

# DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

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MCLL CLASS STRUGGLE  
REPORTS

## CLASS STRUGGLE

The Motor City Labor League believes that the critical material condition which defines the nature of human relationships and human struggle is a person's relationship to the means of production. All other forms of human struggle are rooted in the struggle for ownership/control over the means of producing the materials necessary for physical survival. In addition, we understand that any given individual either controls the means for producing or obtaining the material resources necessary for survival, or does not. We define those who own and control the means of production as the bourgeoisie, and those who do not as the proletariat.

The Motor City Labor League believes that there are only two classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Within the bourgeoisie there are varying degrees of control and ownership. There are also differing degrees of economic and political empowerment within each of the two classes.

The history of the world is the history of the struggle between the class which owns and controls the material resources of any given society and the class which does not. The class which does not own or control has historically been forced to secure its physical survival either through slave labor or the sale of labor power in a competitive market. The proletariat is the class of people which must sell the only thing it in fact owns, which is its labor power, in return for the materials necessary for survival in order to continue laboring and reproducing labor power. The bourgeoisie buys the labor of the proletariat and returns to the proletariat a portion of the value produced by the labor. It does not return all the value, and this is where the class contradiction arises. The bourgeoisie takes some of the value of our labor and turns it into private wealth for itself. With this wealth it procures more of the means of producing wealth and resources and therefore more of the means for controlling what we can do with our labor power in order to continue to survive.

Class societies are always based on exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie must continue to exploit and control the proletariat in order to maintain and increase its power and wealth. The proletariat must continue to resist exploitation in order to maintain and increase its power and potential for survival. Exploited people are always seeking to relieve themselves from exploitation and oppression by developing methods of resistance and defense against exploitation. Just as no animal relates well to captivity, no human being relates well to slavery, whether that be physical confinement or wage slavery which denies us the power to make the decisions which fundamentally determine the conditions of our lives. The historic task of our class is to develop offensive forms of struggle so that we may liberate ourselves from all forms of exploitation.

The history of the world to date is the history of class struggle. At one time the question revolved around the control of land, which was the primary means of production. With the rise of industrial production and the accompanying increase in the need for capital to build and control the productive capacity of modern forms of commodity production, control of capital becomes the significant factor in control of the means of production. Decisions about how capital will be distributed are made by the bourgeoisie on the basis of the maximization of private profit. Human need is not a determining factor, except to the minimal level required to reproduce the labor force. This basis for decision-making is in direct contradiction to the real needs of the vast majority of the people, the laboring people who produce the wealth in the first place. The real needs of the proletariat are centered on survival, security and quality of relationships and working/living conditions. The two classes are therefore objectively at odds with each others interests, and objectively in a state of struggle for power to decide which needs will be met.

The bourgeoisie is a very small number of people in 1973 in the U.S. Their numbers relative to the numbers of the proletariat decrease each year, as more and more people are forced by the built-in dynamics of capitalism and the accompanying rise of monopoly capital to give up ownership and sell their labor to the bourgeoisie. In 1880, 62% of the U.S. labor force were wage and salaried employees. By 1969, 83.6% were non-managerial wage and salaried employees. In 1880, 36.9% of the people owned the means of production. In 1969, only 9.2% of the people owned the means of production.

In order to maintain private property and control the means of social production, the bourgeoisie must also maintain control over the ideology of the society. It does not produce material wealth from its labor, but it does produce the government, the superstructure (schools, media, religion, art, value systems) the culture and ideology which maintain the bourgeoisie in power. The bourgeoisie of any society controls the means of ideological and cultural as well as commodity production. It uses its economic power to control and perpetuate a culture and a government which will in turn increase its economic power.

The proletariat will therefore struggle at all times on several fronts for its liberation: it struggles to gain control of the means of material production, control of the state apparatus (the government) which administers material relations, and it struggles to define an ideology which serves its interests rather than the interests of the bourgeoisie, and a culture which meets the needs of working people.

The Motor City Labor League believes that the primary tasks of the proletariat are to liberate the means of production from the bourgeoisie and take control of the state apparatus for the proletariat. We believe that neither from of control is possible without the other. The state is the military and political fist of the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat cannot therefore actually control the means of productions in its own interests without also controlling the military and political machinery

for safeguarding economic power from attack by the bourgeoisie and developing a superstructure which serves the interests of the proletariat.

Because the bourgeoisie is only a small minority of the people, it can only maintain control if the majority is divided and fighting among itself. Capitalism is objectively based on competition for the material means of survival. The ideology produced and perpetuated by the bourgeoisie divides the proletariat by increasing the sense that the only way to gain the resources to survive is to compete with others. The bourgeoisie intentionally limits resources and perpetuates the myth that there is not enough for all.

Competition and individualism are the critical subjective bases for class divisions. Bourgeois ideology operates to make people believe that competition and individualism are necessary for human survival. To the extent that they are successful in getting us to believe this, they perpetuate class divisions along racial, sexual, occupational, age, income, geographic or national lines, weaken our collective power and strengthen their own.

Capitalism in fact cripples people. To believe that bourgeois competition and individualism are basically anti-survival is to pursue the unity of the proletariat and the defeat of the bourgeoisie's ownership and ideological dominance. Our class is the most highly organized, powerful, productive class in the world. Only our divisions keep us from releasing our productive potential to serve the needs of all of us. We are our greatest resource and we are not scarce.

Class consciousness comes as a result of the struggle of individuals and groups to achieve security and quality and the discovery that there is a force which blocks these achievements. The force is the bourgeoisie and the exploitative, anti-survival, qualitatively bankrupt system of human relations it perpetuates. The struggle against this force develops consciousness about what those of us who must struggle for security and quality all have in common -- we do not control the means of production (material and ideological) and therefore cannot make or implement decisions which serve our real interests.

Individuals approach the definition of their self-interest from different perspectives. These differences are largely a function of their actual material conditions. Individuals whose immediate physical survival is always in question participate in the class struggle initially with a focus on security as the motivating self-interest. Individuals who already have a high enough level of apparent material security participate in the class struggle initially with a focus on the quality of their living conditions and their relationships with other people.

Although the initial motivation for struggle is different for individuals coming from different histories and different relations to the means for survival the process of struggle leads to an awareness or consciousness on the part of all members of the class that they are in



fact fighting for both security and quality, that there is a dialectical relation between the two. Unity comes with increased consciousness that the same struggle, the same revolution, will, if it is to be worthwhile to any individual, produce the objective conditions for creating both security and quality for all individuals.

There is no necessary material basis for division within the proletariat. The only material basis for division is between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. There is a material basis for unity. Capitalism is by its nature anti-survival, and survival is a material condition. Without the defeat of the bourgeoisie, the living conditions of all of us will continue to deteriorate. There will be continuous wars, increased social chaos, increased threats to our health and safety, and increased hostility, fear and alienation among people. Socialism means social security at birth, not at age 65. It is something that all human beings are entitled to and something any rational society can be organized to provide.

Revolutionary struggle for the dictatorship of the international proletariat is the only way to free ourselves and develop the material basis for a pro-survival social system. We have the objective power to do it when we overcome the subjective divisions which are a product of capitalist ideology and the capitalist relationships of production. Objectively in the U.S. the points of our greatest objective power are at the points of commodity production and distribution (industry, transportation, communications). The points of our weakness are in the realm of ideological and cultural production (education, media, etc.). We will attack where we are strong and organize to attack where we are weak at the same time, to build unity by focusing on what we all have in common. We will struggle to define relationships which make our class powerful enough to win over the bourgeoisie.

The Vietnamese have clearly shown us the power of a united people in the struggle to defeat the bourgeoisie. They have done it, and so will we.