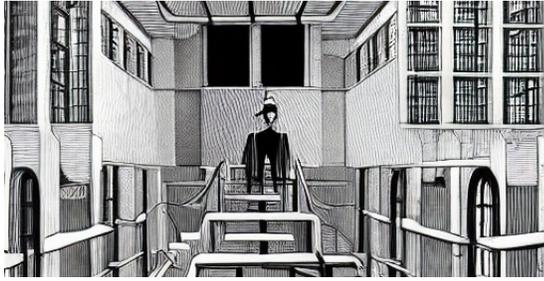


# MUTUAL AID MONTHLY

A Production of Des Moines Mutual Aid

August 2023



## Elitism Sells

*Colleges exclude qualified applicants and jack up the price instead of building more classrooms.*

from Comrade Sid

In *Biden v. Nebraska* the antidemocratic Supreme Court has broken the government's promise of student debt relief. In *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, it has prohibited race as a consideration for university admissions while leaving racist structures intact. This happened because under capitalism, the purpose of higher education is to justify unjust hierarchy as meritocracy. Capitalism dresses college in the veneer of being accessible to all who "deserve" it while entrenching inequalities with financial and bureaucratic barriers. The wealth of benefits flows to the capitalist class: a skilled and disciplined workforce, intellectual property extracted from public-private research partnerships, prestige granted to rich benefactors, and preferred admissions granted to their children. Workers, both faculty and students, are expected to contribute their labor to sustain the system, even as the logic of austerity makes their conditions ever more precarious. As if this time and effort are not enough, financialization of higher education has shifted the monetary burden away from public investment and onto the shoulders of workers.

Neoliberalism has reinvented education from profound engagement with a worker's rightful intellectual and cultural heritage to a glorified job training program. The ruling class then imposes an artificial scarcity on the whole scheme. They have leveraged our ambitions, hopes, and fears to put 45 million of us into student debt.

This debt is not just.

Cooperate with the government's effort to collect it only as much as necessary to keep yourself safe. Join the Debt Collective ([debtcollective.org](http://debtcollective.org)). A single debtor refusing to pay is just delinquent, but many debtors coordinating to refuse to pay is a strike. A better system is possible, but only if we demand it.

## Anarchists in Theory

*We each have a duty to contribute equitably to our community in daily life.*

from MFRose

In 2020 many local anarchists put their theory into practice by fighting in the streets for their autonomy and justice, creating and sustaining mutual aid projects for a better community, showing up for their jailed comrades in solidarity against the state, and by loving each other as they are. But are they continuing to put theories into practice at home and in our community?

Many fem folk in community with men would argue no. Tasks at home not being shared equally or 'traditional' fem work continues to fall solely on them. They are being spoken over, not valued in conversation, not treated as equals period! Have our fems not contributed greatly and directly to the movement? This could lead to extreme burnout and depression for many. We need to support true equality in all spaces through practice and education.

Looking within, we can analyze our own habits to be better partners. When a meal is cooked that you benefit from, contribute in an equal way, distribute the work. While having a thoughtful discussion, hold your tongue and look to those who have gone through life with less privilege for their thoughts. When sharing space with others, uplift and respect your chosen/ family members. Stop approaching life individualistically, only caring about your own needs and desires.

Like defeating our inner pig, we must analyze our own tendencies upholding patriarchy. Change those habits that hurt our most loved. Are we truly anarchists, or only anarchists in theory?



# No One is Coming to Save Us - The Failure of Electoralism Pt. 3: The Myth of Harm Reduction

*Vote Blue No Matter Who (Dies)*

from Jenots Tumsa & Subcomandante Randy

Liberals scream every election to vote Democrat to protect their favorite marginalized group from certain destruction by the Republicans. They call this tactic 'harm reduction' and it has failed miserably for decades.

As discussed in Part 2:

1. For the liberal political class, all tactics beyond voting exist as a funnel to the voting booth.
2. For 'left' advocates of harm reduction, engagement with capitalist parties seems like a 'neutral' supplement. In fact, it completely undercuts all other activity.

Two points of failure, among many:

1. The dems want votes and they get them by pretending to take up movement demands (which secure some left-of-center votes) and then not fulfilling them (which secures center votes). The latter pushes them to the right each election, and has left them to the right of Reagan and Nixon.
2. Harm is not "reduced", in absolute or relative terms, whether through reluctant or enthusiastic participation in elections, regardless of the particular views of candidates or the goodness of their souls. Life does not improve under Democratic rule, it worsens in new ways. It is under a Democratic presidency and Democratic majority congress that the 'Patriot Act 2.0' was passed and police budgets expanded! The crushing of the rail strike, the (non)response to attacks on reproductive rights - these don't help workers assert themselves politically. "Harm reduction" has consequences. Above all, that Dems come first: harm reduction postpones independent working class political activity, forever.

We are back to the obvious: we can only get what we want by posing a credible threat from below, using mass movements outside of electoral politics, aiming to make the state power obsolete and seize back our resources.



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, our basic 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/>.