

Who Rules Detroit?

Millard

1970

The real pig is not the obvious pig. The obvious pig is the one that we see every day: the police force. These are the neanderthals who patrol our communities trying to keep us in line. Government institutions are also the overt pig. The Congress, state legislatures and city councils in Amerika direct the police and military and mouth the policies of the actual controllers.

Politicians and political institutions are the overt oppressors in Amerika. The real pigs are the people who put them in power and direct their policies: the ruling class.

The ruling class is a relatively small percentage of people who control the massive interwoven corporations in Amerika. This amounts to control over the nation's economic structure, which in turn influences all other institutions.

The ruling class keeps its money and power tight within its control, passing them on from generation to generation. This means that there is a virtual aristocracy in Amerika. It remains in the background and manipulates the institutions of society from Nixon down to the local cop.

The control that the ruling class maintains over the economy is what gives them control over our lives. Rather than competing for profits from the consumer by putting out better products, they cooperate in putting out cheaply made products and fixing the prices. If a new company enters the market and refuses to cooperate in the constant conspiracy, it is undercut and forced out of business.

This cooperation also allows them to exploit workers to the maximum. They don't compete for workers by offering higher wages or better working conditions. They cooperate in keeping wages low and working conditions poor. Sellout unions serve an important function in working with the corporations making sure that the workers are given only token wage increases and improvements in working conditions. The UAW is a prime example in the Motor City.

Taxes are another way in which the people are exploited by the ruling class. It is common knowledge that they pay little or no taxes. It is the working people who bear the heavy burden of taxes. These taxes go to support an imperialistic war that protects foreign investments of the ruling class, a war that reaps huge profits for the war industry owned by the ruling class.

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

We've heard the names Rockefeller, Mellon, Ford and DuPont, but many of us do not realize the ways in which these people control our lives.

Detroit has its very own ruling class composed of both national and local families who form a tight controlling network of private businesses and public institutions. Most of the controlling family elites in Detroit live in the Detroit area. One of the oldest and largest is the Buhl family of Grosse Pointe. They hold controlling interest in Parke, Davis & Co., Burroughs and are involved in the National Bank of Detroit.

The Ford family (not related to the automobile Fords) is another major Detroit dynasty. They control Wyandotte Chemical and have a large interest in Libby-Owen-Ford. Through LOF they are tied into Continental Oil Co. which links them up with the Rockefeller family. The Fords are also linked with the Buhls in Parke, Davis & Co.

A third prominent family are the Fishers of Fisher Body Co., GM, and the Fisher-New Center Realty Corporation. Through Max Fisher they are heavily into utilities (Michigan Bell and Michigan Consolidated Gas) and banks (Manufacturers' National Bank of Detroit).

The Fruehaufs, another well-known Detroit family, control Fruehauf Corporation (trailers, shipping containers and modular housing) and are into Burroughs, Detroit Edison, Michigan Consolidated Gas, Michigan Bell and Detroit Bank and Trust.

J.L. Hudson Co. (controlled by the Hudson family) is part of the Dayton-Hudson chain of retail stores in Minneapolis; and is into the National Bank of Detroit and Detroit Edison.

The largest outside interest in Detroit is the Hanna dynasty of Cleveland. They control Chrysler and Great Lakes Steel. They also are involved in Consolidated Coal (now Continental Oil) and the National Bank of Detroit. Internationally, the Hannas control much of the mining in Brazil.

Also involved in the NBD are the DuPonts who control GM. The massive Mellon family is into Chrysler and GM. The Rockefellers have inroads into almost every major Detroit corporation.

Surprisingly, with the exception of Chrysler, the auto companies are not heavily involved in the Detroit economy. Ford and GM have plants in the Detroit area but they exercise little control over the Detroit economy. They have broadened their interests to a national level.

It is true that billions of dollars are pumped into the Detroit economy in wages to workers, but this money has no directive influence on the economy. It is only one element in the political-economic projections of the ruling class. The consumers and workers in Detroit have no directive influence in how the Detroit economy is run. They are merely a vast sea out of which the ruling class sucks labor and profit.

While the corporations are controlled by families, the banks and utilities are controlled jointly by the corporations in order to facilitate their manipulation of Detroit's economy. The three utilities, Detroit Edison, Michigan Consolidated Gas and Michigan Bell, are composed of a tight network of investments and people of the major corporations. Fruehauf, Chrysler and Ex-Cello Corporation virtually dominate all three utilities. In this way these "public" utilities become mere profit making extensions of the long arm of the ruling class.

The banks of Detroit, especially the National Bank of Detroit, are very key in the economic structure. They overlap with the major corporations (chiefly Fruehauf, Burroughs, Parke-Davis, and Chrysler) and are controlled by them. The National Bank of Detroit is the largest bank in Detroit and is connected with every major family elite both local and national. It serves two functions: as the chief exchange center for financial capital in Detroit and as the link between Detroit financiers and national financiers.

This is only a brief scratch on the surface of an understanding of the Detroit economic structure, but through this several things come to light. Each of the major corporations in Detroit is controlled by a family, each of which has involvements that link it with the other families. These involvements are of two kinds: by direct financial investment and, more importantly, by interlocking directorships.

In interlocking directorships, men from the Board of Directors of one company are also members of the Board of Directors of another company. The corporations, banks and utilities cooperate in this way for the maximum exploitation of workers and consumers. Thus, the capitalist ruse of "free competition for the market" is total bullshit. They don't call it a ruling class for nothing.

The ruling class is thus a tight circle of control amounting to complete monopoly of the leading sectors of the American economy. And this conspiracy overlaps onto all levels of government. Nixon and Agnew and all politicians are bought, packaged and sold by the ruling class and are little more than instruments in their grabbing for money and power.

A few of the key men in the Detroit ruling class are:

Walker Cisler: age, 73; residence, 1071 Devonshire Rd., Grosse Point Park. He is involved in Detroit Edison, Fruehauf, Burroughs, Detroit Bank and Trust and others, and is one of the key controllers of the Detroit economy.

Max Fisher: of the Fisher family. He is into Fruehauf, Michigan Bell, Michigan Consolidated Gas and Manufacturers National Bank.

Robert Surdham: age, 64; residence, 46 Lake Shore Rd., Grosse Pointe Farms. He is into the National Bank of Detroit, Cunningham Drugs, National Steel and Wyandotte Chemicals. He represents the huge interests of the Hanna family in Detroit through the National Bank of Detroit.

The next issue of the paper will discuss Detroit's civic and governmental institutions and how they are controlled by the ruling class.

fifth Estate

Millard
Who Rules Detroit?
1970

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/109-july-9-22-1970/who-rules-detroit>
Fifth Estate #109, July 9-22, 1970

fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net