

# Class Writing and Community Construction in The Time Planning Bureau

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**Abstract:** The science fiction film "Time Planning Bureau" presents a profound class writing and community ideal. The journey of the hero Will Salas from silently enduring the oppression of the capitalist exploitation system to finally taking the road of violent resistance is a typical portrayal of breaking the class barriers and fighting for freedom and independence, exposing the ubiquitous exploitation of workers by capitalism. Faced with exploitation and oppression, the working class gradually awakens its class consciousness from factories to stores to banks, and finally the workers move from unorganized violent resistance to united action, which must fulfill the mission of constructing a working class community.

**Key words:** The Time Planning Agency; exploitation; class consciousness; resistance

The American film "The Time Bureau", released in 2011, paints a picture of a proletarian community that must be built as a result of capitalist exploitation and the awakening and rebellion of the proletariat. The story is set in a future society where people's genes stop aging from the age of 25, after which each person has only one year left to live unless they can get more time. Time is branded on everyone's arm, so that people know how much time they have left at all times. Time became currency, and time was traded for payroll and for the purchase of goods. Workers earn time and consume it. The rich could live forever, while the poor had only a few days or hours to live and could die at any time as time ran out.

## 1. The epitome of capitalist exploitation system

For a worker to become an object of capital exploitation, two conditions are required: on the one hand, the worker is a free man who can dispose of his own labor force; on the other hand, he is made to have no other commodity to sell, free to have nothing, nothing necessary for the realization of his own labor force". In other words, the labor force becomes a commodity presupposes the polarization of social wealth, where the worker has nothing but his own labor force. Marx believed that this was clearly the result of historical development, the product of many economic changes and the demise of a series of obsolete forms of social production. The film does not explain how the so-called "primitive accumulation" takes place, but assumes from the beginning that capitalism already exists objectively. I don't have time, I don't have time to figure out how it all happened, it just did", says Will Salas, the main character. Will and his mother live in a very modest place, in contrast to the mansions where the rich and famous live. Will works late to celebrate his mother's fiftieth birthday, just to earn a bottle of wine. This shows that the workers' income is only enough to enable the workers to maintain a basic living, and red wine is already a luxury for them. In this situation, Will does not even have time to have a girlfriend.

At the beginning of the day's work, Will had one day and four minutes left, and when he settled his wages, he found that the factory had cut his wages, leaving him with a total of one day and four hours and fifty minutes. In other words, in addition to the time consumed by the work, he probably earned only four hours and fifty minutes, and the income earned that day was not enough to last him until the

end of the next day. The capitalists exploit workers so heavily and pay them wages so far below the value of labor that they are unable to sustain the simple reproduction of labor, which inevitably leads to the shrinking of the working class. Under capitalism, hard work to get rich is just a myth. In order to survive, the dispossessed worker is forced to sell his labor day after day, the Roman slave by chains and the hired worker by invisible threads tied to his own owner. This illusion of his independence is maintained by the frequent change of employers and the legal mimesis of the contract". Even so, stimulated by the desire for absolute enrichment, the capitalists were not satisfied with normal exploitation, the extent of which threatened the survival of the worker. The remaining year after the age of 25 is the source of the capitalist's time, and behind the capitalist with a life expectancy of thousands of years there must be thousands of workers who cannot live their lives normally. This is a "cannibalistic" social system - the capitalist's unlimited life span is a plundering of workers' lives.

## 2. The germination, awakening and strengthening of the class consciousness of the proletariat

The proletariat, surrounded by the ideology of the bourgeoisie, had to overcome many difficulties to recognize its status and mission. Lukács believed that the proletariat could not evade its mission. The question is only how much suffering it must endure before it reaches the maturity in consciousness to correctly recognize its class position and to be able to reach its own class consciousness. The formation of the hero's class consciousness in the film goes through a long process from germination to awakening and then further strengthening. His sense of rebellion sprouted from his childhood experiences and his work experience when he grew up. When Will was young, his father won time through fighting and then distributed it to everyone, bringing hope to everyone, but was also killed and purged as an unstable element in society. The executives of the Time Lending Bank pointed out that too much time in the wrong hands would collapse the market, this is because if people with a lot of time gave it away to the poor, as Will's father did, the poor would not have to take out further loans, thus destroying the channels of exploitation of the capitalist system. The murder of his father planted a seed of rebellion in Will. After working, the unfair exploitation system inspired Will's rebellious spirit. Will tried to protest against the factory's wage cuts,

but on the one hand, the capitalist's hawks and dogs were watching him intently, and on the other hand, the numb workers next to him said, "Get out of here, take whatever you can get", so he had no choice but to give up.

The real awakening of the hero's class consciousness is stimulated by the death of his mother, but also because a key figure reveals to him the logic of the world. Will's mother had only one and a half hours left after paying off the bank loan, but the bus price went up from one hour to two hours, so she had to run as hard as she could to get back, and died on the road after running out of time. Her mother's tragedy reinforced Will's belief in overthrowing the existing social system. Will met a man in a bar at night "with a century of time", this man came in a higher "time zone", should not have appeared in their time zone. Will kindly reminded him that he should leave here immediately, someone has been watching him, will rob his time and kill him, but the other side looks like it does not matter. Sure enough, Minutemen Fortis appeared and tried to rob him, but was saved by Will. The rescued man's name is Henry Hamilton, from the Higher Time Zone - New Greenwich. Hamilton is 105 years old, and after living for so long has become bored with living and is bent on death, and he believes that it is necessary for people to die. Hamilton told Will the truth about the world: not everyone can live forever, only a few people can, most people must die; the reason why there are different time zones, the reason why taxes and prices in the ghetto keep rising is to make people keep dying; if there is no exploitation, how can the rich have a million years left, while the poor only die gradually because there is not enough time left. Hamilton secretly transferred more than a hundred years of his time to Will the next day, after which he died from running out of time. Although Hamilton's starting point was not to enlighten the proletarians, he revealed to the workers, as Marx did, the laws of capitalism in action. After understanding the secrets of exploitation in the world and suffering the shock of his mother's death, Will aspires to overthrow the unfair social system, take away everything the rich have and make them pay. At this point Will's class consciousness really awakened.

### 3. From unorganized violent resistance to the action of the unionists

In addition to the system of exploitation, the film also portrays the violent organs of capitalism. When the Time Lending Bank raised the interest rate to 37%, Will understood that all his efforts were in vain, even though he gifted the robbed time to the poor, the capitalists could get that time back simply by constantly raising the cost of living. After realizing that the existing social system could not be harmed by robbing time, Will thought that the only way to do it was to rob back a million years of time. They kidnapped Vyse and robbed a million years of time from the Time Lending Bank. Will and Sylvia try to break the exploitative social system by putting a lot of time into the circulation market of the ghetto and making it collapse. Vyse tells them that even if they can change the fate of one or two generations,

they will not change the entire social system, because everyone wants to live forever, and in order for some to live forever, most must die. If time symbolizes money, then this absolute desire for immortality is the same as what Marx called the capitalist's absolute desire to get rich. It is clear that unorganized individual heroic action alone cannot counter the entire capitalist system, and Will and Sylvia probably realized the need to mobilize the masses in order to achieve success in the struggle. Marx and Engels believed that united action, at least by the civilized nations, was one of the first conditions for the proletariat to achieve emancipation. The liberation of all mankind could only be truly achieved through the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system by united proletarians and the complete abolition of capitalist private ownership.

Weis's remarks enrage Will, who seems to realize that there is some truth in what she says, but can only tell Weis firmly: no one should live forever, even if only one person is sacrificed! It can be seen that, after recognizing the unfair nature of the existing social system and the slim hope of revolution, the only thing that supports Will to continue his resistance is his firm ideal belief. They risked their lives to send one million years of time to the twelfth time zone and gave it to the poor. Their practice made the exploitation system in this time zone collapse. With a large amount of circulating time on the market, workers left the factories and tried to cross to the advanced time zone. Led by them, there was also unrest in the eighth and tenth time zones, and the unrest continued to spread to other time zones. After the mobilization of the masses, the resistance struggle made a breakthrough and had the tendency of spreading like a blaze.

### 4. Conclusion: The completion of the community construction

Will and Sylvia end up becoming dedicated time lending bank robbers, going around robbing time lending banks of their time. We can't help but ask, how will things develop and will they succeed? The answer is obviously no. Maybe they will be shot down in their next robbery, and the poor people who are given the gift of time don't even need to be dealt with by the government; they are naturally wiped out when the time is spent. Therefore, only the proletariat is the only truly revolutionary class, and for the proletariat to achieve revolutionary victory, it needs to form its own political party, to constantly educate the workers, and also to unite all the forces that can be united and to carry out the construction of a community. In short, Will and Sylvia set up the image of resistance, planted the seeds of resistance, and laid the foundation for the construction of the proletarian community. Marx and Engels believed that "only in a community can the individual acquire the means for the full development of his talents, that is to say, only in a community can there be individual freedom." Therefore, only by realizing the construction of the proletarian community can we truly realize the rebellion against the ruling class and the pursuit of individual freedom.

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