

The publication of the first issue of *Changeover* is a significant step for the Motor City Labor League in the development and implementation of our role in the struggle for a humane society. It is also the first fully public opportunity to speak about the Motor City Labor League — our origin and direction.

In the summer of 1970, the Motor City Coalition was an attempt to pull together many of the individuals and organizations involved in the struggle for social change in Detroit. Although it finally became clear that conditions were not yet mature enough for the entire Coalition to find a common basis for program and action, the In-Plant Organizing Task Force did continue under the name Motor City Labor League.

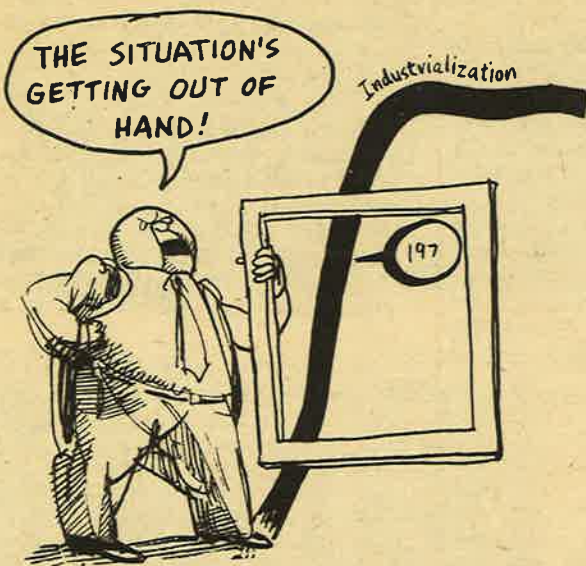
Originally, MCLL was an organization in which a number of groups were represented and whose primary function was to offer support for on-going labor struggles in the city in the form of leaflets, information, demonstrations and legal representation.

Over the past year we recognized that simple reactive support in situations that periodically arose was not sufficient for the building and consolidation of a conscious and directed working class movement in Detroit. The task required — and still requires — a more tightly knit, ideologically sound and highly disciplined organizational form. As a result, MCLL undertook to restructure itself along those lines.

There are some things which MCLL emphatically is:

- We are an organization which believes that radical social change is necessary in order to achieve a just and humane life for all.
- We do believe a scientific socialist economic system is the only vehicle through which such a goal can be achieved.
- We do believe that in order to achieve such a goal, masses of working people will have to be drawn into the struggle and failure to involve the working class means failure for the struggle.
- We are dedicated to the highest possible level of social practice in programs which are responsive to the needs and concerns of the vast majority of people in this society.
- We seek to break down the barriers and divisions between racial groupings, the sexes and working people in the workplace and the community so that we can construct a mass, united struggle.
- We are prepared to enter into principled relationships with all progressive forces in order to carry the struggle forward.

We are well aware that the six statements above are commonplace and it would be difficult to find many



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# MCLL: Origin Purpose and Direction

progressive individuals or organizations that would openly disagree with them. But we must remember that truisms do contain truth and the truth does not become untrue for having been repeated endlessly.

We should look again at the six points and explain what it means to us to say them and why we think they should be taken seriously by anyone who says them.

## Radical Change Necessary

To state that radical change is necessary is to make a cold statement of fact in that we do not believe those who presently benefit from the operation of the present political and economic system will ever voluntarily relinquish those benefits.

Therefore, we are not reformists issuing dire warnings to the power brokers that bad times are coming and secretly hoping from that warning they will themselves institute the necessary changes out of either humanitarian or practical motivation. Radical change is necessary; it will never come from anyone but those of us who are oppressed by the present system; we are unequivocally committed to bringing about that change.

To say a scientific socialist system is the only one in which the elimination of war, poverty and the destruction of human potential can be achieved is a matter of proven historical fact. But the theory and methodology of socialism (and building toward it) is not an idol to be placed above us and worshipped, but a real, understandable, practical tool for use in all of our activity.

It provides all of us with the ability to understand our existence and to move decisively to change the conditions of that existence. We will use it, not eulogize it.

To say that masses of working people will have to be drawn into the struggle or it will fail is to recognize that there has been too little serious and effective work in this area in recent years. It further represents a distinction between us and those organizations which pay lip service to the critical role of workers in the class struggle, but refuse to engage in working class organizing "at this time" for a variety of political or tactical reasons.

However, we also recognize there has been a tendency in the past to define the working class in too narrow or technical a way and that "working class organizing" has been too restrictively defined. We believe there are many layers of the population which are so affected by war, racism, sexism, environmental pollution, inflation, unemployment and oppressive work conditions that more and more of us are prepared to join the struggle for fundamental social change.

To say we are dedicated to social practice in responsive programs is a result of our observation that many progressive groups are immobilized by the enormity and multiplicity of the tasks; thus turning inward for further study and evaluation or on each other in petty conflicts.

Whatever form such activity takes, it is defeatist in that it does not bring about mass organizational work and it is abstract because it separates itself from the people it professes to serve. There is more to change than the idea of organization - building.

To limit progressive activity to the above is to demonstrate fear of and a lack of faith in the very people who are necessary to bring about substantive change.

## Practice - Theory Program

MCLL is composed of people who have developed (and are still developing) through the process of formulating and implementing relevant programs. Therefore, we believe the process of practice must inter-act with the theory of the program in order to create correct organizational and programmatic growth. This entire dynamic is the social practice to which we are dedicated.

To speak about divisions among the people is to say we recognize that our society has created and maintained false separations - between the races, between the sexes, between the city and suburbs, between white-collar and blue-collar, between "public" and private employees and between the workplace and the community. We know we must dispel false divisions and then work toward eliminating or minimizing real differences in order to build a mass, united struggle. That is the object of our social practice.

To say we are prepared to enter into principled relationships with all progressive forces is the culmination of all which has been said above — we are committed to building a mass, united movement of working people in which we all see our common interest, are prepared to bury false divisions, and are willing to move forward on common ground to struggle for social change in our workplaces, communities, schools and other social institutions.

We respect the fact that real differences do exist at the present time and consequently respect the real basis for the existence of separate organizations for whatever racial, geographic or political reasons there may be.

We believe there is a basis for cooperation and that basis is honest respect and actual social practice — not guilt, racism, intimidation, or expediency.

## Process of Development

It is always difficult to analyze the organic process of the development of a political organization. Analysis requires that we examine the process and its component parts.

We would like to analyze the process of publishing this newspaper so as to provide you with as honest a view of our organization as is possible. As it has been stated frequently in this piece, we are practice oriented.

Also, we are people who know intimately the city of Detroit. Indeed, we have individually and collectively, developed a bond with our city and its people.

Our practice orientation provides us with requisite discipline, expertise and unity to put out a newspaper which looks good. Our distribution mechanism will grow rapidly and efficiently. But will the content of *Changeover* reflect a high level of political thought? An honest estimation is that in time *Changeover* will.

*Changeover* is a public expression of the process of our growth and development which we invite you to follow and evaluate.

We have offered to you in short form, who we are, why we are here and how we got here. In our view, no rational, humane person can look honestly at the misery, poverty, destruction (slow or fast, physical or psychological—, brought about by this society and remain unmoved by it. We are strong; we are growing, and we want you to join with us.

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