

# DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

BOX 5 OF 16

FOLDER 5

CHRYSLER JEFFERSON ONE  
JARUM POLICY STATEMENT

PREAMBLE:

We the rank and file workers of the Jefferson Assembly plant have come together under the banner of the Jefferson Assembly Revolutionary Union Movement fully recognizing our historic role and the grave responsibility that is ours to break the shackles that bind us to the most oppressive greedy and vicious capitalist class mankind has ever known. The working class in this country has never seen the sun and never will until we organize and unite regardless of nationality to fight for our own interests. We have a union leadership which from the International right down to the locals unites with the capitalist class to keep us enslaved for their profit. It was only yesterday that our so-called International called out the goons consisting of union officials from various locals against our brothers and sisters at Mack Avenue Stamping plant to force them to work in inhumane unsafe conditions. It was our so called union leadership that negotiated voluntary overtime, which in one stroke of the pen wiped out the militant life and death struggle of the workers of this country at the turn of the century for 8 hours work, 8 hours rest, and 8 hours recreation.

The working class has always struggled for peace, but yet we see that this country is in a continual crisis both economically and politically and we have always borne the burden. Capitalist class wars of aggression are always on our doorstep and we must do the fighting and dying while they get rich. Systematically day by day our democratic rights are being taken away from us -- witness the legalizing of search and seizure, the reinstatement of the death penalty, etc.

We must stop this motion of oncoming fascism, that is, a situation where we are stripped of even our most basic democratic rights. Our union leadership says nothing in our defense. In fact, the Woodcocks, Mazeys, Frasers are helping the capitalist class to lead us right into fascism. We recognize the magnitude of the problem and the dire predicament the working class is in, but we do have a way out. Just as in the '30's when the rank and file joined in unity from the bottom up to form throughout the country the C.I.O. the time has come for the rank and file once again to unite to rid ourselves of treacherous, backstabbing union leadership and their phoney reforms. We demand that union democracy start from the bottom

and go on!

#### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES:

Our purpose is to join together as workers irregardless of sex or nationality and fight to forge the unity of the working class and to fight against faecism which is attacking our democratic rights. Legislatively, the passage of laws such as "search and seizure", reinstatement of the death penalty, outlawing of hand guns, etc., does not represent an attempt by the capitalists to safeguard our lives but rather an attempt to squash any opposition while the capitalists develop new forms or tactics to further exploit the working class. And those new tactics are moving ever closer to Hitler type of oppression and exploitation, which like Hitler would plunge us into another war.

The democracy within the union and the protection the trade-union leadership once offered us has deteriorated to the point whereas, these trade-union bandits and thugs actually aid in the development of fascism by selling us out while our most basic rights and freedoms, such as deciding union policy, are being snatched away from us.

Our main objectives are to unite the working class and to drive from positions of leadership every sell-out, opportunist, and traitor who represent the interests of the capitalists and not ours. The capitalists have historically used these scoundrels as buffers between themselves and us by buying them off. It is only through getting rid of these so called leaders can we guarantee a real fight for our needs both economically and politically.

And we must fight against the historical tendency of the capitalist class which has kept us divided by hitting black against white men against women, skilled against unskilled and native born workers against foreign born. It is only through exposing and smashing these divisions within our class that our best interests can be fought for and won.

#### PROCEDURE:

To reach our objectives J.A.R.U.M. shall be a democratic organization demanding the full participation of all members. Our concept of democracy being different from the pseudo democracy of the U.A.W. and all other so-called democratic unions.

Each member is required to prepare himself for full participation in the activities discussions and decisions of JARUM through leafleting studying and understanding the problems we face in carrying out our program. And in our activities great care must be exercised in planning and carrying them out to ensure success.

All decisions will carry based on a majority vote. These decisions will in turn determine the policy strategy, etc. of JARUM. Meetings will be chaired by the elected chairman and an agenda will be circulated prior to meetings. Members will be required to exercise discipline over themselves to ensure an orderly meeting.

#### RULES GOVERNING MEMBERSHIP

Membership in J.A.R.U.M. will be contingent upon a members ability to commit him or herself to the program and carry out his duties and responsibilities. These responsibilities are: (1) Acceptance of the program which means full and resolute participation in activities and organizational affairs. (2) A member should be subject to evaluation and criticism of the committee he serves on or any body related to J.A.R.U.M. (3) The organization as a whole and the individual committees should set the criteria whereby membership is democratically granted, denied or withdrawn. (5) Members and supporters should pay dues of \$2.00 a month. Each individual unit will have the responsibility of collecting dues.

#### OUR LINE:

We recognize that our struggle at Jefferson Assembly is not an isolated one and that we have common cause with other workers in Detroit, throughout the country, and throughout the world.

For this reason it is incumbent upon us to support all struggles against oppression and exploitation, be it in Lynn Townsend's kitchen, the White Castle, Ford Rouge, the Mississippi Delta the plains of Wyoming, the tin mines of Bolivia, the rubber plantations of Indonesia, the oil fields of Biafra, or the Chrysler plants in South Africa.

Needless to say our line is the hard line. We are in a life and death struggle against

against the capitalist class that has been raging savagely within the plants and wherever exploitation and oppression exist. A struggle which has shown no quarter to the working class and which we now wage and give no quarter. The ruthless and vicious nature of the capitalist class, in our case Chrysler in particular, in their drive for maximum profit, has brought us to a point where we are now prepared to struggle tooth and nail against all oppression and exploitation. All that the capitalists has acquired has been acquired through their exploitation and oppression of the working class with their tactics of murder, enslavement, mayhem and rape. Our line is one of consistent struggle in which we support all struggles against oppression and exploitation.

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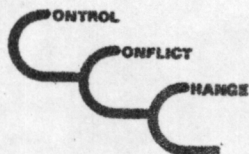
**“FINALLY  
GOT  
THE  
NEWS”**

**(THE LEFT IN DETROIT)**

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Presentation by  
**THE MOTOR CITY  
LABOR LEAGUE**

**December 4, 1973**



Socialist Education  
Institute

SPONSORED BY  
The Alliance  
The Motor City Labor League



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FINALLY GOT THE NEWS-THE LEFT IN DETROIT

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This is a transcript of a presentation made by the Motor City Labor League. It's subject is a critique of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW) and the film about it, "Finally Got the News". Although focusing on the LRBW, much of what is said applies to the Motor City Labor League itself as well as many other organizations in Detroit and elsewhere. Also included are questions and comments and the response to them from members of MCLL.

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The presentation was made to attending members and guests of Control, Conflict and Change on Tuesday December 4, 1973 at Central Methodist Church, Detroit, Michigan.

"Finally Got the News"-The Left in Detroit, was the third session of the fourth year of the program of CCC, a socialist educational program sponsored by The Alliance and The Motor City Labor League.

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## Introduction

Good evening.

We want to begin with a self-criticism. Because our own perspectives changed as we went along, there are many expectations you have concerning what tonight's session is about. First, let us explain what it is not about. We do not intend to present a history of the entire Detroit left or assess its present prospects, problems, and tasks. We do not yet have the ability or the time to do so. We are aware however, that the title in the catalogue "Finally Got The News---The Left In Detroit" could easily be interpreted as suggesting we would do just that.

What we do intend to do is use historical materialism to the best of our present level of development as Marxists-Leninists to critically analyze the film "Finally Got The News" and what it depicts about the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. Although how the film was made is a story in itself, we do not intend to discuss that aspect of the film, but rather as we said the politics of the League which brought about its collapse.

We think that is, in itself, a serious and difficult task. Much that exists politically in Detroit today derives directly or indirectly from the League. We in the Motor City Labor League trace our own origins there, although some of us were involved in movements and organizations which preceded it. The Communist League chapter in Detroit, the Black Workers Congress, the Labor Defense Coalition, the Alliance, From the Ground Up and Control-Conflict-Change Book Club itself have roots in the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.



The League, partly because of this film, has been enshrined, romanticized, and glamorized since it collapsed shortly after this film was made. It has not, however, been microscopically analyzed. Why, if it was so great, did it collapse? The film itself makes brilliant use of the medium to blend sight, sound and culture. But, without claiming to present a total definitive and comprehensive view of the history of the League, we want to concentrate on the political tendencies in the League which weakened and destroyed it.

In preparing for tonight's session we have consulted with members of the Detroit chapter of the Communist League and the Black Workers Congress, both direct descendents of the League, and others. Their criticism and insights were extremely helpful, but we take full responsibility for the analysis which is to follow. And just as the preceding two CCC forum sessions for this year have been controversial both during and after the sessions, we expect this one will be also. We welcome that and think that principal political struggle is exactly what we all need in the period.

Tonight's session has basically five parts. First, we wish to present a quick overview about the context of politics in Detroit in the period 1968 when DRUM (Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement) began, through 1971 when it underwent its first split. Second, we wish to show the film itself.

We ask that you look closely and critically at the politics it projects and keep in mind that the organization did collapse shortly after the film was completed, although the ghost lives on.

After the film we wish to present a brief critique derived from our study and analysis. To do so is to depart somewhat in form and content from previous CCC practice. Up to now we have discussed the rudimentary concepts and progress of socialist revolution. Tonight, we wish to begin discussing the errors which socialist revolution encounters and must overcome. In doing so, we may use some Marxist-Leninist terminology which is unfamiliar. We trust that those of you who have been members for some time will recall that the struggle to expand and sharpen our political vocabulary is a long and good tradition in CCC, and that table leaders and follow-up reading will extend the process further. Then, as usual, there will be table discussions followed by the fifth and final part of the session when members of the NCLL Central Committee will be available to respond to questions.

Now to briefly set the context. 1968, when DRUM began, through 1971, was a turbulent and critical time internationally, nationally, and locally. While we can hardly begin to detail all of the forces converging in that period, we think a viewing of the film will be enhanced by recalling some of the developments and conditions of the period.

Internationally, 1968 was the year of the TET offensive which struck a deadly blow at U.S. imperialism and caused Lyndon Johnson to announce his abdication from the Presidency two months later. Chile was preparing to, and did in this period, elect Allende. In China, the Proletarian cultural revolution was drawing to the close of its first phase, and in April, 1970, China launched its first satellite. The Arab countries were still recovering from their defeat by the Israelis in 1967. The wave of independence, and struggle for independence, from colonial powers in Africa continued.

Nationally, political violence escalated to intense levels throughout the U.S. King and Kennedy were assassinated along with a number of members of the Black Panther Party, including Fred Hampton who was shot to death in his bed exactly four years ago tonight. Many cities, including the national capital, were convulsed with riots following the King assassination. In Detroit, you may remember, the national guard was called out and virtual martial law imposed. There was violence against white demonstrators and newsmen at the Democratic convention in Chicago. In the years thereafter, the FBI's most wanted list expanded to include sixteen people accused of political crimes. There were student uprisings at Orangeburg, Jackson State, in Berkeley, California, and Kent State University, all where state power was used to kill. At Columbia hundreds of white students were beaten.

Within the left, the anarchism and terrorism (both mock and real) of Yippies, Weathermen, who were very active in Detroit, Black Panthers, and the Black Manifesto gave the bourgeoisie media a field day in characterizing the entire left as an infantile disorder with little or nothing in common with the mass of working people. The old left, particularly the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party confined themselves largely to the spontaneity of the anti-war movement.

But underneath all these transitory and traumatic events lay a basic reality which we find admirably characterized in an introduction to the pamphlet "Our Thing Is Drum" by Jim Jacobs, then a member of the Detroit Organizing Committee, from which we would like to quote:

"Stretch a line on a map of America from Buffalo, New York, through Pittsburgh, Wheeling, Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis, and finally Kansas City, then north to Des Moines, Minneapolis, then east to Milwaukee, Flint, Detroit and Cleveland.

"This is the Midwest, the industrial heartland of of America. Over forty percent of the people in this area work in the basic manufacturing industries -- auto, steel, machine products, rubber, electric -- that are the foundation of America's economic wealth. The establishment of the American Tool box in the Midwest is not accidental. Within the soil of this area lie the essential materials... for the production of steel, the basic component of any industrial society. Moreover, the Midwest possesses a fine system of rivers and lakes making transportation of heavy, bulky items relatively inexpensive. The opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway ten years ago gave many of the industrial cities on the Great Lakes direct ties with overseas markets and guaranteed that the industrial production of middle America will continue to be imperialist in scope."

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Black employment in the auto factories began in 1916. Most black auto workers were hired by Ford to work in the Rouge foundries and steel mill. While blacks could find work at the Rouge, Ford kept them from living in Dearborn, preferring to establish a suburb for blacks, which with characteristic WASP racism he named Inkster. He wanted blacks to break up any efforts to organize his shops. As blacks entered the plants in production jobs, the company and the union reacted with dual seniority lists, job assignments, and the erection of other caste boundaries. In what can be viewed as a precursor of the League in August, 1941, black laborers and foundry workers at Chrysler's Dodge Main Plant, where DRUM emerged in 1968, wildcatted against management and the UAW because their seniority was passed over in giving transfers to the new Chrysler Tank Plant in Warren. Since World War II, blacks have streamed into the Detroit plants, and in some Chrysler factories they make up sixty to seventy-five percent of the workers.

First, the opening of service and lower-middle class positions in Detroit gave whites an opportunity to leave the auto plants. Second, automation of the automobile industry created new and difficult working conditions for the remaining workers.

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The formation and growth of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers can be viewed in three stages. The first stage came as people like John Watson, Ken Cockrel, Mike Hamlin, General Baker and John Williams founded the Inner-City Voice newspaper in 1967. The second stage involved worker organizations in Chrysler plants in the summer and fall of 1968. The third stage, in which this film was made, was the diversification of activities from plant organization to work in the community.

The film we have just seen, we believe, is an essentially accurate representation of the politics of the organization which produced it. It contains much, although not all, of the data necessary to an understanding of why, shortly after the film was completed, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers collapsed.

In making this critical analysis, we do not intend to say that there was nothing positive about the League and its contribution to class struggle. But in order for us to move forward we do think the League needs de-mystifying. In that sense, an assessment of the negatives is the single greatest positive. As Lenin said in What Is To Be Done from which we will quote frequently this evening:

But in order to profit from the experience of that movement, and to draw practical lessons from it, we must thoroughly understand the causes and significance of this of that shortcoming. (Selected Works, Vol.I., p. 145).

Recognizing that time and our own underdevelopment inhibit a proper and full discussion of either the concepts or their application, we wish to briefly identify the following characteristics expressed in the film and in the organization: ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM; PRIMITIVENESS AND ECONOMISM, SPONTANEITY, BOURGEOIS NATIONALISM, CULTURAL AUTONOMY, NON-DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM, and OPPORTUNISM. We would like to elaborate on four of these tonight: ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM, BOUGEOIS NATIONALISM, PRIMITIVENESS & ECONOMISM and OPPORTUNISM.

A problem in making any of these distinctions is that, in a sense, leaving aside its positives, the League was almost a textbook study in errors. Of all the things which can be substituted for class consciousness at one time or another, they called for all of them. As a result, the tendencies we describe weave in and out of one another in a way that may seem confusing, and certainly was at the time. For example, Nationalism contributed to spontaneity and vice-versa. With that difficulty in mind, we will proceed.

First, anarcho-syndicalism, which is, to quote from William Z. Foster:

"In its basic aspects, syndicalism, or more properly anarcho-syndicalism, may be defined very briefly--is that tendency in the labor movement to confine the revolutionary class struggle of the workers in the economic field, to practically ignore the state, and to reduce the whole fight of the working class to simply a question of trade union action. Its fighting organization is the trade union; its basic method of class warfare is the strike, with the general strike as the revolutionary weapon; and its revolutionary goal is the setting up of a trade union "state" to conduct industry and all other social activities."

You will recall that in the first part of the film, John Watson speaks about the particular strategic location of some groups of black workers. Later he talks about improving the economic situation of workers to the point where they can build up a strike fund and possibly buy some guns. That is but a milder form of what the League stated explicitly



in its own forty page publication The General Policy Statement and Labor Program of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. They said:

"A union of workers is power. They can, if they so decide, control the economy of a country as large and powerful as the U.S.A. simply by calling a general strike. When workers are abused by a racist, capitalist government, they can respond by closing down the economical heart of the nation."

It is true that the League projected the need for a party, and that the film portrays the class collaborationist nature of the company-union relationship, particularly in the interview with the Ford executives. But it is clear that the forms and demands of the League component parts, as well as its own program, was anarcho-syndicalism.

#### BOURGEOISE NATIONALISM and CULTURAL AUTONOMY

We are aware of the difficulty which some may have with an all white organization such as MCLL making any criticism at all of a black organization such as the League, but particularly the difficulty in doing so on this question. Ironically the legacy of such a view and such racial separation is quite directly traceable to the League itself. In making such criticisms, we do not mean to deny or disguise the fact that racism and chauvinism continue among whites and within the white left; indeed the League's nationalism was doubtless in part a response to the failure of the left to adequately cope in theory or practice with the obstacle racism presents.

But, as we hope will become clear from what follows, the error of bourgeoisie nationalism is an inescapable one which continues to have very real effects.

First, we must remind ourselves that the League was the League of Revolutionary Black Workers and that it itself, in its formal written program, called for a black-Marxist-Leninist party, a contradiction if ever there was one, for Lenin was very clear on the question as the following illustrates:

"Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the 'most just' 'purest' most refined and civilized brand. In place of all forms of nationalism, Marxism advances internationalism, the amalgamation of all nations in the higher unity. The awakening of the masses from feudal lethargy and their struggle against all national oppression for the sovereignty of the people, of the nation are progressive."  
(Here we might add a logical, spontaneous, and recurring demand in response to a long history of oppression of a minority group.)  
"Hence it is the Marxist's bounden duty to stand for the most resolute and consistent democratization on all aspects of the national question. This task is largely a negative one. But this is the limit the proletariat can go to in supporting nationalism, for beyond that begins the 'positive' activity of the bourgeoisie striving to fortify nationalism.... All advocacy of the segregation of the workers of one nation from those of another, all attacks upon Marxist 'assimilation' or attempts, where the proletariat was concerned to contrapose one national culture as a whole to another allegedly integral national culture and so forth is bourgeoisie nationalism, against which it is necessary to wage a ruthless struggle."  
(Lenin Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism; p.26,27)

In the film, the call for black workers power, the separate organization of workers, and the explicit refusal of the League, plant, community, and central organizations to admit white workers to membership are examples of bourgeois nationalism.

The League took a contradictory view of whites. On one hand, members felt they should support the League as their first political priority; on the other hand, that they should organize whites which they said was impossible because whites were too racist to be organized. In the "Our Thing Is Drum" interview the position is taken that "whites in America don't act like workers. They don't act like a proletariat. They act like racists." Conversely, when blacks put forward nationalist demands, they were not only acting like workers, but like the proletarian vanguard. That, it seems to us, is bourgeoisie nationalism.

The question here is not simply whether or not the League properly adhered to Marxist-Leninist doctrine but whether the effect of their failure to combat bourgeoisie nationalism made the development of class as opposed to racial struggle more difficult. We think that it did.

## PRIMITIVENESS and ECONOMISM

This tendency also is discussed in Lenin's What Is To Be Done in chapter four. We think the most important of many manifestations of the tendency has to do with the League's opposition to theoretical study and ideological development. You will remember that the film at no point calls for or attaches any importance to theoretical study and education. In fact, it implies at many points that the League already knew everything it needed to know about Capitalism and how to defeat it. In both the film and the OUR THING IS DRUM interview the line is taken that: "The League of Revolutionary Black Workers is real when it says: goddamn it, we understand everything about this motherfucking country. We understand everything about this motherfucking country: we are prepared to demonstrate that." (Our Thing Is Drum, page 36)

Lenin discussed an aspect of this phenomenon the following way:

"...all the arguments advanced are nothing more than a glorification and a defense of primitiveness."

"These people who cannot pronounce the word 'theoretician' without a sneer, who describe their genuflections to common lack of training and backwardness as a 'sense for the realities of life' reveal in practice a failure to understand our most imperative practical tasks. The worst sin we commit is that we degrade our political and organizational tasks to the level of the immediate, 'palpable', 'concrete' interests of the everyday...struggle."  
(Lenin, Vol. I Selected Works - 202)

Now, here is a following quote from the same interview  
Our Thing Is Drum:

"We try to stick with reality, with what is concrete. We don't get off into the metaphysical and all that other kind of thing. We try and deal with concrete situations that our people experience. Our programs are based on that. They evolve out of our concrete situations. It is not something of us thinking up an abstract design in our mind and putting it together and going out and imposing it on a situation. It's the other way around. It comes out of conditions.

The program evolves out of conditions that are real to people."

We need to remember here that it is one thing for such statements to be made in the course of a developing struggle. It is another for those who call themselves Marxist-Leninists. Moreover, the fetishism with practice and the so-called pragmatic is particularly important to understand as a deeply entrenched anti-communist and anti-theoretical view within U.S. capitalist ideology.

## OPPORTUNISM

Perhaps because it is so prevalent, especially in U.S. bourgeoisie politics, opportunism is difficult to understand in a precise and scientific way. It is crucial to an understanding of the League, however, which was used at various times by individuals and groups. We offer the following definition, again from Lenin:

"Opportunism means sacrificing fundamental interest so as to gain temporary and partial advantages (which could be either individual or organizational). That is the gist of the matter, if we consider the theoretical definition of opportunism."  
(Vol. I., Marx, Engels, Lenin on Scientific Communism. p.490)

"The dialectics of history were such that the theoretical victory of Marxism compelled its enemies to disguise themselves as Marxists. Liberalism, rotten within, tried to revive itself in the form of socialist opportunism." (ibid p.493)

And finally:

"Advocacy of class collaboration; abandonment of the idea of socialist revolution and revolutionary methods of struggle; adaptation to bourgeoisie nationalism, losing sight of the fact that border lines of nationality and country are historically transient, making a fetish of bourgeoisie legality; renunciation of the class viewpoint and the class struggle, for fear of repelling the 'broad masses of the population' (meaning the petty bourgeoisie) such, doubtlessly are the ideological foundations of opportunism." (ibid p.491)

Many of the above points are self-evident or have already been spoken. We would only add that for all the revolutionary calls in the film, and in the League publications, including the League program, there nowhere appears a call for socialist revolution.

We are aware that on top of seeing the film itself, this is a considerable amount of information for most people to comprehend in a short time. We hope it will be helpful if we sum up by briefly drawing some lessons from this assessment.

First, the creation of a party requires the formulation and implementation of a correct party-building strategy. We are presently engaged in intense discussion within MCLL on the content of such a strategy. We are not prepared to comment, at this time therefore, on its substance. We affirm, however, that a main lesson of the League and its collapse is that it is not enough to merely call for such a thing or proclaim oneself a pre-party organization.

Second, we affirm what we said at the time of the split in the Motor City Labor League a year ago last September. Democratic Centralism, criticism, self-criticism and principled internal struggle without intimidation are essential to the development of correct politics. The entire membership must be grounded in the fundamental concepts of Marxism-Leninism and participate in such struggles.

As a correlary, we have viewed for some time theory and ideology as primary tasks in this period. That is the greatest single deficiency of both the new left and the old.

Further, we conclude that combatting errors of bourgeois nationalism and white chauvinism and sycophancy must be central to our theory and practice.

The fact that the film "Finally Got The News" survives, and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers does not, says something about the nature of film as a powerful means of propaganda, and also says something about the dangers of putting propaganda techniques and resources in command of politics rather than the other way around. In fact, this might be extended to the whole League obsession with resources that held that it was more important to obtain a typesetting machine than to know what to type.

Finally, for all its faults, the League's emphasis on the role of the proletariat, the basic validity of Marxism-Leninism and the base it built in the factories are in part responsible for the fact that we are all here tonight and that Marxism-Leninism is alive and well in Detroit.



(For reasons of time, some of what was prepared by MCLL was not read at the session itself; specifically, sections on non-democratic centralism and spontaneity. We include them here however as follows:)

#### NON-DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

In all of our discussions with ex-members of the League there was agreement that the organization was neither democratic nor centralist. Primairily it functioned including the making of the film itself, on the basis of whoever had or could get the resources for a project did it. Conversely whoever could withhold the resources from a project they didn't want done did so.

The leadership body, as identified at the beginning of the film was all male. It confronted the membership more or less when it felt like it, which was rare and perhaps most importantly provided them with no coherent or consistent educational study or ideological development. Nor was there any mechanism of criticism and self-criticism especially of the leadership. Those who did venture criticisms of the leadership were generally purged. One result of this was that with no means for internal struggle to be carried out there was little but personal loyalties to prevent the differences when they emerged from turning into splits.

## SPONTENAITY

We turn again to Lenin in "What is TO BE Done" for an extremely applicable comparison of developments in Russia similar to those in Detroit.

He says:

"Strikes occurred in Russia in the 1870's and '60's... and they were accompanied by the 'spontaneous destruction of machinery', etc.. Compared with these 'revolts', the strikes of the 1890's might even be described as 'conscious', to such an extent do they mark the progress which the working class movement made in that period. This shows that the 'spontaneous element', in essence, represents nothing more nor less than consciousness in an embryonic form... The workers were losing their age long faith in the permanence of the system which oppressed them and began, I shall not say understand but to sense the necessity for collective resistance, definitely abandoning their slavish submission to the authorities. But this was nevertheless more in the nature of outbursts of desperation and vengance than of struggle." (selected works vol I 143)

Spontaneous rebellion and resistance, as we know is not however sufficient to bring about socialist revolution. If it were, capitalism would no longer be with us, since there is plenty of resistance to be found throughout the present and the past. The League practiced many forms of spontenaity, accepting peoples own self-definitions about where they were at. One example of this in particular seems important to illustrate. Another short quote from Lenin is helpful here as well:

"After stating that the arm of the blue coats (that is the police) could never halt the progress of the working class movement. The leading article goes on to say (and here Lenin is quoting from an article in another publication)... 'the virility of the working class movement is due to the fact that the workers themsilves are at last taking their fate into their own hands and out of the hands of the leaders'... Actually, the leaders were one might say, torn out of the hands of the workers by the police; yet it is made to appear that the

workers were fighting against the leaders and liberated themselves from their yoke. Instead of the call to go forward towards the consolidation of the revolutionary organization and the expansion of political activity, the call was issued for a retreat to the purely trade union struggle." (vol I, 147)

Here we ask you to recall the speech by Ken Cockrell toward the end of the film about the successful defense of attacks against the League by Chrysler, the police, and so on. This is similar to the position taken at a Newsreel initiated "Repression" conference at St. Joseph's church January 30, 1970. There Cockrell argued that the League was superior to the Black Panther Party because as he said then: "We could go on and on with a person in our organization who has been sought out for attack. But we proudly proclaim to the world that all of our people who are members of our organization are still on the street and still working." But the fact of the matter is that it is not sufficient to be out on the street instead of in jail. One must not only know what one is doing out of jail but also one must have access to the workplaces and elsewhere. Actually the combination of the effects of repression; firing workers from plants for militant activity; and some workers like General Baker who were forced to leave the city; plus those kept away from the plants by an exceptionally broad injunction obtained by Chrysler contributed a great deal to the separation of the League from its worker base and to its ultimate demise.

Doubtless even more fundamental in this regard was its glorification of wildcats, walkouts and precipitous shop floor activity in general. As well, its consistent preoccupation with racial conflicts, especially in the plants stood in the way of its putting forward to workers an understanding of class struggle, that is, of the class as a whole and its irreconcilable differences with the bourgeoisie and with an understanding of the role of trade union struggle within the class struggle.