



# Des Moines Mutual Aid Monthly

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## Yankee Go Home

BY COMRADE PATRICK

While the lesser demons of capital attempt to work their magic in the statehouse with HSB 666, the Great Satan itself, American Empire, has chosen to rain blood in the Middle East once again. In the midst of negotiations on February 28th, the US and the Zionist Entity (“Israel”) launched an unprovoked and dastardly attack on Iran. As is their custom, they began by murdering hundreds of children at a school in Southern Iran, and martyred Ayatollah Khamenei, who remained, openly, at his home with his wife under explicit threat of assassination.

The Great Satan has bitten off more than it can chew this time. It appears that the Trump administration believed that it could cow Iran with decapitation as it did Venezuela. This was not the case. The Islamic Republic boasts a singular combination of naturally defensible borders along a strategic chokepoint, plus a deep state with 50 years of experience in resisting American imperialism. The US and its vassals have lost numerous aircraft and have seen hundreds of Iranian missiles strike their bases.

Critically, the US, its Gulf vassals, and “Israel”, are burning through the means to down Iranian projectiles far more quickly than Iran is running out of rockets and drones. Trump imagined a war that would last days; the Revolutionary Guard prepared for a war that will last for years.

Perhaps more important, the Iranian state has demonstrated durability, despite decapitation and constant attack. It has been able to implement a long-term contingency plan to shut down the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway for oil, nitrogen, helium, and everything made with these products - which is almost everything you consume. While we have not yet seen skyrocketing gas prices in the United States (where we extract most of our own oil), the price of literally everything else is going up, and will continue to go up, over the coming months, across the globe.

The international economy and the US’ global dominance is predicated on the free flow of goods and the ability of the United States to project power and protect its allies. This war is threatening to undermine both of

these conditions. It is possible that the Iran War will become for the US what the seizure of the Suez Canal was for France and the UK: the last act of a dying empire before it slinks from the world stage.

The American public, by now very aware of its utter lack of input on US foreign policy, has been relatively quiet about this war. Trump’s adventure is nevertheless extremely unpopular among all segments, including his own base, and the Empire’s inevitable retreat will undermine the legitimacy of the state. Failure in warfare, spikes in the cost of living, and an unpopular regime are necessary (though not sufficient) conditions for regime change, in the US as much as anywhere else. Revolutionaries in the imperial core desire the defeat of their own nation and the victory of third-world resistance. We must redouble our agitation not only against Trump but the system which produced him. We are humbled by the heroism of the Iranian people and are duty-bound to ensure that their sacrifices bring lasting peace, that we do our part to exorcise the Great Satan from this planet. ■

## The Number of the Beast

BY COMRADE RICKY P

In January, Republicans in the Iowa House introduced a law that would enact a “three-strikes” policy: anyone convicted of three felonies (or certain misdemeanors) would be subject to a mandatory 20-year prison sentence. The law would put thousands of Iowans one minor conviction away from decades behind bars. Experts calculate that the proposed law would double Iowa’s prison population in ten years and cost the state, which is apparently too broke to increase education funding, an additional \$165 million per year. Disdaining to conceal their aims, its authors named this monstrosity **HSB 666**.

Any argument that this law will increase public safety can be laughed away. California enacted a similar policy in the 1990s, only for voters to strike it down in a referendum after violent crime levels stayed the same and state deficits ballooned. Nor is there really any argument for a ‘just retribution’: **666** necessarily fits a 20-year punishment to a long list of wholly disparate crimes.

Instead, **666** is intended to expand the carceral capacity of the capitalist state. Prison under capital has always

been a warehouse for what is deemed the surplus population, that (usually colonized, black and brown) section of the working class which cannot be permanently employed (without upward pressure on wages). This semi-permanently section is restive and is correctly perceived as potentially dangerous to the ruling class. Prescient capitalist administrators recognize that continued automation, including that brought on by so-called artificial intelligence, is likely to increase unemployment. Those newly unemployed in the next few decades will add to the ranks of the restive poor, and the capitalists behind **666** believe that half a dozen new prisons must be built to contain the threat they represent.

As always, the ruling class is not united in this vision, and the opposition within the statehouse to **666** comes from Republicans who oppose all government spending and a few Democrats can not (yet) bring themselves to vote for the measure. The only principled opposition to the bill so far are the efforts of a nascent Des Moines subset of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party, who have led community meetings and calls against the bill. As abolitionists in firm support of black liberation, we will be watching the progress of **666** and summon whatever opposition we can against it. ■





## DES MOINES MUTUAL AID

# Des Moines Mutual Aid Points of Unity:

**O** We believe in working shoulder to shoulder and standing in solidarity with all oppressed communities. We ourselves are oppressed, and our mutual aid work is a fight for our collective liberation. We do not believe in a top-down model of charity. Instead, we contrast our efforts at horizontal mutual aid, the fostering of mutually beneficial relationships and communities, to dehumanizing and colonizing charity.

**1** We believe in community autonomy. We believe that the communities we live and organize in have been largely excluded from state social services, but intensely surveilled and policed by the state repressive apparatus. Capitalism is fundamentally unable to meet people's needs. We want to build self-sustaining communities that are independent of the capitalist state, both materially and ideologically, and can resist its repression.

**2** We are police and prison abolitionists. Abolition and the mutual aid that we practice are inextricably linked. We don't rely on capitalist institutions or the police to do our work. We believe in building strong and resilient communities which make police obsolete, including community systems of accountability and crisis intervention.

**3** We work to raise the political consciousness of our communities. Part of political education is connecting people's lived experiences to a broader political perspective. Another component is working to ensure that people can meet their basic needs. It is difficult to organize for future liberation when someone is entrenched in day-to-day struggle.

**4** We have open disagreements with each other about ideas and practices. We believe there is no formula for resolving our ideological differences other than working towards our common aims, engaging with each other in a comradely manner, and respecting one another, whether or not we can hash out disagreements in the process.

**5** We are a revolutionary organization. We are united in a basic agreement that the ultimate goal of revolution is the abolition of the state and of social classes, and that the state's institutions are not a means to achieving that end. We are against participation in electoral politics, because we are for the development of mutual aid as an alternative and widespread institution. ■



## Nebraska's Little St. James

BY COMRADE ASH WILMARTH

**J**ust after dawn broke on the morning of September 5th, 1982, a 12-year old paperboy left his house in West Des Moines to start his route. He picked up his stack of Sunday's Des Moines Register and reportedly stopped to talk to a man in a blue Ford on 42nd Street. He was never seen again. Johnny Gosch's disappearance marked the beginning of a decade of fear for parents in the metro. Two other paperboys vanished from Des Moines' streets in the next five years. While their faces began appearing on milk cartons across the country, parents stopped letting children play outside the yard and residents began locking their front doors for the first time.

There is reason to believe that these disappearances were not isolated tragedies. While children were being plucked off of the streets in Des Moines, Omaha was being racked by its own scandal involving children. A routine financial audit of Omaha's Franklin Credit Union in 1988 resulted in the partial exposure of a child prostitution ring

centered around Lawrence King, a prominent Nebraska Republican politician. This ring bears an obvious resemblance to that run by Jeffery Epstein: children were trafficked from foster homes and the Boy's Town orphanage and provided to elites at exclusive parties in Omaha and Washington, D.C., which were videotaped for blackmail purposes. Officials from both the local and national Republican party were implicated. The scandal threatened to boil over until the lead state investigator in the case died in a mysterious plane crash in 1990. The Nebraska State Patrol and FBI then neatly wrapped up the case announcing that the dozens of victims who made allegations against King and other elites were simply participating in what they called "a carefully crafted hoax".

The only victim of the Franklin Ring to receive anything like justice was Paul Bonacci, who won a 1999 civil suit against the ring's leader, Lawrence King, for sexual and physical abuse committed between 1980 and 1988. Bonacci also reported to investigators that Johnny

Gosch was abducted by members of the same cabal of child traffickers that abused him. His testimony led Gosch's mother to file a lawsuit against the former police chief of West Des Moines for misconduct in her son's case.

Reading about the DOJ's disclosure of "the Epstein Files" is revolting, but that disgust is inevitably tempered in Des Moines by the fact that the elites named are concentrated on the East and West coasts, their crimes committed in places removed from us by thousands of miles. Remembering the Franklin Ring bridges that distance. Not only are there more Jeffery Epsteins, more blackmail rings out there, some of them have tendrils reaching into your backyard. The same people and organizations who evict the homeless from their camps, tear gassed you in 2020, and obliterate trans rights from the statehouse helped cover up the Franklin Ring. Some likely participated in it. You need not fly to Little St. James to find the depravity which cements elite solidarity. It can be found at your local police station and City Hall. ■

## Hold Your Ground

BY COMRADE PATRICK

**T**he state which occupies this country has been an entity worthy only of destruction since its inception. The natives it murdered and black people it enslaved harbored no illusions about this fact, and the horror white Americans have begun to feel about their country since Trump's second election is simply a late recognition of that reality. America is not worse now than it was when the 7th Cavalry murdered women and children at Wounded Knee in 1890, nor than when generations of black people were enslaved. Instead, generations of freedom fighters have died to make it better in the intervening decades.

What has changed since Trump's election is that the American empire is no longer pretending to be a liberal democratic one, and is embracing with increasing openness its roots in slavery and its practice of genocide. Some liberal "left" Americans have observed this development and come to the conclusion that they must flee to a safer haven, that they are the immediate victims of the Trump regime. They witness the systematic rounding up of colonized people and decide that it is they, the citizen, who should consider flight! These people fundamentally misunderstand their position in relation to reality. It is as though they believe their situation to be analogous to that of antebellum escaped slaves, when it is in fact their duty to man the Underground Railroad, to be forming networks of resistance and creating areas of refuge. Imagine if William Garrison or Elijah Lovejoy, much less Harriet Tubman, had ended their antislavery screeds by announcing that they were leaving the enslaved in their predicament and personally fleeing to Canada!

There is no liberation to be found in the settler vassal state of Canada, nor Starmer's UK or any European state, many of whose governments contain right-wing elements as reactionary as those now ruling the US (Mexico City does not want you to come gentrify it, either). It is unclear if these places, which are subordinate to the US militarily and economically, will even provide refuge. There is no advantage to be gained by running away from Trump and imagining that you can resist better somewhere else. The working class may be international, but you are not, and you are better off organizing with your neighbors and people with whom you have had relationships for years than running away as an individual.

The American state and the dominant culture is abominable, but it has always existed along with another America, one in which runaway slaves and rebellious natives formed maroon communities; where dissident white southerners hung Confederate recruiters; where striking workers formed rebel armies against the government. This is the tradition of which we are inheritors. The only possible result of cowardice and flight is shame. There is liberation to be found, if we are brave enough to fight for it, in the ashes of the American empire.

John Brown's last words are often remembered as: "the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood", words as true today as they were in 1859. But these were only the last words he is known to have put down in writing: Brown left us with another epitaph, in deeds as well as word. On the wagon taking him to the gallows, he is reported to have looked upon the hills of Virginia and remarked, "This is a beautiful country." ■

*In Loving Memory of Comrades KT and Gary*