

# MUTUAL AID MONTHLY

A Production of Des Moines Mutual Aid

January 2025



## Against Community, For Alienation!

*A book review of Todd McGowan's latest*

Comrade Jenots

The hegemonic belief within the left is that alienation is to be combated - that the future, truly human society is one in which alienation has been wholesale eradicated or relegated to minor life inconveniences.

McGowan's outlook, inspired by Hegel and Freud, takes alienation to be a constitutive part of human life. It isn't something to be cured, it is what makes us human. The great tragedies of human society result from attempts to paper over this by putting forward identities that obscure this basic alienation: whiteness, manhood, and other symbolic communities. Moreover, capitalism did not invent alienation - it only revealed and exacerbated it.

Leftist communities rest on the same principle: denial of the fundamental alienation in every individual. How can we instead come together as alienated individuals? Against the community and its cure-all affirmations of identity, McGowan defends the misunderstood notion of the public. Take a public bus (as opposed to a charter bus for a group of young men on their way to Bible camp). We can encounter anyone - and we each have an equal entitlement to it. Its norms are completely different from those of the charter bus.

Communities purport to give their members a place, as well as expectations, at the expense of those they exclude. As a result, they produce the anxiety of their own sustainment - whence the cruelty done in their name all throughout history. The public does not even pretend to be a home to any of us, and as a result excludes nobody. In this sense, it has a (challenging and unsure) place for us all, even for our anti-immigrant neighbor. The ultimate challenge is to coherently formulate politics on the basis of this public.

## Preemptive Suffering, American Hope

*The spectre of global war haunts*

Comrade Crixus

The fall of Bashar al-Assad in Syria has raised many questions, the most obvious being: What does this mean for the future American foreign policy given other significant recent developments? Hezbollah recuperating, Syria falling to American backed jihadists, effective Zionist annexation of parts of Syria, Iranian timidity in the face of Zionist attacks add up to an opportunity for the servants of American plunder to strike at its greatest regional opponent: Iran.

The world division among imperialist powers dating back to the late 19th century means the globalization of crisis. To begin to understand future American-Israeli aggression against Iran, we must note future American conflict with China. Suffice to say that America and China compete over plundering nations, especially over natural resources like mineral wealth. This, combined with China's economic ascent has our ruling class feeling vulnerable. For a decade, established American imperialism and rising Chinese imperialism have engaged in saber rattling from Taiwan to the South China Sea. American trade policies started by Trump and continued by Biden constitute economic war against China, and China's recent ban on exporting certain rare earths to the US due to their potential for military use.

The conditions which created WWI are developing again today. We should not conclude that American war mongers seek a conflict with Iran and China simultaneously. Relative Iranian weakness, the likelihood that they will seek to develop nuclear weapons in response to recent events, and the American public's obvious disdain for distant poor people demonstrated by the apathy to genocide in Gaza have given American hyenas in the State Department the perfect chance to endorse further Zionist aggression. The groundwork for future world war is being laid. The chance to secure the Iranian front before the war even starts will be difficult to resist.





## The Winter Breaks Dark

*The government wants people to freeze to death*

Comrade Pat

The local government exposed itself as an open servant of developer and landlord interests this September when it passed new anti-homeless laws. Officially, the City has not yet implemented these new policies.

That does not mean it hasn't stepped up its war on the poor. In the fall and early winter, the City changed the way they enforce laws which stood before the new ordinances passed. In previous years, the government would sweep camps once every couple of months, usually in the spring, summer, fall, and early winter. In October, they began 'double-posting' camps, meaning that they would evict a camp and immediately begin new eviction proceedings in the same area, with the obvious intention of making camping impossible there. The City has also extended the time frame in which the evictions themselves take place, so that government bulldozers clear a camp, and then return a week later under the pretext of doing the same eviction (without initiating new legal proceedings). Campers who return may lose all of their belongings twice in the same week.

The City office in charge of handling eviction appeals has also ignored one of our appeal requests and evicted campers without any notice, stealing everything they own. Upon our demands for explanation, the sneering bureaucrat Dalton Jacobus replied that the appeal "was neither approved or denied". Recently, DMPD pig-dogs have threatened to arrest campers who resist evictions, though we have not yet heard reports of actual arrests. Dozens of heaters and tanks of propane DSM Mutual Aid has distributed have been taken from campers by these foul pigs, leaving campers defenseless against the cold. The blood of anyone who freezes to death this winter is on the hands of this capitalist government.

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/>.

# ASSASSINATION BONUS!

## Trepov and Thompson

*What can past assassinations tell us about this one?*

Comrade Crixus

In January 1878, Russian revolutionary Vera Zasulich shot and wounded a general of the Tsarist regime, Fyodor Trepov. This act was celebrated in the Russian Empire as a justified response to his treatment of political prisoners. Trepovs and their like are not discarded relics of the 19th century, nor do they always declare their despicable purpose with a military uniform. Ours are parasites of many kinds, including those who batten at our sickness. One of them was Iowa native Brian Thompson.

This counterblow was delivered in the early hours of December 4th in New York. Since Luigi's arrest, a manifesto has been leaked indicating his actions were taken in vengeance against plague profiteers. We should critique the official story, but it is too early for confident conjecture.

This action is unsurprising given the known suffering caused by the health industry. The positive response is a surprise. Acknowledging the responsibility borne by a CEO for the legion of deaths caused by profit seeking healthcare is a rare indication of American acuity. Of course we need revolutionary organization to do something with this. Leaving the discussion of massive obstacles to creating this organization for another time, we should look at ruling class action following this. Luigi was escorted off a helicopter by the mayor of New York, accompanied by the NYPD commissioner and dozens of pigs. The New York Times had a CEO write an op-ed declaring Thompson to be a "working class hero"! More concern has been shown for this CEO than for school shooting victims. More important than whatever fear was instilled in sections of the ruling class, their blunderous, self-righteous response to this indicates ruling class misjudgement of growing contradiction. Such misjudgement over time has led to far more revolutionary action than a simple assassination.



## Prophets of the Unconscious

*The collective unconscious is expressed in politics*

Comrade Cobey

In "The Red Book" by Carl Jung, he cites his own essay "the Relations Between the I and the Unconscious" in which "Jung refers to the destructive and anarchic aspects that are constellated in societies being enacted by prophetically inclined individuals through spectacular crimes such as regicide".

This phenomena is recognizable to us all, with the rise of political violence against the ruling class regardless of the perpetrators general political positions. The necessity of class solidarity seems to live in the unconscious. It's Obvious that even without general class consciousness we will see more and more violent retaliation by these "prophets", these signalers of the end of the robber-barons' reign. This unconscious personal approach is perfectly displayed in the form of assassin Luigi Mangione.. As the system becomes more out of balance the results will continue to be on full display in the violent actions of those confused by fantasies that no longer match reality (a common theme for the basis of mental illness in Jung's work.).

As long as people are exploited, regardless of the individual's understanding of the system abusing them, there will be "prophets" of the struggle ahead, angry manifestations of the collective unconscious like Luigi Mangione. Hopefully few such unconscious apparitions will be needed before the message is clear and we all absorb it. Judging by their reaction to Brian Thompson's assassination, the ruling class is now very aware of the message sent.

Lone wolf action is exciting, it can be inspiring, but a new world won't be built by individual action. If we want real systemic changes, we need organization, infrastructure, and consciousness. I hope our prophets' messages get through. I have a feeling more are coming.

Reflections on Luigi

This revenge is respectable, victory is paramount

Comrade Jordan

The alleged assassin of Brian Thompson comes from a different class than many expected. Luigi Mangione was coming out of the launch pad of privilege. Oppression, struggle, and scarcity were mere abstract concepts to him. Based on the elite schools he attended and the property holdings of his family, his elders worked to reinforce this view, guiding his perceptions towards careers in the corporate world.

The only exception to Luigi’s insulation from the world is a lifetime health condition. He has serious, debilitating pain. His class privileges were not sufficient to solve his problem with healthcare. This is different than all other material problems which are solved for the wealthy: housing, healthy food, education, autonomy, etc. The increasingly visible failure of the imperial core to provide basic health services to its labor aristocracy is a crack in the armor. The potential of this crack is limited, but deserves further analysis for potential agitation and destabilization before it can be patched.

Luigi did not take his experience and extrapolate to struggles of others generally - particularly outside of the very specific exploitation of the health insurance industry. He leaned further into the hyper-individualism and exceptionalism in which he was reportedly ideologically trained. He believes he was the “first to face [health insurance] with a brutal honesty.” He reacted emotionally and with vengeance.

Luigi’s alleged action did not contribute to permanent change. An assassintion is cathartic and deserved. However, because it was singular and random, it didn’t significantly hurt capitalism, for profit health insurance, or even the company. Spontaneous, lone-wolf-style actions are generally politically and strategically unsound. Anyone aspiring to become true class traitors to the working aristocracy must commit fully and without reservation to solidarity with all other struggles and organize to bring the whole empire down.



T R E P O V P G F C R L  
S M S P W G G P O A B E  
T U I G I U L Z N R C T  
E N E B T H R A G L M S  
H I C N F H I H A J G O  
P T T H O R O I R U I H  
O E Z V B I M M R N B M  
R D H Y T D G E P G H C  
P N H W E V G N V S P D  
E S E N J I L K A I O O  
A I I E C N V L N M I N  
O E B I A L T O O N A A  
D Q D E S S E R P E R L  
M E H C I L U S A Z Y D  
D E A T H P A N E L Z S

altoona - brian - carl jung  
claim denied - death panel  
hostel - luigi - mangione - mcdonalds  
prophets - regicide - repressed  
thompson - trepov - united - zasulich

