**Applied Example of Dialectical Materialism:**

**Taxi Workers’ Alliance**

Now with basic understanding of the basic laws, we are going to attempt to apply dialectical materialism to an analysis of a campaign of the Taxi Workers Alliance in New York City.

The Scene:

Up until 1979, taxi drivers were employees of large corporations.  Move towards making taxi workers more like independent contractors.   This led to many changes.   Are about 24,000 drivers, 95% are immigrants, overwhelmingly majority are South Asian.   System now works–all cabs have medallions.  Medallions cost $250,000.   Medallions consolidated into hands of a small number of taxi corporations who lease them to the drivers.   People pay to work–about $80 a day.    Some drivers have own cars–others have to pay $30 to lease car for day.  Also pay gas, tickets, etc.   Drivers are at deficit before start of day…work to break even and make a profit (wages) by the end of the day.   This is why they work 12-14 hour shifts.

The Application of Dialectics:

* TWA’s assessment –Primary Contradiction is ownership of medallion (means of production)–not ownership of the car.   Overwhelming number of drivers are leasing medallions vs. split of car ownership.
* Goal: Allow drivers to own means of production and destroy medallion based system.
* Strategy–destabilize medallion structure.  1998–called for taxi drivers strike–harassment and exploitation by taxi & limousine commission–harassment by Giuliani.
* Got 99% of workers to strike in 1998 (at which point medallion was worth $300,000–dropped to $180,000 during strike–destabilize medallion value to disinterest owners from owning medallions.