

Ruling Class Rip-Off

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The last issue of the *Fifth Estate* described the ruling class families and their corporate structure and how they exert control over the economy of Detroit ["Who Rules Detroit?" FE #109, July 9–22, 1970]. (A minor correction is that the Fisher family of the Fisher New Realty Co. is not related to the Fisher family of Fisher Body. But a pig is still a pig.)
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The ruling class families by their tight control of the Detroit economy have their fingers around every worker and consumer in Detroit.

Price and wage manipulation are only part of their constant rip-off. They also have a powerful influence on the courts, city councils, universities and any other institution they can manipulate to get profits and power.

Anyone who's been in court and dug the scene there doesn't have to be told that the courts favor the rich. The city councils of the Detroit area are no different. Who puts up the bread for the campaigns of the judges and councilmen? The ruling class. And what if the judges and councilmen don't line up the way the ruling class wants them to? They don't get elected the next time.

Money is what puts people in office and makes sure they serve the interests of the rich. This is the way all politics is run, and to hold a revolutionary consciousness of that one must see behind the disguise of the rise of Amerikan "democracy."

The research that was done into the ruling class in Detroit did not cover the city council or the court system, since the way they are controlled by the ruling class is not too complex and most people understand it. What is more important are certain institutions whose real purposes have been hidden from us and which are very important in making sure that the ruling class can hang on to its profits and power.

About 15 years ago the big capitalists got into a thing of "urban planning." They realized that cities were decaying from any lack of forethought when they were being built. They figured that by coordinating the government's and business' efforts they could plan the development of a city and in this way guarantee their profits and power in the future.

A 10-year study of the economic growth in the U.S. has pointed out the Midwest as the fastest-growing region. Because of the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway, Detroit will become a major world trade center by 1980.

The Detroit ruling class is very much into grabbing their piece of the growth. So what they did was to set up organizations to propagandize people and pressure government structures into rebuilding the city the way they want it. This is what the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and its urban renewal program is about on a national level. The ruling class pressures the government into using tax money to redesign the cities in a way that benefits their businesses with no concern for the people.

One way this is done is by setting up freeways to coincide with where the corporations want their factories and want their products distributed. Another way this is done is by making sure cheap labor is available by controlling the flow of populations.

In the Detroit area the Black population is being channeled out to the northwest to provide cheap labor for factory towns to be developed out there. An "industrial axis" is being formed from Toledo to Port Huron by building freeways and plants along that line.

Because Detroit will be such an important world center in the future, the entire inner city is being rebuilt. Peoples' homes are being ripped down and highrise expensive apartments and business facilities are being put up (e.g., Lafayette Towers).

The Wayne State University Matthaei Athletic complex is another example of the domestic imperialism of the ruling class. Ten thousand people were thrown out of their homes to build a beautiful but irrelevant athletic facility, to be used only by students and faculty from the suburbs.

The purpose of this redevelopment is to convert the inner city into a cultural and financial center with office buildings, plush apartments complexes, malls, fountains and museums; in other words to bring the rich and their money back into the city from the suburbs.

The city government has no choice but to cooperate in throwing out the poor and bringing in the rich and their businesses. The cities of Amerika are in a crisis. They are decaying because all the money and industry is moving out to the suburbs, leaving no tax base in the city.

Poor people, Black and white, don't supply the money needed to run a city so those who have an interest in seeing the city survive have to bring in a rich tax base. In this way the whole system becomes a conspiracy of big business and government against the people.

The Metropolitan Fund is the umbrella for this conspiracy in southeast Michigan. It includes six counties and four and a half million people. It is made up of people and money from all the major Detroit ruling class families (Hanna, Ford, Buhl, Fisher, Fruehauf, and Hudson) and their interests (Chrysler, Fruehauf, J.L. Hudson, Detroit Edison, Mich. Bell, Michigan Consolidated Gas, National Bank of Detroit, Detroit Bank and Trust, and others). The Detroit Common Council (Mel Ravitz), Wayne State University (Wild Bill Keast), and the UAW (Leonard Woodcock) are also involved.

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) is one of the branches of the Metropolitan Fund that carries out its practical work. SEMCOG is trying to pull together all the political municipalities outside Detroit. This will eventually lead to a single huge regional government in southeast Michigan (even though SEMCOG insists this is not what it is about).

One chief result of SEMCOG is to keep the Black people from getting any political power. Today 47% of Detroit voters are Black and in a few years when they are in a majority, a metropolitan government of southeast Michigan will be set up and their votes will be flooded under by the suburban white vote. This kills any community control black people need and want so badly.

However SEMCOG is on the verge of failure.

Two things have scared the suburbs away from becoming involved with the problems of Detroit: The rising militancy in the black community has rubbed on their racism, and the war has brought on an economic crisis that has hit especially hard at the decaying cities.

New Detroit Inc., also linked with the Fund, was formed after the '67 rebellion. It serves two important functions in trying to rebuild Detroit for the ruling class. For one it propagandizes about the problems of the city and how big business believes they should be solved (with tax money of course, of which the ruling class pays very little). It also tries to co-opt militancy among blacks in the city by setting up token programs that make the people think that they are being helped and by buying off black radical organizations by funding them and paying large salaries to potential radicals.

New Detroit is made up of the large corporations which have property or large investments in the city and want to see their interest protected. Some of the key ones are Michigan Bell, Detroit Edison, J.L. Hudson Co., Wayne State, and Fisher New Center Realty Corporation.

Other branches of the Fund are: Southeast Michigan Transit Authority (SEMTA) which was set up to bypass local transit systems. Metropolitan Detroit Citizens Development Authority (MDCDA) is pushing modular housing, which will mean huge profits for Fruehauf, Chrysler and Ford.

Wayne State University is an important key in the domestic imperialism of the Detroit ruling class. President Keast is linked with the Rockefeller interests. He used to be an administrator at Cornell, a Rockefeller-owned university. V.P.s Edward Cushman and George Cullen are from American Motors. Other administrators link Wayne with Michigan Bell and the Institute of Defense Analysis. Leonard Woodcock, president of the UAW, is also on the board of governors. Through Keast and Cushman WSU is very involved in New Detroit.

Wayne State's chief rip-off role is in its involvement in the urban renewal of the land around it. It is ripping down homes and throwing out "unesthetic" community people to build Matthaei, dorms and scientific research facilities, none of which is related to the community which they are destroying. The master plan is to make the area into an exclusive residential area that will allow upper class businessmen to live near where they will work once downtown is developed into a business center.

Universities in general are one of the best disguised rip-off agents of the ruling class. They usually own huge amounts of land and are linked tightly with the local elite through interlocking directorships and investments. Not only do they create profits for the ruling class they also serve as human assembly lines to turn out brainwashed white-collar technocrats to serve as cogs in the machinery of Amerikan society.

The United Foundation, which runs the Torch Drive, serves as the ruling class's tool for social action. Every major corporation, utility and bank in Detroit has people on it. Half of the \$30 million it collects goes to United Community Services, which funds traditional and inadequate programs (e.g., Boy Scouts and YMCA) which have little relevance to poor people and the problems of the city.

The Detroit ruling class owns the corporations, utilities and banks. They manipulate our wages and rake off the surplus after fixing the prices of products we make. In the electoral process they package and sell us their glittering puppets for "public" officials. They get together in organizations like HUD, Metropolitan Fund and SEMCOG to move populations and plan cities to guarantee and increase their power over us.

It's a totally deliberate conspiracy to fuck the people for the profit of the elite. And it's called CAPITALISM.

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See "Who Rules Detroit?" FE #109, July 9-22, 1970.



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