untouched, even as he grudgingly acknowledges that “Columbus committed bad acts against Indigenous people.” As governor, Cuomo even had a Central Park Columbus monument added to the State Register of Historic Places to guarantee its preservation.

But defending Columbus in 2025 is more than cultural nostalgia — it’s an attempt to weaponize ethnic pride against truth. Glorifying Columbus is no tribute to Italian-American workers and families who faced discrimination — it’s an insult to them. Columbus was not their forerunner; he was a mercenary for empire, an agent of enslavement and genocide.

Italian-American legacy — from Sacco and Vanzetti to the labor and anti-fascist movements — stands with the oppressed, not with empire. Honoring that real legacy means telling the truth about Columbus and the system he served.

### **The myth and the merchant**

For generations, U.S. classrooms have glorified Christopher Columbus as the daring mariner who “discovered” a new world. The songs and parades celebrate him as a man of vision and courage — the founder of Western civilization in the Americas. But this version of Columbus is one of history’s most successful propaganda campaigns.

When we read his own journals and the accounts of contemporaries such as Bartolomé de Las Casas, a very different figure emerges — not a heroic explorer but a royal-chartered merchant of conquest. He was not the first European to reach these shores — and he didn’t “discover” anything.

### **From Africa to the Americas**

Before crossing the Atlantic, Columbus had spent years studying the Portuguese system of expansion along Africa’s coasts. He saw how it worked: Sail under royal orders, seize land in the name of the crown and the church, and profit from gold,

trade, and human lives. Enslavement was built into the plan from the start.

But what Columbus found in the Americas changed everything. Unlike the Portuguese, who had to fight powerful African kingdoms, Columbus met peoples who had no reason to expect invasion — and no defense against European weapons or Old World diseases.

That imbalance gave him a free hand. He didn't bother building trade posts or alliances. He went straight to conquest and plunder — enslaving the Taíno, seizing land, and demanding tribute in gold.

Columbus brought the brutal system the Portuguese had pioneered to the Americas. What began on the African coast as raiding and slaving exploded in the Caribbean into total occupation and genocide.

### **The human ledger**

When Columbus landed in the Bahamas on Oct. 12, 1492, he was greeted by the Taíno people — peaceful, generous, and curious about the strangers from across the sea. Columbus's first recorded observations were not of geography or astronomy but of people as potential labor.

In his own log, he wrote that the Taíno "should make good servants." Within 48 hours, he was calculating the logistics of enslavement: "With 50 men they could all be subjugated and compelled to do anything one wishes."

Throughout his journal, Columbus remarked on the people's gentleness and lack of weapons — not as virtues but as weaknesses to exploit. His words do not read like those of an explorer, but like those of a profiteer taking inventory of assets.

Just weeks into his mission, Columbus began capturing and shipping men and women to Spain as specimens and slaves. Historian José Asensio called it "a trifling

act with fatal consequences."

He enslaved entire communities, forcing them to mine gold, plant crops, and serve the colonizers under threat of mutilation and death.

### **Conquest and the birth of a new world order**

Columbus's voyages were at the beginning of modern European colonialism. His actions helped set in motion a transformation of the global economy. Gold and silver from the Americas flooded European markets, feeding a new money economy. Crops, livestock, and diseases crossed oceans, reshaping entire continents. The Spanish Empire, enriched by plunder, helped fuel the early growth of European banking, trade, and industry.

This was the violent accumulation of wealth that began in Africa and laid the foundations of capitalism — a process built on enslavement, dispossession, and genocide. The destruction of Indigenous societies, the rise of the Atlantic slave trade, and the seizure of land across the Americas created the material base for Europe's later industrial expansion.

### **The real legacy**

The gold ripped from the Caribbean and the lives stolen from Indigenous nations — alongside the centuries of stolen labor and bodies from Africa — formed the basis of the violent accumulation that built European capitalism. Out of that blood-soaked foundation grew a world system that continues to exploit labor and land across the globe.



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# Voting for Mamdani is voting against racism

written by Struggle - La Lucha

November 11, 2025

## **Stop the billionaires from stealing the NYC election**

On the eve of the Nov. 4 New York City mayoral election, the billionaire class is going all out to defeat Zohran Mamdani.

The chief weapon of the wealthy and powerful is racism against Mamdani, who is Muslim and was born in Uganda.

It's not just Fox News and the New York Post, both owned by the Murdoch family, which are spewing hate nonstop.

Mamdani's chief opponent — former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo — went on Sid Rosenberg's bigoted WABC radio talk show. Cuomo laughed when Rosenberg claimed Mamdani would welcome another Sept. 11, 2001, attack.

Mamdani responded eloquently. "Islamophobia is not seen as inexcusable," he said



in a video appeal. "Elected officials can sell T-shirts calling for my deportation."

Cuomo visits Trump-loving neighborhoods in Staten Island, where he denounces Mamdani for being against statues of genocidal Columbus.

He's also courting a handful of right-wing synagogues, attacking the Muslim Mamdani for demanding an end to the genocide in Gaza — even as tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of Jewish New Yorkers have joined his call for justice for the Palestinian people, against genocide, and are backing Mamdani's campaign.

**The Nov. 4 election is a referendum on racism.** Voting for Mamdani is saying no to Islamophobia and every form of racism and bigotry.

### **The big money against Mamdani**

More than \$40 million is being spent to defeat the Democratic Socialist Zohran Mamdani, who wants to freeze rents and make the buses and child care free.

These absolutely needed reforms horrify former New York Mayor Bloomberg, who has shoveled over [\\$8 million](#) into the Stop Mamdani slush fund. That's spare change for Bloomberg, whose fortune is estimated at [\\$109.4 billion](#).

During Bloomberg's 12-year reign in City Hall, up to a million people per year were detained by police under "Stop and Frisk" policies. The overwhelming number of people who had their Fourth Amendment rights against illegal searches stolen were Black and Brown.

The money-bags mayor also wanted to close [20 firehouses](#) across the city.

Bloomberg let public housing rot while the average monthly rent for a 691 square foot, one-bedroom apartment in Manhattan has risen to [\\$5,494](#). NYC transit fares are scheduled to rise to \$3 in January, 60 times what they were in 1948, when it cost a nickel to take a bus or subway.

But Zohran Mamdani must not be allowed to be elected mayor!

Other donors to the Stop Mamdani campaign include Joe Gebbia, co-founder of Airbnb, who has given \$2 million. Also giving money is [Alice Walton](#), whose \$111.4 billion fortune comes from the poverty wages paid to two million Walmart workers.

### **Cuomo's rotten record**

When he was governor, Andrew Cuomo was forced to resign for being accused of being a sexual predator. He compelled thousands of seniors hospitalized with COVID-19 to go to nursing homes, where the disease spread, killing thousands more.

His daddy, Mario Cuomo, was also governor. The elder Cuomo took \$8 billion in funds meant for affordable housing and used them to build more prisons than any other governor in New York history.

Zohran Mamdani's campaign has become a mass movement against decades of capitalist austerity and cutbacks. Even more so it's a way to say no to anti-Muslim racism that became official policy after Sept. 11, 2001.

It was the struggle of Palestinians against U.S./Zionist genocide — and all the pro-Palestinian demonstrations — that helped spark Mamdani's campaign.

Mamdani's program of mild reforms may not seem extraordinary. But it gives people a chance to mobilize against capitalism in the capital of capitalism.

It's crucial that revolutionary socialists and all progressive people support Mamdani against racism, against Islamophobia, and against Wall Street's billionaires. For further analysis, please check out "[The Mamdani NYC mayoral campaign, 'Which side are you on?,'](#)" by Sharon Black.



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## What's a billionaire doing paying off the troops?

written by Struggle - La Lucha

November 11, 2025

The "anonymous donor" Donald Trump bragged about on Oct. 23 — the one supposedly giving \$130 million to pay U.S. military personnel during the government shutdown — turns out to be billionaire [Timothy Mellon](#), heir to one of the oldest

capitalist dynasties in the United States.

The [donation](#) from the 83-year-old member of the filthy-rich Mellon financial dynasty amounts to \$100 per member of the Armed Forces.

That's about 2% of the Pentagon's monthly payroll for those wearing a uniform. So what's the point?

Is Mellon's money earmarked for elite units who could be mobilized to attack demonstrators protesting ICE raids? Or to pay off key generals and admirals in some future plot like the Jan. 6, 2021, takeover of the United States Capitol?

The \$130 million payoff is likely illegal and violates the Antideficiency Act. Mellon isn't donating paintings to the National Gallery of Art like his granddaddy, Andrew Mellon, did to get off tax evasion charges.

It goes around Congress, which, in a republic, is supposed to decide where the tax money goes. Mellon's money allows Trump to say to GIs, "I'm the one providing for your families, not the liberals in Congress."

SNAP benefits — formerly known as food stamps — for 42 million people are going to run out of money on Nov. 1. Why couldn't Timothy Mellon make a donation to food banks?

Even with increasing food prices, \$130 million could still buy a lot of eggs.

This isn't a random act of generosity.

### **The Mellon family octopus**

What the DuPonts are to Delaware, the Mellons are to Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania. For over 150 years, the family has sliced and diced industries while breaking strikes.

Key to Mellon power is their bank, the Bank of New York Mellon, with assets of \$440 billion. Its assets under management — funds belonging to its wealthy clients, which the bank manages — amount to \$2.1 trillion.

Timothy's grandfather, Andrew Mellon, used the family bank to control a whole series of blue-chip corporations, including Alcoa. Because of its patents, the outfit held a virtual monopoly on U.S. aluminum production for decades.

Interior Secretary Harold Ickes declared that if the United States lost World War II, it would be because Alcoa was holding back on producing aluminum for planes. The federal government had to break Alcoa's patent monopoly.

The jewel in the family crown was Gulf Oil, which merged with Texaco to form Chevron in 1985. Andrew Mellon served as Treasury Secretary for three presidents in the 1920s (Harding, Coolidge and Hoover), giving tax cuts to his fellow plutocrats.

Afterwards, he was appointed ambassador to Britain, where he demanded a 50% cut of the British crown colony of Kuwait's petroleum production for Gulf Oil. Sixty years later, the first U.S. war in the Arab/Persian Gulf began.

### **Machine guns for the miners**

Every generation of Mellons has been at war with the working class. After their Pittsburgh Coal Company crushed a miners' strike in the 1920s, a Senate inquiry exposed the firm's private armies. Richard Mellon, Andrew's brother, coolly told senators that "you couldn't run a coal mine without machine guns."

Timothy Mellon carried that tradition into modern times. As owner of several [New England railroads](#), he fought union contracts and ran them into bankruptcy, slashing jobs and safety.

His autobiography drips with racist contempt, describing Black people in [racist](#)

terms. He poured \$1.5 million into defending Arizona's vicious SB 1070 anti-immigrant law, most of which was thrown out by the courts.

No wonder this bigot is a friend of Donald Trump.

### **The real question**

Why should one billionaire decide who gets paid while tens of millions go hungry?

Why can a private fortune fill the gap left by a "shutdown" — but only for the armed forces, never for the poor?

The government always finds money for bullets, never for bread.

