

MUTUAL AID MONTHLY

A Production of Des Moines Mutual Aid

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“The Sound Before the Fury”:

The Attica Revolt, Abolition, Reaction

Comrade Patrick

We are men! We are not beasts, and we do not intend to be beaten or driven as such...

-Attica Inmate's Declaration, 1971

September 9th marks the 52nd anniversary of the inmate uprising at Attica State Penitentiary in New York. On that day hundreds of incarcerated people sick of beatings, confinement to tiny cells, inadequate healthcare and general abuse overwhelmed the guards by force and took over the prison.

Often referred to as an ugly riot by capitalist historians, prisoners actually established a well-organized commune once in control. An elected committee communicated with the press and issued demands for humane treatment as well civil and labor rights. Racial divisions maintained by the guards dissolved in the wave of solidarity: a NYT reporter toured the commune and remarked it as “the first place I have ever seen where there was no racism.”

The state reacted with predictable violence. On September 13th, NY State troopers and other snarling pigs assaulted the prison, shooting into the yard and murdering 33 prisoners and 9 guards held hostage. Echoing the punishment of restive slaves in the South, the survivors were sexually humiliated and tortured.

This echo is no coincidence. America's prisons function as a warehouse for colonized populations and the poor who cannot be integrated into capitalism due to structural unemployment and are a mechanism to keep people on the margins but ‘free’ in line. We are prison abolitionists today because we recognize that the prison system functions not to keep us safe but to maintain the capitalist order. The martyrs of Attica point toward the possibility of liberation from this order and reminds us of the brutality the capitalists will use to maintain it.

Remember Attica!

The Accelerating Climate Crisis Brings Pain and Revolutionary Potential

Comrade Jake

Record-shattering wildfires, disappearing ice caps, boiling oceans, mass death, it's all happening now and we're just getting started. At the current rate, we're looking at a billion climate refugees. The capitalist state looks at this as an opportunity. It means they can feed the military-prison-police industrial machine and use racism to continue pitting the multi-racial working-class against each other into oblivion. Are there other possibilities?

In 1970, Huey P. Newton, co-founder of the Black Panther Party, introduced his theory of intercommunalism. In short, this theory says most forms of nationalism are obsolete, because international corporations and technologically advanced imperialist states have reduced most nations down to a series of discrete communities which exist to supply an imperial center, a situation called reactionary intercommunalism.

They also believe this situation can be transformed into revolutionary intercommunalism and eventually communism (modes of production are collectively-owned, fruits of labor are equally shared) if communities are able to link “liberated zones” together into a united front against imperialism.

The midwest will likely fare better than many places as the climate crisis worsens. With higher concentrations of people who have lost everything due to capitalist destruction of the planet, there is revolutionary potential. If we work to build solidarity with these communities, we can reverse climate change through a revolution and reorganization of society.

Proof of this is that global emissions were drastically cut for the first time during the COVID pandemic, when production was focused on meeting people's needs rather than maximizing profits for the rich.

Climate change will raise sea levels, cause apocalyptic floods and displace almost a billion people

Humanity needs to plan accordingly for the countless number of future climate refugees fleeing rising oceans

By MATTHEW ROZSA
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Three Freedoms: a Review of The Dawn of Everything by David Graeber and David Wengrow

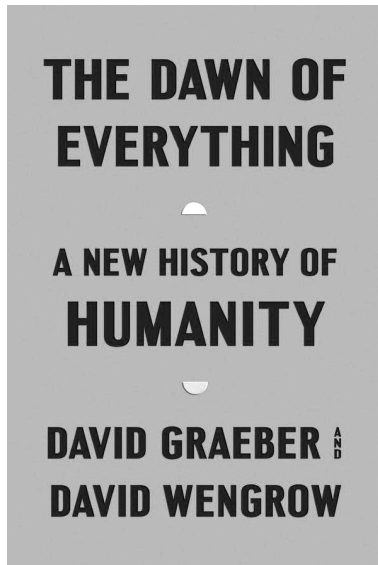
Comrade Sid

There is a tendency to think of our current situation as the inevitable consequence of immutable law, that this is what happens when people settle in hamlets, then villages, then towns then cities then nation-states then empires. As societies become bigger, they become more complex and require more coordination to keep the peace and manage resources.

Those who coordinate the resources inevitably gather the power to themselves, and this, supposedly, is the origin of inequality. "Development" is a process by which the people trade the oppression of deprivation, disease, and violence for a more benign, economic oppression. You may (if you're lucky) spend more than eight hours a day doing what someone else tells you to do, but, hey, at least you're not shitting yourself to death. The best freedom is a free market, or so the story goes.

In *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*, the Davids offer a radically different vision. They show that over the tens of thousands of years of human history, inequality and oppression cannot be reliably correlated with agriculture or urbanism. Rather, societal "development," the idea that societies move through predictable stages of growth that lead to inequality, is an invention of Old World intellectuals in defense against New World intellectuals' criticisms of settler-colonial societies. Why was Europe rife with the indignities of poverty and rigid hierarchies? Well, European societies were more "developed."

On the contrary, the people of North America were not naive to oppression before the Columbian exchange. They had just put in the work to contain it, as have countless people before and after. Since the dawn of everything, people have exercised the freedom to enact new social structures for themselves, along with the freedom to travel and the freedom to disobey authority. If we are to survive, we too need to claim these freedoms for ourselves.



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/>.