

# MUTUAL AID MONTHLY

A Production of Des Moines Mutual Aid

October 2024

## The Pig Goes 'Oink'

*The violence of the state is most clearly on display in moments of crisis*

Comrade Jack

In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, pigs in the city of Black Mountain, North Carolina were photographed standing outside of a local grocery store, barricading the entrance to protect against potential "looters." This was not the first time - nor will it be the last time - the pigs employ violence to defend "property rights" over the well-being of their communities affected by catastrophic weather disasters (or literally anything else). No amount of desperation or misery will give the pig any feelings of empathy or convince them to do anything that resembles humility or caring for the suffering of the people.

This further demonstrates the willingness of the pig to perpetuate and accelerate the suffering of the people they claim to "protect and serve." This is the reality of the pig's duty to serve the capitalist class and their property. Both the pig and the capitalist would rather see people starve and die, while food rots and lifesaving supplies waste away behind the doors barred from the people in need. As the climate crisis accelerates and more extreme weather is certain, we must not expect the pigs to act differently when times and the people become more desperate, and more chaotic. We must anticipate that their violence will escalate like the next disasters that are sure to come.



## Why Couldn't We Stop Them?

*Quit protesting and start learning small unit tactics*

Comrade Pat

The past three Des Moines City Council meetings saw more demonstrators than any time in the body's history. Hundreds rallied against the city's declared intention to criminalize homelessness. Even the District Attorney spoke in opposition. *The Register* ran two months of liberal invective against the ordinances. How could the City withstand this onslaught of dissent?

In more civilized times, the poor might register their dissatisfaction by murdering tax collectors, seizing key positions by force, or going on strike. These actions exercise power. Modern protests are, by contrast, fundamentally communicative actions, meant to convey a message to an audience (here, the City Council) so that that audience will exercise power on the behalf of those protesting.

This sort of communicative action can be effective. Witness the recent kerfuffle involving Wooly's music hall: a politically connected neighbor complained to the City about loud music; the City considered sanctioning Wooly's; Wooly's responded by mobilizing hundreds to email the City, who immediately backed off. Why did this action work, while the far more significant protests against the houseless ordinances failed?

Wooly's is a capitalist enterprise which brings in millions. Houseless people and the concerns of local dignitaries irritate local developers and don't generate profit.

The City Council is not a body to be moved by whichever interest approaches it. It is only an instrument of the rich. It can hear communicative actions from bourgeois concerns like Wooly's; it is deaf to louder protests from the lower classes. Why should we hold signs for demons who refuse to read them? Protests are only effective for monied interests. We should stop pretending they work for the working class. They don't. *We should spend our time building power, not begging those with it to listen.*

# Early Steps in Alternatives to Bourgeois “Democracy”

*Frustrated with genocidal candidates and capital dictatorship?*

Comrade Jordan

To cast off capitalism, we all must act with purpose. Actions must be within our capability and must be effective. Successful actions that don't produce results are as consuming and potentially harmful as actions that are doomed to fail. Below are steps that I have found to be fundamental in evaluating, “what should we do?”

**1. Read Theory.** The struggle to move beyond capitalist domination has been ongoing for hundreds of years. Neglecting to study revolutionary theory and history is to accept repeating failures and the loss of progress between generations. Some recommendations to get a foothold onto theory are: *Wage Labour and Capital* (Marx); *Reform or Revolution* (Luxembourg); *The State and Revolution* (Lenin); *Where do Correct Ideas Come From?* (Mao); *Anarchism What It Really Stands For* (Goldman)

**2. Practice.** Taking action in your community (mutual aid, labor organizing, proletarian art) develops your relationships with other radicals, gives you practical experience with your local conditions, and provides an essential chance to apply and modify tactics.

**3. Embrace Empathy.** We fail when fatigue, indifference, or disdain overcomes our ability to empathize with any oppressed people. The motivation for our struggles is found in our sense of shared suffering and a communal sense of dignity and resistance.

**4. Proceed Analytically.** While empathy and morality empowers our fight for an egalitarian form of society, we must base our strategy on what will succeed. This requires rigorous study, Marxist analysis, and planning.

**5. Recognize Our Own Bases for Perspective.** We all must check our own class interests when engaging with revolutionary ideas to ensure we are not preventing ourselves from fighting for a better world.



This flyer is a production of Des Moines Mutual Aid, which is a local network of anarchists, communists, and socialists building community autonomy from capitalism and the state. Below are our points of unity - basically, the political and social outlook which binds us together.

**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.

If you want to get involved, let a volunteer know. For more information, including how to donate, visit <https://iowamutualaid.org/>.