

MUTUAL AID MONTHLY

A Production of Des Moines Mutual Aid

May 2023



Remember the Martyrs, Celebrate May Day

International Worker's Day is the true labor holiday
Subcommandante Jade

The first of May is marked by a celebration of International Workers Day, or May Day, for millions of people around the world. Most don't observe the holiday here, though, because the amerikkkan government established Labor Day in September as an alternative to International Worker's Day, an attempt to break international solidarity and erase our radical labor history.

The origin of May Day is the Haymarket Massacre in 1886. A general strike to shorten the workday from 14 to 8 hours commenced May 1st in Chicago's Haymarket Square with fifty thousand participants. On May 3rd, cops fired into the crowd, murdering 6 strikers. A bomb was thrown, and the state used it as justification for sentencing 7 anarchist union organizers to death (4 were eventually killed, 1 committed suicide in jail) and launching a crackdown against radical unions and other left wing organizations. The amerikkkan government does not want to remember this incident, which is why we have Labor Day in September (They are joined in this reactionary "celebration" by fellow settler colonies, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan). The labor movements of the rest of the world, then and now, sided with the Haymarket Martyrs and honor their sacrifices on May 1st to this day.

The Haymarket Affair pushed forward the fight for the eight hour workday, and after decades of more radical union action, the labor movement eventually won us the weekend and overtime pay in 1938. Today, May Day is a day of remembrance and appreciation for the martyrs of class war and a celebration of all those who fight for a world where labor is entitled to all it produces.

DSM Policy on Houseless Crisis: 'Eliminate All Signs There is One'

Comrade Jake

Last winter in subzero temps, campers that we frequently visit were greeted with a sign that said they must find a new home or face prosecution. This is a common theme for the camps we visit around the city. People going through traumatic life experiences end up on the street. They apply for housing and if lucky enough to check all the boxes, they get on a waiting list for several years before something opens up.

Meanwhile, the city's go-to solution is sending everyone to CISS (the downtown shelter), which is often described to be akin to a prison. Additionally, there is a 90 day time limit before you're kicked out and you can be banned for life on the whims of an angry staff member.

The solution to this issue is simple, use housing for people, not profits. But this isn't possible under a capitalist system. A survey reported by the DSM Register in April 2023 found there were around 644 homeless people on a given night. Simultaneously, a quick search on Apartment.com nets over 2,000 available rental units.

It would be far cheaper for the city to pay rent for people experiencing houselessness, rather than destroying and criminalizing camps. As soon as one camp is bulldozed, people move back in and the cycle repeats. Governments under capitalism will not fix this, because they work for capitalists, aka landlords and bosses. Brutalizing those who fall to the margins is an effective way to keep people obedient while the rich exploit us.



Capitalism Has Failed Us

Despite promising freedom, capitalism subjects us to the tyranny of the workplace and exploitation.

Isla Scott

Capitalism has failed us.

It promises us freedom but only oppresses, it leaves us broken, starving on the streets only for another capitalist to pick us up and exploit us again.

To understand how we have gotten to this point, we must first understand capitalism. Its main characteristics are the private ownership of the means of production (factories and workplaces), within the context of a market economy. Capitalism rose to prominence in the 18th century, replacing feudalism. With it came the rise of two new classes, the working class and the capitalist class. The working class sells their labor power to the capitalist class for money, lest they be forced into appalling conditions. However, the working class is affected more by capitalism than just selling their labor power, they are exploited by the capitalist class.

Take, for example, the Heavenly Pizza store in Ohio, where the owner announced that for one day, the store's profits would be paid out to the workers themselves. On July 9th, 2021, the workers were paid 78 dollars an hour. How? Simply put, they were paid the full value of their labor. The store gave all the money produced to the workers, the very same money, the very same value that was created by the workers.

So now we realize capitalism has not liberated us, and contains only one freedom: the freedom to be exploited at work or live on the street.



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.

0. 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/>.