



# Des Moines Mutual Aid Monthly

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## The City Wants to Bulldoze Your Home, Too

BY COMRADE PATRICK

Despite a budget crisis, the City of Des Moines wrote a \$200,000 check to “cbz LLC”, which is apparently the name of a legitimate business, for housing development consulting. The “findings” of this company are doubtless more indicative of local developer interests than any objective research done: cbz told the City that it needs to destroy cheap housing for workers and build McMansions.

The study took particular aim at small houses in Des Moines’ streetcar suburbs and post-WW2 single-family homes on the South and East side, and the Drake and Merle Hay neighborhoods — really, anywhere affordable housing is to be found. 45,000 houses in these neighborhoods would be “voluntarily” sold to the City under cbz’s proposal, bulldozed, and replaced with housing for yuppies. The cost for this planned mass displacement is enormous, at \$15-20 million per block gentrified. Not outlined in the study is where the displaced homeowners would go, nor why the existence of 900-square foot homes poses a problem for anyone who doesn’t own a property development company.

This study, and the exorbitant price paid for it, are a shameless display of the City’s hatred for anyone who doesn’t draw a six-figure salary or own a small business. No longer content to attack people without homes, the government is now threatening to attack poor people lucky enough to have them. The housing crisis in Des Moines is already cresting, with hundreds more homeless this year than last, but the government’s chief concern, as ever, is the use of public resources to enrich the local capitalist class. The capitalists envision a city full of McMansions and the liquidation of small houses and homeless people. We will fight for a city with housing for all — and the liquidation of the capitalist class. ■

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## Free Mahmoud Khalil, Political Prisoner

*“My arrest was a direct consequence of exercising my right to free speech as I advocated for a free Palestine and an end to the genocide in Gaza [...] it is our moral imperative to persist in the struggle for their complete freedom.” — Mahmoud Khalil*

BY COMRADE BETSY

Pro-Palestinian activist Mahmoud Khalil was detained by immigration authorities on March 8th for his role organizing student protests at Columbia University. He is a lawful full-time resident of the United States, and his pregnant wife is a citizen. A video of his arrest shows him abducted by chubby plain-clothes pigs wearing Marvel t-shirts. He was sent from New York to a detention center in Louisiana in an attempt to separate him from legal representation and put him in a more conservative court.

The fascist Trump-Musk administration is using executive orders to expel legal residents that have committed no crime, without due process or legal recourse. Even the pretence of criminality here is discarded; they are flagrantly targeting their political enemies

on the Left. Khalil, a person of Palestinian descent, has been wrongfully declared an ally of “terroristic groups” for demanding his university divest from Israel and speaking out against the ongoing genocide of his people.

By attempting to deport a legal immigrant without criminal charges, the administration is flexing their power with a bold violation of the First and Fifth Amendments, which protect free speech, due process, and unwarranted detention. Even the most liberal of mainstream media is refusing to stand up for him, and even worse, is muddying the waters by conflating criticism of Israel with antisemitism.

Now more than ever, it’s imperative to speak out against the arrest of Mahmoud, the ongoing genocide in Palestine, and the media’s complicity in both. ■





# A Baseline for Political Endorsement

*It could be yours, too...*

BY COMRADE JENOTS

If you are someone still waiting for politicians to solve your problems for you, here are some conditions you might consider adopting before handing out your support. Anyone from the president to a lowly city councilor must provide all of the following:

**1 A detailed plan for achieving an outcome.** Promises and hope are out, and meaningless insults to our intelligence. Plans to achieve an outcome that factor in obstacles and oppositional strategies are in. Without winning strategies that can be explained loud and clear, hopes for “progress” are as useful as hopes for utopia — in which case I’d rather put my eggs in the latter basket.

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**2 Accountability for failure.** What happens if a promise isn’t kept? At minimum, no support ever again for that candidate. “Trying” is for school children, not for people who decide our fates. A politician who “does their best” does not have a strategy. There are ways to win what we need: above all, the withholding of labor and the strike. We should support people who will actually use them, not people who kneel in congress and do interpretive dance at the capitol.

**3 A complete and permanent end to all talk of “at least I’m not the other guy”.** This is always kettle logic: nobody with a plan and a program talks this way. The only response to this is “fuck you, I’d prefer your enemy then.”

**4 An explanation of one’s entitlement to enthusiasm.** If a bid for office consumes energy and enthusiasm, it has to explain why it has pulled that attention and effort away from the alternatives. Most of what works has yet to be discovered. Those who should be at work discovering it and trying new things are instead knocking doors. Thus, to steal away this energy is to incur a debt. ■

# Don’t Help Your Stuttering Enemy

BY COMRADE CRIXUS

Responding to Trump’s address to congress, the Democrats trotted out a former CIA analyst, who complained that Trump was failing to live up to the glorious example of Ronald Reagan. We are informed that Reagan, a death squad director and mass imprisonment champion, would have been “rolling in his grave” had he seen Trump’s Ukraine policy. We must hope that the Democrats continue this line of “attack” — and there are reasons to think it will continue.

The appeal to American “moderates” has been demonstrated repeatedly to be a failing electoral strategy. Recently, Kamala severely underperformed down-ballot candidates including many progressives who beat Trump-aligned candidates. This is not just due to Biden administration messes that she was associated with. Their campaign was built around appealing to moderates and Republicans who didn’t like Trump: hostility to those opposed to genocide in Palestine, campaign stops with Liz Cheney, seeking an alliance with Nikki Haley, embracing an anti-migrant policy equal to the viciousness of anything Trump did.

Recently, a centrist Democrat group hosted a retreat where they created a five-point plan committing further to this strategy. “Resistance to Trump” means shifting even further to the right to compete for a larger portion of the mass of human garbage commonly referred to as the moderate American electorate.

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This strategy, and the commitment they seem to have to it, makes me wonder if the party is forgetting its role. The Democrats exist as a black hole for any genuine opposition to the ruling class. Well-meaning progressives and other misguided people feel obligated to vote for them given the appearance of difference with the Republicans. If the Democrats continue to obliterate this falsehood of their own accord, they may force some to spend their energy elsewhere. The Democrats are smashing their face with a hammer. Instead of helping, we should cheer. ■



# Collapsing the Gate: Lucasville

BY COMRADE CRIXUS

American history is a series of atrocities and mass murderers thinly painted over. Anyone with even a passing interest in history knows this. Our most respected figures like Washington, Jackson, Reagan, Sherman, and Lincoln are all participants in a general, yet-to-be-avenged crusade against the global masses. Given the American penchant for celebrating such figures, it is unsurprising that true heroes are made sterile in memory, or outright forgotten. The more bourgeois American history demonizes someone, the more likely they are to have contributed to the liberatory heritage Communists should celebrate. In that spirit, the Lucasville prison uprising should be honored.

From April 11th to 21st 1993, 400 prisoners at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility staged a rebellion against horrific conditions common to American prisons. These included forced bunking between men of different races in order to further division through violent conflict, forced tuberculosis testing which violated Muslim restrictions, beatings, collaboration between white prisoners and the white prison guards, etc. After killing snitches and taking guards hostage, the white and black prisoners came together in unity, with graffiti found afterward saying “convict race”.

Aryan Brotherhood, black Muslims, and Gangster Disciples collaborated on demands. A guard was eventually executed due to a lack of good faith negotiation by the state. During the state’s investigation, they pinned the killing on the five identified leaders, despite a serious lack of evidence. Betrayed by the inmate who had likely executed the guard against their wishes,

the Lucasville Five remain on death row to this day.

George Skatzes, Keith Lamar, Bomani Shakur, Siddique Abdullah Hasan, and Jason Robb all played roles in a courageous act of rebellion, and stand on death row ready to pay the American price for resistance to American life. ■



# Stating the Obvious

BY COMRADE PATRICK

Our coverage of the City’s budget crisis has focused on the fact that the few decent things the government does are being cut in order to fund the police. We should also consider the proximate cause of the forced spending cuts: the state government’s decision to cap local property taxes, the chief source of municipal funding. The reason for this decision is predictable: Republicans want to appease their constituency of wealthy suburbanites.

The legal principle which allows them to do it has more interesting implications for movement strategy.

Preemption is the fundamental legal fact of American governmental hierarchy: federal laws trump state laws, state laws trump local laws. The cabal of rabid reactionaries in Iowa’s government have made liberal use of preemption, striking down local minimum wage increases and outlawing attempts to defund police departments. Legal challenges to the state’s

authority to use preemption this way will fail, because it is the most basic legal principle underpinning government.

There are many reasons to consider dubious any attempts to ‘build power’ on the part of leftists by participating in local elections, but the fact of state preemption is the first and most obvious. Anything done on a local level: defunding the police, making housing a human right, taxing (much less expropriating) the local elite, can and will be done away with immediately by

a stroke of Kim Reynold’s pen. Acknowledging this fact is not ‘complying in advance’, it is recognizing reality. Challenging capital by winning local elections will not work. We prove nothing besides the thickness of our skulls by continuing to bang our heads against the wall with this failed strategy. Our path to power is not obvious, nor any easy road to walk, but we can be certain that it does not run through any ballot box. ■