

# What do Americans have to be thankful for this Thanksgiving?

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As families gather to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday today, American society faces a profound social, economic and political crisis. In contrast to the inevitable bromides and homilies that will be uttered by Biden and other politicians, the United States is in an advanced state of decay.

Perhaps the most toxic expression of the crisis is the phenomenon of mass shootings, a near-daily occurrence in the United States. Thanksgiving 2022 takes place in the midst of a wave of homicidal violence.

On Tuesday night, Walmart night manager Andre Bing, 31, walked into the Chesapeake, Virginia supercenter and killed at least six people before taking his own life.

Two days earlier, on Sunday November 20, Chen Wu, 45, “executed” three men and one woman, all Chinese immigrants working and living on a marijuana grow farm in rural Kingfisher County, Oklahoma, according to police. A fifth person was shot and remains in critical condition.

Last Saturday, at a gay nightclub in Colorado Springs, Colorado, 22-year-old Anderson Lee Aldrich opened fire with an AR-15 style semi-automatic rifle, killing five and wounding dozens more within minutes.

These shootings occurred in cities and in the countryside, in states governed by Democrats and Republicans alike, resulting in at least 22 fatalities and over 35 severe injuries.

While each mass shooting has its own particular circumstances, the pervasiveness of such acts is not fundamentally rooted in the individual psychology of the killers. These tragedies, in the final analysis, are expressions of the profound social crisis that exists in the United States.

What is the reality of social life in America?

The United States is the most unequal major capitalist country on the planet. Soaring inflation has led to a 10 percent increase in annual food prices, contributing to increased malnourishment and hunger.

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Urban Institute, one in five adults in the US reported food insecurity in 2022, double the one in 10 figure reported by the White House in 2020.

The American Farm Bureau Federation reported this week that it will cost the average American household 20 percent more than it did last year to feed a family of 10 a traditional Thanksgiving meal.

Even if workers can afford a meal today, many will not be able to afford a roof over their heads tomorrow. The Zumper National Rent Report, released on Tuesday, found that already sky-high rent prices continued to increase in many major cities, leading to more evictions.

In Chicago, the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment is \$1,870, a 23 percent increase compared to last year. WBEZ Chicago reported that “Cook County eviction rates have steadily climbed back to their highest levels since the pandemic started.”

In Chesapeake, Virginia, the location of Tuesday’s massacre, the average price of a one-bedroom apartment is \$1,480, a staggering 41 percent year-to-year increase.

For some, the daily struggle to survive becomes too much to bear. Between December 2020 and December 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recorded over 107,000 drug overdose deaths, more than five times as many deaths as were recorded by the agency in 1999.

While Americans have been told the pandemic is over and it is time to “move on,” the simple act of gathering around the dinner table this year will lead to sickness

and death for thousands. A November 23 headline in *Kaiser Health News* warns, “Experts worry Thanksgiving could spur a surge of flu, RSV, COVID.”

The so-called “triple-demic” is overwhelming already overworked and understaffed hospitals across the country.

Nearly three years of profit-driven pandemic policies have left just under 1.1 million Americans dead from COVID-19, in the process inflicting profound trauma on the collective psyche of millions of workers and their families. Hundreds continue to die needlessly every day.

But the pandemic profiteers continue to gorge themselves. Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, 728 billionaires in the US have seen their wealth increase by 50 percent, or \$1.5 trillion. These 728 people control a combined \$4.48 trillion.

While there is supposedly no money to stop evictions or expand social services, both parties in Washington ensure that trillion-dollar military budgets and weekly infusions to the Ukrainian military glide through Congress.

The cost of the war, including the inflation it produces, is being foisted onto the backs of the working class through increased fuel, housing and food prices.

The political representatives of big business, meanwhile, promote the most backward and reactionary ideologies in an attempt to disorient and divide the working class: hatred for immigrants, racism, anti-Semitism, the tribalist politics of identity, irrationalism, anti-science and militarism.

But workers are not passively accepting these attacks on their living standards and their very lives.

The biggest graduate student worker strike in history is currently underway, involving 48,000 academic workers in California. And after three years without a contract, and dozens of delays, White House interventions, extensions and revotes imposed by the union bureaucracies, 115,000 railroad workers are poised to strike as early as December 9.

Thanksgiving was established as a national holiday in the midst of the Civil War as a celebration and commemoration of the immensely liberating and progressive impulse provided by what historians have rightly called the “Second American Revolution.”

The proclamation signed by the “Great

Emancipator,” President Abraham Lincoln, on October 3, 1863 set aside the last Thursday of November as a “day of thanksgiving.” Citing “signal victories over the enemy” some months after the triumphs at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, the statement praised the “Almighty” for augmenting “our free population by emancipation and by immigration.”

The declaration declared that providence had “crowned the labor of our workingmen in every department of industry with abundant rewards.”

It spoke of the “great trial of civil war into which we have been brought by our adherence as a nation to the cause of freedom and humanity.” It concluded with the hope that the abolition of slavery would “afford to us reasonable hopes of an ultimate and happy deliverance from all our dangers and afflictions.”

This Thanksgiving, in the midst of the greatest crisis since the Civil War, the “irrepressible conflict” is not between North and South, or between “free” labor and slave labor, but between the working class and the capitalist class—not just in the United States, but on a global scale.

The “cause of freedom and humanity” will not, and cannot, be advanced within the framework of capitalism. Only the independent intervention of the working class, in revolutionary opposition to all capitalist parties and the profit system they represent, can resolve the myriad problems that face humanity.

This will be done through the expropriation of the corporate oligarchy and the reorganization of production and global society based on social need, not private gain. The future of humanity can be guaranteed only through socialist revolution.



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