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Just How Corrupt is DMPD?

BY COMRADE PATRICK

It is obvious for all those with eyes to see and fingers to count that Des Moines' upcoming budget deficit could easily be borne by the police department alone. The entire budget cut could come out of police salaries and still allow each pig to receive over \$100,000/year in salary and benefits, double the area's median income. That this is not even considered, that the City Manager laughed off the suggestion of a proportional trimming of all departmental budgets, that the only question for the City Council is which essential service to axe in order to preserve DMPD's budget in its entirety, is indicative of how much influence the cops have over the city government. How is it that they are able to dictate budget priorities to an ostensibly democratic body?

Abolitionists rightly focus most of their critique of police on the structural role that they play in capitalist society. Class rule cannot exist without organized violence to enforce property relations and maintain labor discipline, and police enthusiastically perform that function. The long history of police corruption, though, suggests that the discretion necessarily afforded to cops by the ruling class engenders an independent pig political agenda, expressed in both legal lobbying and mob-like criminal activity. Cops have a lot of power to do violence, and wield that power to advance their interests, both as individual pigs and as a (sub)class.

It is no wonder, then, that there is a long history of straight-up police gangs. Since at least 1970 in LA, multiple criminal gangs made up solely of Sheriff's deputies and city police have been active, committing murder, kidnapping, extortion, and dealing drugs. More recently, at least four prominent BLM organizers in St. Louis have been found dead in their vehicles between 2016 and 2018 in circumstances which strongly suggest that they were murdered by perpetrators with expertise in evading homicide forensics. Three years after Freddie Gray was murdered in Baltimore, eight police officers there were arrested and dozens more implicated in the use of a gun recovery task force as a cover for murdering, robbing, and extorting drug and gun dealers. That all of this has been widely reported—and that practically nothing has been done to combat this organized criminal activity—is a clear illustration of the political power inherent in both licit and illicit pig organizations. Any politician or federal agency trying to curb these abuses would face pushback from these gangs and the Fraternal Order of Police ranging from pig labor action to murder and extortion, carried out by men experienced in covering up their crimes.

There is no reason to believe that the police in Des Moines are one iota less criminal than their swine brethren in LA and Baltimore. To the contrary: it would be odd to assume that cops in Des Moines with the same class position, incentive structure, and general pig disposition would act differently than cops elsewhere. The fact that organized

criminality in DMPD has not been exposed is a testament to the servility of the capitalist media rather than local pigs' innocence. "Minor" scandals such as the 2014 exposure of a Des Moines cop's domestic abuse, widespread rumors of DMPD spokesman Paul Parezik's abuse of his child, and the recent expulsion of a cadet from the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy for a violent attack on a fellow student are merely the tip of an undoubtedly filthy pig iceberg.

We can reasonably speculate that local police criminality is used to advance DMPD's political interests. Their function as the enforcers of capitalist rule could well be fulfilled even with a significantly reduced budget, but this is unthinkable for this government. The majority of our local tax dollars go to these thieving pigs, and they have never taken a budget cut. The importance of their structural role and the lobbying of the Fraternal Order of Police explains some of this largesse, but we should never underestimate pigs' capacity for raw criminality, naked corruption. Cops regularly commit murder, deal drugs, extort criminals, and cover it up. DMPD is just as corrupt, criminal, and violent as any other police force. That the City Council finds ways to fund the police above all else is, no doubt, due in part to DMPD's potential for criminal violence and implicit threat posed by snarling pigs against any (ostensibly) democratic government. ■



Our Cities Budget Reflects its Priorities

BY COMRADE SCARY LARRY

Recently, news broke that the city of Des Moines is planning to make budget cuts that are likely to result in the closure of one or two of our public libraries. The excuse is that there isn't enough money due to a budget shortfall, on account of the new statewide cap on tax increases.

The new restrictions are going to require the city to make some changes and cuts, libraries being first on the chopping block is very typical. As is increasing the budget for police and fire every year, including in the new, more restrictive budget.

Right-wingers claim that libraries are "outdated" because now people have access to streaming services, ebooks, and online shopping but that still assumes a lot of privilege which many don't have and libraries do so much more. Our libraries serve as access points for food stamps, emergency housing, and other social services. They also serve as warming and cooling centers, used mainly by our unhoused community members. These resources are life-saving and serve to reduce crime. They provide real safety.

What does this say about our priorities as a city? The reality of the library is that it provides cost saving, life saving, and crime reducing services. ■

“A Fair Trial Would Have Been No Trial At All” – The Acquittal Of Angela Davis

BY SUBCOMADANTE RONNIE

On June 4th, 1972, Angela Davis was acquitted of murder and kidnapping charges in California.

Angela Davis, a cofounder of the modern abolition movement, author of *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, was a philosophy professor at UCLA at the time of the charges. The Board of Regents tried twice to have her removed from her position, first for being a member of the Communist Party, then for “inflammatory” speeches that included “repeated characterizations of the police as ‘pigs.’” Angela was active in the Black Power Movement, organizing with the Che-Lumumba Club of the Communist Party, the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, and other leftist organizations.

On August 7, 1970, 17-year old Jonathan Jackson, staged an armed ambush on a courtroom. Jonathan, who was the younger brother of Soledad Brother and *Blood in my Eye* author and Black militant revolutionary prison organizer George Jackson, took the judge hostage to trade him for the release of the political prisoners known as the Soledad Brothers, which included George. Jonathan, two accomplices, and the judge were killed by the pigs while they were in the escape vehicle.

The pig’s investigation revealed that some of the guns used in the heroic ambush were purchased by Angela and she was charged with “aggravated kidnapping and first-degree murder in the death of Judge Harold Haley” even though she was never accused of being at the courthouse. At the time these charges made Angela eligible for the death penalty.

Angela went underground and became the 3rd woman ever to be on the FBI’s Top Ten Most Wanted List. In October 1970, she was captured in New York City, although many assumed she had fled internationally as many militants did at the time. During her time in prison awaiting trial, she became an icon of Black Power, Feminism, and anti-imperialism. A large and popular “Free Angela!” movement sprung up around the world. While being held hostage waiting for trial, she wrote and edited the anthology *If They Come in The Morning: Voices of Resistance*, part biography/part analysis of the u.s. prison and judicial systems — entirely by hand — in her prison cell.

The trial began in March 1972, before an all-white jury. Angela played a large role in her defense, including doing the opening statement which could not be crossexamined by the state. The crux of the defense’s argument was that she owned the guns for

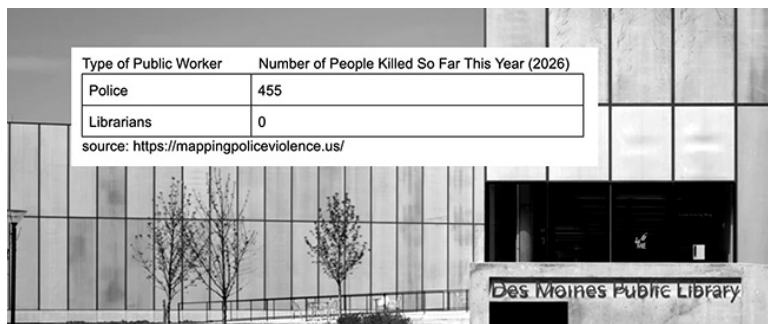


the defense of the Soledad Brothers Defense Committee Headquarters, but had no idea what Jonathan was planning. The pigs argued that because of an alleged romantic relationship between George and Angela, she helped conspire the ambush to break him out of prison and, apparently, destroy the united states of america.

It took the all-white jury just thirteen hours to return a Not Guilty verdict and Angela walked free. Then-California Governor Ronald Regan declared that Davis would never teach in California again. She was immediately hired by San Francisco State University.

In the years since, she has published more books and many articles, has been a featured speaker at countless events, and cofounded the vibrant modern abolition movement that this collective carries on the tradition of today. ■

Budgeting for Public Safety



BY SUBCOMANDANTE BIBLIOTECARÍA

“Public Safety” is the sacred ideal that politicians use to justify continual growth of prisons and policing. Recently, “public safety” was cited by Des Moines City Manager Scott Sanders to excuse DMPD from taking proportional budget cuts resulting from the new property tax rules sent down from above by the Oppressors That Be in the state legislature. If the concept of public safety is taken at face value as a legitimate goal to direct budgetary decisions, a clear misinterpretation of who is included in the “public” becomes evident. The capitalist government tells us that “Public Safety” is a universal value. The results of decisions made in the name of increasing public safety reveal that “public” safety in class society is in fact not public or universal at all: it is safety for capitalist interests and death for the lower classes.

The examples are numerous: When members of the “public” are at risk of severe injury or death because city workers threw their belongings in a dumpster, is safety created? When members of the “public” are harassed and thrown in cages while trying to make ends meet without a dollar to their name, who benefits? When people are racially profiled, pulled over, searched, and detained without cause, does the “public” become safer? All of these actions are funded by the City under the guise of “public safety,” yet they threaten (and oftentimes take) the lives of members of the public. Meanwhile the rights of property owners to continue making profits is protected and white supremacist pig culture is validated.

What does truly universal public safety actually look like? Imagine institutions that serve as warming and cooling centers in extreme temperatures, places that connect people to resources that allow them to both survive and thrive, where they meet fellow community members and work together towards common goals, share skills, and build genuine connections with other human beings that do not require some sort of monetary transaction. Believe it or not, a place like this already exists in the public libraries (our last third spaces!). Currently,

public libraries in Des Moines are facing a potential multi million dollar budget cut that could eliminate services, hours, jobs, and even entire library branches. Over the years, the library budget has consistently been cut at higher proportions compared to other departments due to the unwillingness of politicians to prioritize life-affirming institutions over those that only cause more death and destruction.

Despite the rhetoric, those in charge could really care less about public safety. Time and again, they have prioritized the safety of those in power and the property they possess over the livelihoods of the public. The motive to do this stems from a variety of sources, be it bribes from pig unions and property developers or personal interests as small business tyrants. Despite any good intentions held by individuals in positions of power, the role of the city council and any other decision-making body in this colonial empire is and always has been to ensure that this hierarchy of priorities remains intact by any means necessary. If we truly want to create public safety, we must build more spaces that don’t rely on capitalist politicians to be sustained and support the ones that already exist before they are cut in the name of the vital service that they provide. ■

DART Routes Slashed by Suburbs and Zionists

BY COMRADE RICKY P

June 14th will see the culmination of a years-long attack on public transportation in the metro. DART will cut the vast majority of its routes, reducing the number of bus lines from 27 to just 11. Hundreds of people who rely on public transit will see their stops eliminated. Many will have to walk extra blocks or miles to catch the bus. DART’s service, already substandard and unreliable, will thus become totally unusable for many.

Public transit requires significant up-front investment in order to work: most people will ride the bus as a primary means of transit only if it is reliable, stops close to them and their destination, and runs both early and late. If commuters cannot count on mass transit to get them where they need to be, when they need to be there, they will drive instead, and the public transit system cannot use money raised from bus fares to sustain itself or grow.

This is exactly the situation DART was in at the start of the decade: a lack of investment by the capitalist government meant poor, unreliable service, compelling most commuters to use their cars. Only those who had no other means rode the bus. Discontent to spare even a small amount of money to

ensure that people without cars can travel, a consortium of the local ruling classes pounced on DART’s weakness to cut its services further. The small-business elites who govern West Des Moines, Urbandale, Windsor Heights, Johnson, Altoona and Bondurant rebelled against the tyranny of allowing poor people meager mobility in early 2024. These “cities” threatened to cut all of their funding if DART didn’t simultaneously reduce its budget and prioritize the suburbs. Grimes and Pleasant Hill actually pulled out of public transit funding agreements in late 2024 and early 2025 respectively, and DART was forced to capitulate.

Unsure how to effectively manage savagery, DART’s leadership turned to people who are: Israeli tech freaks. They paid Via, an Israeli tech firm with close ties to the genocidal Zionist Entity \$35,000 to consult them on how to “restructure”. Unsurprisingly, Via informed them that they needed to cut its bus routes and give ride-share apps money. Despite public protests, this is exactly what DART did. Poor people will begin feeling the full effects of the Suburbanite-Zionist mutilation of Des Moines’ public transit in two weeks. To all those who will be left without transit because of these cuts, we can offer nothing but our sympathy. To those who conspired to make the cuts, we extend nothing but our contempt. ■