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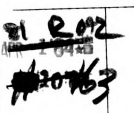

CLASS THEORY AND AMERICAN POLITICS

By

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ABSTRACT

CLASS THEORY AND AMERICAN POLITICS

By

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This work attempts a reexamination of Marx's theory of classes in light of changes in the character of twentieth-century American capitalism. The particular focus is on the political implications of the emergence and growth of new "middle strata," which contradict Marx's argument about the simplification of class antagonisms. Rather than rejecting Marx out-of-hand, however, the analysis explores the restructuring of class relations from the standpoint of a Marxist framework, locating the new middle strata within the separation between mental and manual labor, both in production and in the society as a whole. The political consequences of the restructuring of class relations are considered by examining the emergence of a "new right" in American politics during the early 1980s. The new right is seen as a realignment of political coalitions, arising in part from antagonisms between the working class and the new middle strata; moreover, the new right is regarded as historically contingent, underscoring the necessity of emphasizing the less deterministic aspects of Marx's writings, in which politics are neither immediately reducible to some "objective" class structure nor guided by an immanent trajectory of history.

Specifically, the organization of the work is as follows: The first chapter reviews a wide body of Marx's writings in order to retrieve the

constituents of a theory of classes; the second chapter examines the restructuring of class relations in the twentieth-century United States, relying upon empirical data and recent theoretical works on the labor process, the state, and mass culture; the third chapter consists of a review of recent class theory, focusing particularly on the debates over the new middle strata; and, the final chapter attempts to draw the earlier discussion into focus by exploring the new right.

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INTRODUCTION

The problem of class has been an enduring one within Marxist theory, fueled by the fundamental irony that, although Marx regarded class as the central category for understanding human history ("The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle"), it remained a generally underdeveloped concept in his writings. The profound restructuring of twentieth-century capitalism, however, has pushed that problem to the brink, raising a question as to whether Marx's concept of class in any longer useful for understanding the political dynamics of the advanced capitalist societies.

Historically, the problem has tended to be addressed in terms of the politics of class, rather than the identification of classes. As Alan Hunt has argued,

> (f)rom Marx through to Lenin the concept of the "working class" was relatively non-problematic. The working class was identified as the industrial or factory proletariat. Throughout the "classical" period of Marxist theory the problem which presented itself was the relationship between the working class and other social classes (Hunt, 1977:18).

In essence, the constitution of the working class "in itself" was taken for granted. The strategic question became how to realize the potential of the working class as the revolutionary subject of history, in conjunction with other classes. For Lenin, the central issue was the relationship between the working class and the peasantry in Russia (see, e.g., Lenin, 1975[2]:450-452), an issue that reappeared in other twentieth-century revolutions in the Third World. In the more developed

capitalist countries of Western Europe, the problem took on different dimensions. In the early part of the twentieth century, the central issue was the failure of a fairly substantial proletariat to replicate the revolutionary upheaval in Russia in the centers of industrial capitalism. During this period, the basic conception of the working class as synonymous with the industrial proletariat remained relatively unchallenged. As Hunt has argued, it was not until the 1930s that the composition of classes began to be re-examined. The adoption of "popular fronts" and "united fronts" against fascism required the revolutionary movement to reconsider not only relations within the working class, but relations between the working class and other classes, which shifted the political strategy to a Gramscian project of forming alliances under the hegemonic leadership of the working class. (For a fuller discussion, see Hunt, 1977:81-84). The anti-monopoly coalition strategy of Eurocommunism is a recent expression of this shift (Carillo, 1978).

What is perhaps most significant about this reorientation, however, is that it increasingly meant forming alliances not only with other classes that were in historical decline (peasantry, petty bourgeoisie), but with new strata that were, in fact, created as a result of transformations in the nature of modern capitalism. Expansion in the ranks of managers, professionals, technicians, scientists, engineers, state employees, office workers, etc. represented new forces in the class structure of the advanced capitalist societies, which had to be reckoned with theoretically as well as practically. The emergence of these new intermediate strata posed a dilemma: They could be seen as part of an expanded working class, by virtue of the fact that they tended to work for wages and salaries rather than as independent producers or owners of capital; they could be regarded as somehow

existing "between" the fundamental conflict between capital and labor; or, they could be characterized as some form of new class, which required either a substantial modification or an outright rejection of Marxist class theory. In any event, these new middle strata had to be recognized as an independent political force, since they were, by and large, the social base for new forms of militance that emerged during and after the 1960s--the events of May, 1968 in France, the movement for workers' self-management (autogestion), feminism, environmentalism, the anti-nuclear movement, etc.

The situation in the United States was different, although in some respects parallel. With the purging of communists from the labor movement during the 1940s, the near decimation of the Party during the 1950s, and the integration of the working class into mass political parties, even the shell of class politics disappeared from view. Given the marginalization of the old left, the new left that emerged from the student and anti-war movements of the 1960s, to the extent that it turned to Marxism as a theory of history, found itself in an ironic position--it had adopted a theory of history that could not account for its own existence. Furthermore, new left activism was not adequate for rejuvenating working class militance. Short-lived attempts to forge a "student-worker alliance" only served to underscore the separation. Subsequent political responses were no more successful. In that fraction of the new left generally referred to as the "new communist movement," one tendency embraced Lenin's theory of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism, dismissed the American working class as a conservative labor aristocracy, and focused their work on solidarity with Third World revolutionary movements, while another tendency, genuflecting before orthodoxy, charged by Lenin's pamphlet, What Is To Be Done?, and carrying

an armful of newspapers, stalked the factory gates. The "democratic socialist" (non-Leninist) wing of the new left, on the other hand, was more likely to engage in political work within its own social base (environmentalist, anti-nuclear, neighborhood, gay, and women's organizations), but tended to skirt around the contradictions of class--especially their own isolation from the working class--by accepting some vague notion of an "expanded working class."

Thus, within the Marxist political movements of Western Europe and the United States, the problem of class has taken on larger proportions, involving not only strategic questions of forming class alliances, but also questions referring to the basic composition of classes. The political quandary of contemporary Marxism is reflected within recent Marxist theory, where debates over the nature of class have been forced to confront the profound restructuring of social relations in the advanced capitalist countries. A central issue in those debates has been the political implications of the growth of the new middle strata. To summarize briefly, sections of the new middle strata have been characterized variously as part of an expanded working class, increasingly proletarianized by the conditions of wage labor (Szymanski, 1972; Loren, 1977); as a "new working class" with a revolutionary potential that goes beyond the conservative practices of traditional working class trade unions and political parties (Mallet, 1975a and 1975b; Gorz, 1964; Gintis, 1970 and 1972); as a "new petty bourgeoisie" whose political and ideological character transforms them into a rearguard in spite of their dispossession through wage labor (Poulantzas, 1975 and 1979); as occupying "contradictory class locations," having interests in common with both capital and wage labor (Wright, 1978); and, as a new "Professional-Managerial Class" that is at once subordinate to capital and in a position

of domination over the working class (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977a and 1977b; Walker, 1979).

In addition to attempts to account for the new middle strata within a framework which accepts Marx's argument about the fundamental conflict between capital and labor, others have argued that sections of the new middle strata constitute a "new class" which renders obsolete the Marxist characterization of class relations in capitalist society. The sources for this latter line of argument are varied, including a range from hostility to sympathy toward the Marxist tradition. One theoretical strain, for example, emerged from the argument that a separation of ownership from control shifted social power from the capitalist class to a stratum of corporate and state managers (see, e.g., Berle and Means, 1967; Berle, 1959)--a development that has been both bewailed (Burnham, 1941; Kristol, 1978) and applauded (Galbraith, 1958 and 1967). A related, but more comprehensive, argument contends that the social relations of "post-industrial" society are dominated by a new knowledge class (Touraine, 1971a and 1971b; Bell, 1973), a theme which has been repeated in various forms (Bensman and Vidich, 1971; Gouldner, 1975-76 and 1979). The contention that the "new class" transcends specifically capitalist social relations has been buttressed by pointing to parallel developments in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.*

It is the purpose of the present work to undertake a critical review of the debates over the nature of class in the advanced capitalist

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*Djilas' (1959) "classic" application of the new class argument to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe focused primarily on the party-state bureaucracy. More recent discussions, however, have focused more broadly on the role of intellectuals within the division of labor in "actually existing socialist" societies (Bahro, 1978; Konrad and Szelenyi, 1979).

countries, with a particular focus on the political implications of the new middle strata. The study concentrates on the United States, which, in many respects, poses the most difficult challenge to a Marxist theory of class, since the politics of class are much less apparent than in Western Europe. In brief, the outline of the study is as follows: The first chapter attempts to retrieve the constituents of a theory of class from Marx's writings, an undertaking necessitated by the fact that Marx nowhere provided a single, comprehensive theory of class. The second chapter turns to an examination of the limitations of Marx's writings with respect to the new middle strata by looking at changes in the character of American capitalism during the twentieth century. The third chapter consists of a review of recent class theory. The final chapter then attempts to draw together the various themes developed throughout the study into an analysis of the relationship between class and American politics, specifically by looking at the recent emergence of a "new right."

A caveat is in order. To the extent that the study focuses exclusively on class, it is necessarily incomplete; i.e., any analysis that does not give equal weight to questions of race and gender can only claim a partial understanding of American politics. The emphasis on class can provide useful insights into the politics of race and gender, insofar as both the black and feminist movements have been saddled with their own internal class divisions; on the other hand, how race and gender affect the politics of class does not receive the central attention it would deserve in a more comprehensive analysis--it is, as the classic disclaimer goes, beyond the scope of the present study.

CHAPTER 1

MARX'S THEORY OF CLASSES IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY

The modern usage of the term "class" as a description of social relations originated during the period of the Industrial Revolution in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, particularly in association with the French and American Revolutions. In contrast to the hitherto static vocabulary of estate, rank, and order, class reflected a changing social consciousness:

> The essential history of the introduction of "class," as a word which would supersede older names for social divisions, relates to the increasing consciousness that social position is made rather than merely inherited. All the older words, with their essential metaphors of standing, stepping and arranging in rows, belong to a society in which position was determined by birth (Williams, 1976:52).

Even within this modern usage, however, class has had a variety of meanings. The terms upper class, middle class, and lower class, for example, imply hierarchy, a rank order, although in the modern sense they also connote the possibility of movement between classes rather than merely fixed position. Class has also been used to describe divisions based on different sources of income, as in the distinction between landlords, capitalists, and laborers within classical political economy. The terms useful or productive classes counterposed to a privileged class suggest, on the other hand, a dichotomous division based on a fundamentally exploitative relationship (Williams, 1976:51-59; Ossowski, 1963:19-68).

Marx's concept of class is firmly rooted in this modern sense of the term, incorporating at one time or another the various meanings

associated with it. According to his own account, Marx's unique contribution was the claim that " . . . the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production . . ." (Letter to J. Weydemeyer in Marx and Engels, 1969[1]: 528). Thus, although the configuration of classes may appear at times in the form of hierarchy, or as divisions based on sources of income, the essential nature of class is derived from social relations formed in the process of production; furthermore, class relations associated with one historical stage of production give way to new class relations formed in a succeeding stage. Given their essentially historical character, then, classes are never preconstituted even within one stage of production, but--to use Hegelian language--are in the process of "becoming."

Nowhere in his general theory of class is the condensation of a multiplicity of meanings into a fundamentally historical category more evident than in his theory of classes in capitalist society. Both hierarchical gradation and divisions based on income are dissolved in the formation of capitalist class relations. Consider, for example, an oft-quoted passage from the Communist Manifesto, written in 1848:

> In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank . . . .
>
> The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.
>
> Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:109).

Or, consider a passage from the end of the third volume of Capital, written in 1883:

> The owners merely of labour-power, owners of capital, and landowners, whose respective sources of income* are wages, profit and ground-rent, in other words, wage-labourers, capitalists and landowners, constitute then three big classes of modern society based upon the capitalist mode of production.
>
> In England, modern society is indisputably most highly and classically developed in economic structure. Nevertheless, even here the stratification of classes does not appear in its pure form. Middle and intermediate strata even here obliterate lines of demarcation everywhere . . . . However, this is immaterial for our analysis. We have seen that the continual tendency and law of development of the capitalist mode of production is more and more to divorce the means of production from labour, and more and more to concentrate the scattered means of production into large groups, thereby transforming labour into wage-labour and the means of production into capital. And to this tendency, on the other hand, corresponds the independent separation of landed property from capital and labour, or the transformation of all landed property into the form of landed property corresponding to the capitalist mode of production (Marx, 1967[3]:885).

Thus, the earlier gradations of social rank, the appearance of middle and intermediate strata within capitalist social relations, and even the hitherto independent existence of landed property, are all transformed into the basic contradiction between capital and wage labor.

The simplicity, and even the elements of consistency, that appear in the passages quoted above, however, betray a profound transformation in the substance of Marx's argument that occurred over the course of his writings. That transformation embodied not only variations in his intellectual project, but often ambiguous and sometimes contradictory positions. When Marx finally returned to a comprehensive restatement of a theory of classes in capitalist society, one which would reflect his

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*Marx's mention of sources of income here is a set-up, playing to the conventional wisdom of prevailing political economy. When he later asks the question, "What constitutes a class?", he answers: "At first glance--the identity of revenues and sources of revenue." He then proceeds to dismantle the logic of the argument, pointing out that even physicians and officials would have to be considered as separate classes, since they receive their revenues from different sources. Although the manuscript breaks off suddenly, the trajectory was clearly toward establishing ownership of capital and ownership of mere labor power as the defining criteria of class (Marx, 1967[3]:886).

developed position on the question, the project was abruptly interrupted by his death. The task of retrieving the constituents of that theory, then, requires going over the fragments that are dispersed throughout a wide range of his writings, taking into account the more general evolution of his thinking. The purpose of such a seemingly tedious undertaking is to provide a framework for exploring the limitations of the theory with respect to the nature of class relations in the advanced capitalist countries, but one which can also take advantage of the rich insights that are often lost when only facile accounts of general conclusions are taken into consideration. The intent is neither to praise Marx nor to bury him, but to address him honestly and critically.

The Proletariat as the Negation of Private Property

In his early writings, Marx's discussion of class was conducted within the framework of a critique of German philosophy and, to a lesser extent, the beginnings of his confrontation with English political economy. The looming figure was unquestionably Hegel, both in his own right and indirectly through his influence on the younger generation of German philosophers. The concept of class was, for Marx, the material basis for a critique of the Hegelian dialectic. In that context, the proletariat was presented as a necessity, both as the "other side" of capital and its negation; as such, it was still essentially a philosophical concept.

The dialectical relation between classes, as a necessary relation, was suggested by Marx in one of his earliest works, Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction, written in 1844. Marx argued in general that the possibilities of human emancipation in Germany rested not with critical philosophy, but required a material base, a class whose particular interests represented the whole of society:

> For a popular revolution and the emancipation of a particular class of civil society to coincide, for one class to represent the whole of society, another class must concentrate in itself all the evil of society, a particular class must embody and represent a general obstacle and limitation. A particular social sphere must be regarded as the notorious crime of the whole society, so that emancipation from this sphere appears as a general emancipation. For one class to be the liberating class par excellence, it is necessary that another class should be openly the oppressing class (Marx, 1964:56).

The development of the whole of German society, however, had not even reached that of England or France, so that no class had " . . . the logic, insight, courage and clarity which would make it a negative representative of society" (Marx, 1964:56). Marx then asked the question, which he proceeded to answer,

> Where is there, then, a real possibility of emancipation in Germany?
> This is our reply. A class must be formed which has radical chains, a class in civil society which is not a class of civil society, a class which is the dissolution of all classes, a sphere of society which has a universal character because its sufferings are universal, and which does not claim a particular redress because the wrong which is done to it is not a particular wrong but wrong in general . . . . This dissolution of society, as a particular class is the proletariat (Marx, 1964:58).

What brings the proletariat into being? Marx mentions only briefly that the proletariat is ". . . a result of the industrial movement" (Marx, 1964:58). As Nicolaus has suggested, "Marx has discovered no more about the proletariat than that it develops and grows larger as industry does, and already he has it dancing the leading negative role in the dialectic of History" (Nicolaus, 1967:26).

The role of the proletariat in the dialectic of history began to take on more content as Marx addressed the confrontation between German philosophy and English political economy. German philosophy, however, maintained the upper hand. In a book written with Engels near the end of 1844, The Holy Family (subtitled a "Critique of Critical Criticism"), the

target was a group of Young Hegelians. In the fourth chapter, Marx and Engels took on Edgar Bauer's translation and criticism of Proudhon's Qu'est-ce que la propriété? Briefly, Proudhon argued (in contrast to English political economy, which took as its starting point the wealth of nations created by private property) that private property also produces poverty, and that, in order to abolish poverty, private property must itself be abolished. German "critical criticism," however, chastised Proudhon for failing to recognize that poverty and wealth constitute a single whole, which must be investigated as such in order to discover the preconditions for its existence. The problem with "critical criticism," according to Marx and Engels, was that, in attempting to stand "outside" the whole in a typically theological manner, it failed to comprehend the real movement of the antithesis:*

> Proletariat and wealth are opposites; as such they form a single whole. They are both creations of the world of private property. The question is exactly what place each occupies in the antithesis. It is not sufficient to declare them two sides of a single whole.
>
> Private property as private property, as wealth, is compelled to maintain itself, and thereby its opposite, the proletariat, in existence. That is the positive side of the antithesis, self-satisfied private property.
>
> The proletariat, on the contrary, is compelled as proletariat to abolish itself and thereby its opposite, private property, which determines its existence, and which makes it proletariat. It is the negative side of the antithesis, its restlessness within its very self, dissolved and self-dissolving private property**(Marx and Engels, 1975:43).

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*If the defense of Proudhon against the criticism of German philosophy appears to be somewhat ironic, in light of Marx's own critique of Proudhon three years later in The Poverty of Philosophy, Marx explains that irony: "M. Proudhon has the misfortune of being peculiarly misunderstood in Europe. In France, he has the right to be a bad economist, because he is reputed to be a good German philosopher. In Germany, he has the right to be a bad philosopher, because he is reputed to be one of the ablest of French economists. Being both German and economist at the same time, we desire to protest against this double error" (Marx, 1963:Foreword).

**If there is any doubt about the enormous influence of Hegel, one need only compare this passage with Hegel's discussion of "Lordship and Bondage" in The Phenomenology of Mind (Hegel, 1967:229-240).

In essence, the proletariat is brought into existence as the "other side" of private property, as its negation.

That limited insight, with as yet no historical content, predominated over Marx's early "economic" writings. In the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, written earlier in 1844, Marx engaged Adam Smith's argument that the expansion of capital increases the wealth of nations. Marx argued, in contrast to Smith, that increasing wealth based upon the expansion of capital--itself nothing but accumulated labor--also leads to its opposite, viz, impoverishment for a growing class of workers whose means of existence are increasingly separated from them and concentrated in the hands of the capitalist:

> . . .(W)hen is a society in a condition of increasing wealth? When the capital and revenues of a country are growing. But this is only possible (a) when much labour is accumulated, for capital is accumulated labour; when, therefore, more of the worker's product is taken from him, when his own labour becomes opposed to him as an alien possession, and when his means of existence and his activity are increasingly concentrated in the hands of the capitalist. (b) The accumulation of capital increases the number of workers; conversely, the increasing number of workers increases the division of labour, and the increasing division of labour increases the accumulation of capital. As a result of the division of labour on the one hand, and the accumulation of capital on the other hand, the worker becomes even more completely dependent upon labour . . . . (c) In a society where prosperity is increasing, only the very wealthiest can live from the interest on money. All others must employ their capital in business or trade. As a result the competition among capitalists increases. The concentration of capital becomes greater, the large capitalists ruin the small ones, and some of the former capitalists sink into the working class which, as a result of this accession of numbers, suffers a further decline in wages and falls into still greater dependence upon the few great capitalists (Marx, 1964:72).

Thus, the expansion of capital is predicated upon, and simultaneously produces, an increase in the ranks of the working class, causing ". . .the whole of society (to) divide into the two classes of property owners and propertyless workers" (Marx, 1964:120).

What appeared, at first, in philosophical terms as only a necessary relation between classes thus took on a political-economic character,

insofar as the creation of the proletariat was linked to the division of labor, the concentration of capital, etc.; however, even this political economic treatment was abstract, providing no concrete, historical content to the formation of classes.

If there was any doubt that Marx remained in the thrall of Hegelian philosophy, it was laid to rest by Marx's claim that private property was derived from alienated labor (Marx, 1964:131).

The History of Classes

The first attempt to give a historical foundation to the formation of classes in capitalist society occurred two years later (1846) when, in conjunction with Engels, Marx issued a final and definitive critique of German philosophy in order to prepare the way for his writings on political economy.* The German Ideology was, in essence, an exposition of the philosophical foundations of materialism (the core of which was contained in Marx's Theses on Feuerbach, written a year earlier) and their extension into a materialist conception of history. It was in the context of the latter, especially, that the discussion of classes took on a historical character.

The argument about the formation of classes proceeded from the claim that various historical stages in the division of labor corresponded to different stages in the ownership of productive forces (tribal ownership, ancient communal and state ownership, feudal or estate property) and that, in the transition from feudalism to capitalism, the division of labor was

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*"It seemed to me very important that a work polemicising against German philosophy and current German socialism should precede my positive construction. This is necessary in order to prepare the public for the point of view of my Economics which is diametrically opposed to the previous German intellectual approach" (Marx's letter to Leske, quoted in McLellan, 1973:143).

simultaneously extended to an unprecedented scale and subsumed under capitalist social relations. In its broadest outlines, the argument traced the formation of classes within capitalism from the separation of town and country, corresponding to the beginnings of the existence of capital independent of landed property (the formation of guild systems in the towns); the separation of production and commerce, leading to an expansion of trade and communication, the establishment of relations between towns, and the formation of a burgher class (bourgeoisie) whose conditions of life transcended locality and craft; the rise of manufacture and production for an expanded market, thereby supplanting the guild organization of production, and the transformation of the relationship between worker and employer from patriarchal relations within the guild to monetary relations between worker and capitalist; the continued growth of commerce and navigation, the creation of a world market, and the rise of big industry on a world scale.

> Big industry universalised competition . . . , established means of communication and the modern world market, subordinated trade to itself, transformed all capital into industrial capital, and thus produced the rapid circulation (development of the financial system) and the centralisation of capital . . . . Generally speaking, big industry created everywhere the same relations between the classes of society, and thus destroyed the peculiar individuality of the various nationalities. And finally, while the bourgeoisie of each nation still retained separate national interests, big industry created a class, which in all nations has the same interest and with which nationality is already dead; a class which is really rid of all the old world and at the same time stands pitted against it (Marx and Engels, 1969:61-62).

In short, " . . . the whole mass of conditions of existence, limitations, biases of individuals, are fused together into the two simplest forms: private property and labour" (Marx and Engels, 1969:73).

Although classes were now seen as historical formations, the relations between classes still retained aspects of the Hegelian metaphysic. In the broad sweep of history, one class within a given historical stage of

production must present itself as the representative of the whole of society, over and against the ruling class. Since each succeeding stage in the ownership of production brings about an increase in the division of labor, each new ruling class extends its sphere of domination beyond that of any prior class, while simultaneously creating the conditions for new and greater opposition.

> Every new class . . . achieves its hegemony only on a broader basis than that of the class ruling previously, whereas the opposition of the non-ruling class against the new ruling class later develops all the more sharply and profoundly. Both these things determine the fact that the struggle to be waged against this new ruling class, in its turn, aims at a more decided and radical negation of the previous conditions of society than could all previous classes which sought to rule (Marx and Engels, 1969:49).

In the modern bourgeois era, the division of labor is extended to a world scale and the forces of production are brought under the domination of capital; corresponding to this movement of capital, on the other side, is a mass of propertyless workers whose only connection between ". . . the productive forces and . . . their own existence--labour--has lost all semblance of self-activity and only sustanins their life by stunting it" (Marx and Engels, 1969:74). Thus,

> (o)nly the proletarians of the present day, who are completely shut off from all self-activity, are in a position to achieve a complete and no longer restricted self-activity, which consists in the appropriation of a totality of productive forces . . . . This appropriation . . . can only be effected through a union, which by the character of the proletariat itself can again only be a universal one, and through a revolution, in which, on the one hand, the power of the earlier mode of production and intercourse and social organisation is overthrown, and, on the other hand, there develops the universal character and the energy of the proletariat, without which the revolution cannot be accomplished; and in which, further, the proletariat rids itself of everything that still clings to it from its previous position in society (Marx and Engels, 1969:75).

What is interesting about this account, however, is that, in giving the formation of classes a historical foundation--albeit a rather sketchy

and inadequate one, as Engels was to note later (Marx and Engels, 1947: xv)--a new element was introduced. Although the antithesis between private property and labor continued to have aspects of a necessary relation insofar as the proletariat, by its very condition of existence, represented the negation of private property, it also had to develop a consciousness of its condition, a revolutionary consciousness as a political class. The significance of this development should not be overstated, however, since the formation of a revolutionary class consciousness still had something of an automatic quality, being basically a reflection of material conditions.

Perhaps the most-often-quoted statement of this problematic was issued a year later (1847) when, having settled accounts with his "erstwhile philosophical conscience" and abandoned the manuscript of The German Ideology to "the gnawing criticism of the mice"* (Marx and Engels, 1969:505), Marx returned to his study of political economy. In the context of his critique of Proudhon's work, expressed in The Poverty of Philosophy, Marx argued that the class struggle must take on a political character:

> Economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The combination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle, of which we have noted only a few phases, this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests. But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle (Marx, 1963:173).

Marx thus makes a distinction between a class in itself, formed under the

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*This much-cited comment, taken from the Preface to a Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy, has often been used as evidence that the "mature" Marx rejected his earlier philosophical writings. The remark, however, referred in part to difficulties Marx and Engels were having in getting the manuscript published--difficulties they were willing to leave " . . . to the gnawing criticism of the mice all the more willingly as we had achieved our main purpose--self-clarification" (Marx and Engels, 1969:505).

objective conditions of capitalist production, and a class for itself,* in which the workers recognize (become conscious of) their common interests and constitute themselves as a political class. What is the nature of this transformation? A revolutionary class consciousness is the necessary consequence of the existence of an oppressed class, but contingent upon the full development of the productive forces within the old society.

> An oppressed class is the vital condition for every society founded on the antagonism of classes. The emancipation of the oppressed class thus implies necessarily the creation of a new society. For the oppressed class to be able to emancipate itself it is necessary that the productive powers already acquired and the existing social relations should no longer be capable of existing side by side. Of all the instruments of production, the greatest productive power is the revolutionary class itself. The organization of revolutionary elements as a class supposes the existence of all the productive forces which could be engendered in the bosom of the old society (Marx, 1963:173-174).

The question of how the proletariat constitutes itself as the revolutionary class was taken up again in the Manifesto of the Communist Party, which Marx and Engels wrote on behalf of the Communist League in late 1847 and early 1848. In the Manifesto, the schematic account of the historical formation of classes contained in The German Ideology, together with the view that the proletariat was necessarily the revolutionary class, predominated, with both tendencies being reinforced by the essentially propagandistic purposes of the document; however, the various stages through which the proletariat becomes a political class--i.e., transforms itself from a class in itself to a class for itself--received some elaboration.

In the first section of the Manifesto, entitled "Bourgeois and

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*These terms are adaptations of Hegel's observation that "self-consciousness exists in itself and for itself" as the opening statement in his discussion of "Lordship and Bondage" in The Phenomenology of Mind (Hegel, 1967:229).

Proletarians," Marx and Engels reconstructed the history of classes in capitalist society. The bourgeoisie, emerging from the ruins of feudal society, had transformed in its wake all hitherto existing social relations by ". . . constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society" (Marx and Engels, 1969:111). In this revolutionizing of the instruments of production, the bourgeoisie had brought under its sway productive forces on a scale unprecedented in human history.

> The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground--what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour (Marx and Engels, 1969:113)?

By developing these productive forces, however, the bourgeoisie had also created a series of crises, caused by the inability to contain the productive forces within the social relations of bourgeois society. The attempts to overcome these crises--". . . by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces . . . , by the conquest of new markets, and by more thorough exploitation of the old ones"--only had the consequence of " . . . paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented" (Marx and Engels, 1969:114).

The creation of these productive forces, and the ensuing crises, could not be contained within bourgeois social relations because ". . . not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons--the modern working class--the proletarians" (Marx and Engels, 1969:114). It

was at this point that Marx and Engels began their description of the development of the proletariat, both as an "objective" formation and as a political class.

> In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed--a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital (Marx and Engels, 1969:114).

As modern industry continues to destroy the remnants of feudal society and the little workshops of guild production, the ranks of the working class are swelled by the dissolution of sections of the middle class.

> The lower strata of the middle class--the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicrafts-men and peasants--all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialised skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population (Marx and Engels, 1969:115).

The struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie undergoes various stages of development.

> With its birth begins its struggle with bourgeoisie. At first the contest is carried on by individual labourers, then by the workpeople of a factory, then by the operatives of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them (Marx and Engels, 1969:115).

Insofar as the proletariat, at this point, constitutes a class, it is by virtue of the fact that it has been brought into being by the bourgeoisie.

> At this stage the labourers still form an incoherent mass scattered over the whole country, and broken up by their mutual competition. If anywhere they unite to form more compact bodies, this is not yet the consequence of their own active union, but of the union of the bourgeoisie, which class, in order to attain its own political ends, is compelled to set the whole proletariat in motion, and is moreover yet, for a time, able to do so (Marx and Engels, 1969:116).

But, as modern industry develops, ". . . the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows,

and it feels that strength more" (Marx and Engels, 1969:116). It begins to form combinations (trade unions) and engages in occasional revolts. "Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time" (Marx and Engels, 1969:116). The growing union of the workers, however, is aided by the means of transportation and communication developed to such a great scale by the bourgeoisie.

Although, in the conduct of its political struggle against the bourgeoisie, "(t)his organisation of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves"--and here analysis converges with cheerleading--". . . it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier" (Marx and Engels, 1969:117). Ultimately, ". . . when the class struggle nears the decisive hour . . . ," sections of the ruling class are thrust into the proletariat, or voluntarily join its cause as ideologists, bringing ". . . fresh elements of enlightenment and progress" and a theoretical comprehension of ". . . the historical movement as a whole" (Marx and Engels, 1969:117). Other classes line up politically in relation to the basic struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat. The lower middle class, whose inclination is conservative insofar as it fights against its extinction at the hands of the bourgeoisie, may nevertheless adopt the standpoint of the proletariat in order to protect its future interests. The "dangerous class," the "social scum," although it may ". . . be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution," is more likely to play ". . . the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue" (Marx and Engels, 1969:118). "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class" (Marx and Engels, 1969:117).

> (In sum,) the advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable (Marx and Engels, 1969:119).

The intent of the rather extensive use of quotations has been, in part, to show that the theory of classes contained in the Manifesto--the most widely read, and perhaps most influential, Marxist text--was based on a limited understanding of class. The schematic account of the historical formation of classes in capitalist society was the product not only of an intended abbreviation suitable for a pamphlet, but rooted in the very general treatment provided in The German Ideology. Likewise, the argument that the proletariat was necessarily a revolutionary class, while originating in part in the inflated rhetoric of propaganda, was a conviction formed in the earliest confrontations with Hegelian philosophy, before the notion of class had any historical content. Even the introduction of the potentially problematic relationship between class as an objective formation and class as a political force (first characterized in The Poverty of Philosophy as a distinction between a class in itself and a class for itself) was circumscribed by putative destiny. Thus, the argument that a "distinctive feature" of the bourgeois epoch is that "it has simplified the class antagonisms" represented the shortcomings of that legacy.

Two factors, however, introduced a greater complexity into the argument: the revolutionary upheavals in Europe during 1848, which forced Marx to explore the subtleties of the sometimes-forward, sometimes-backward movement of history; and, Marx's extended study of political economy, and his analysis of capitalist production. An examination of each of those

factors, in their turn, forms the heart of the remainder of the present chapter.

Classes in History

Around the time the Manifesto was finally published in February of 1848, proclaiming that a "spectre is haunting Europe," revolutionary uprisings broke out on the continent. Having been expelled from Belgium, Marx was invited to Paris by the new provisional government in France. When the counter-revolution began that summer, signaled by the bloody suppression of a workers' revolt in Paris, Marx, now placed under some restrictions, left for London. In London, he founded a monthly journal, Neue Rheinische Zeitung-Revue, where he wrote a series of articles on the French situation, published in 1850 as The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850. After the coup d'etat in December, 1951, solidifying the counter-revolution, Marx analyzed the events occurring over the entire three-and-a-half-year period in a series of articles for a New York journal, The Revolution; the latter were published in 1852 as The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (McLellan, 1980:43-44, 54-56).

The analysis of the events in France marked an important departure in Marx's treatment of class. There is, to state the obvious, a significant difference in the amount of attention one can devote to detail in a book that covers a period of two years, or three and a half years, as opposed to "the history of all hitherto existing society." More than detail, however, the analysis of the actual political struggle between classes brought into focus the problematic relation between the "economic" and the "political" elements of class.

Marx did not abandon his notion that the proletariat would become the revolutionary class when the productive forces were fully developed under

capitalism. As early as April, 1849, for example, Marx observed in his opening remarks in Wage Labour and Capital that the turn of events in the European class struggle proved that every revolutionary upheaval, and every social reform, ". . . remains a utopia until the proletarian revolution and feudalistic counter-revolution measure swords in a world war" (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:150). Or, again, in the introductory statement to The Class Struggles in France:

> With the exception of only a few chapters, every more important part of the annals of the revolution from 1848 to 1849 carries the heading: Defeat of the revolution!
>
> What succumbed in these defeats was not the revolution. It was the pre-revolutionary traditional appendages, results of social relationships which had not yet come to the point of sharp class antagonisms--persons, illusions, conceptions, projects from which the revolutionary party before the February Revolution was not free, from which it could be freed not by the victory of February, but only by a series of defeats.
>
> In a word: the revolution made progress, forged ahead, not by its immediate tragicomic achievements, but on the contrary by the creation of an opponent in combat with whom, only, the party of overthrow ripened into a really revolutionary party (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:205).

In essence, the defeat of the revolution in France was only one more stage in the formation of the proletariat as the revolutionary class.

What was different about the analysis, however, was that, rather than the simplification of class antagonisms being presented as an almost linear development, the events in France revealed what Stuart Hall has called the "complex simplification" of classes (Hunt, 1977:35), occurring, at times, in an "ascending," and at other times, in a "descending" line (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:417-418). In a period of transition, when the development of the productive forces under French capitalism was as yet incomplete, factions within classes divided their common interests; temporary alliances were formed between classes, and within classes, only to fall apart again; and, what appeared at first to be a consolidation of the rule of the bourgeoisie crumbled when the coup d'etat of Louis

Bonaparte wound up representing (of all things!) the small-holding peasantry.

Marx's analysis of French history during the period 1848-1851 contained a great deal of detail, much of which must be passed over in the present account. Only the broadest outlines of that history, then, will be recounted here, with a particular focus on the analysis of class forces.

The Restoration under the Bourbon dynasty (1814-1830) represented the rule of landed property. The July Monarchy, under Louis Philippe (1830-1848), represented the rule of the French bourgeoisie, but predominantly the finance aristocracy, as opposed to the industrial bourgeoisie.

> The first thing that the February (1848) republic had to do was . . . to complete the rule of the bourgeoisie by allowing, beside the finance aristocracy, all the propertied classes to enter the orbit of political power (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:212).

The industrial bourgeoisie rode into the circles of power on the backs of the working class insurrections in February, 1848: "Just as the workers in the July (1830) days had fought for and won the bourgeois monarchy, so in the February (1848) days they fought for and won the bourgeois republic" (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:212).

The short-lived coincidence of interests between the industrial bourgeoisie and the proletariat resulted from the fact that it is the former which brings the latter into existence. The proletariat, however, was not as yet prepared for its task as the revolutionary class representing the interests of the whole of society. Instead,

> . . . the Paris proletariat sought to secure the advancement of its own interests side by side with those of the bourgeoisie, instead of enforcing them as the revolutionary interests of society itself . . . , it let the red flag be lowered to the tricolour (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:214).

The proletariat was seduced by the ". . . sentimental reconciliation of contradictory class interests . . ." under the banner of fraternite,

it ". . . revelled in this magnanimous intoxification of fraternity" (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:215).

Thus, the overthrow of Louis Phillipe and the creation of a provisional government represented ". . . a compromise between the different classes which together had overturned the July throne, but whose interests were mutually antagonistic" (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:210). The stalemate, however, did not last long, for just as the Paris workers had brought together the various factions of the bourgeoisie in a republic based on universal suffrage, so it compelled them to unite against the proletariat itself. With a mounting state debt, the provisional government had to withdraw concessions made to the workers. "The February republic was won by the workers with the passive support of the bourgeoisie. The proletarians rightly regarded themselves as the victors of February, and they made the arrogant claims of victors" (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:224). Demonstrations broke out in May, as workers invaded the Constituent Assembly and announced that it was dissolved, but the domonstrators were dispersed and the leaders put in jail. When the workers, having no other recourse, took to the streets in June, they were crushed in a bloody defeat.

> Just as the February republic, with its socialist concessions, required a battle of the proletariat, united with the bourgeoisie, against the monarchy, so a second battle was necessary in order to sever the republic from the socialist concessions, in order to officially work out the bourgeois republic as dominant. The bourgeoisie had to refute, arms in hand, the demands of the proletariat. And the real birth-place of the bourgeois republic is not the February victory; it is the June defeat (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:224).

After the June defeat, and the consolidation of the bourgeois republic, a new alignment of class forces took shape:

> On . . . (one) side stood the aristocracy of finance, the industrial bourgeoisie, the middle class, the petty bourgeois,

> the army, the lumpenproletariat organised as the Mobile Guard, the intellectual lights, the clergy and the rural population. On the side of the proletariat stood none but itself. More than three thousand insurgents were butchered after the victory, and fifteen thousand were transported without trial. With this defeat the proletariat passes into the background of the revolutionary stage (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:404).

From its position in the background, the proletariat fell prey to various utopian experiments, allied itself temporarily with any class or faction that seemed to represent a revolutionary potential, but generally pursued its goals "behind society's back" rather than as the representative of the whole of society.

The June defeat had accomplished the unification of the different factions of the bourgeoisie into a party of Order. As against the party of Anarchy, the proletariat, their common interests overcame their divisions. Landed property was rescued from political nullity. The industrial bourgeoisie, previously at odds with the finance aristocracy, the scourge of its indebtedness, recognized the greater threat of the working class: "The reduction of his profit by finance, what is that compared with the abolition of profit by the proletariat" (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:271)?

The consolidation of the bourgeois republic under the domination of the party of Order, and the marginalization of the proletariat, cleared the way for the next phase--the destruction of the republic itself. The Constituent National Assembly had drafted a constitution, formalizing universal suffrage, civil liberties, equality before the law, the creation of legislative (National Assembly) and executive (President) branches, etc. The first presidential election on December 10, 1848 brought into power Louis Bonaparte. The ascension of Bonaparte was made possible, in large part, by massive support from the peasantry which, freed from the bonds of feudalism in the Revolution of 1789, had borne the costs of the February (1848) republic through the imposition of taxes. The support for Bonaparte,

then, was a reaction against the bourgeois republic, against the tax collector.* Bonaparte's election, on the other hand, was also met with approval by the army, which suffered under the republic from lack of glory and inadequate pay; the big bourgeoisie, which regarded Bonaparte as a bridge to monarchy; and, the proletariat and petty bourgeoisie, who saw in him a capable opponent of the war minister who had led the brutal suppression of the June insurrection (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:413).

The period of the Constituent National Assembly after the election of Bonaparte was rife with conflict. There was, for example, a split within the bourgeoisie between republicans and royalists, with the latter being further divided into two factions, Legitimists (landed property, heirs to the Bourbon dynasty) and Orleanists (finance aristocracy and industrial bourgeoisie). The coalescence of the separate interests of the bourgeoisie into a party of Order ran up against Bonaparte, with whom they formed an uneasy and shifting alliance. The contours of that alliance were often influenced by the actions of a third force, the social democratic party, made up of the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Then, there was the vast mass of peasants, always available for mobilization as a reactionary force. The political turn of events at this juncture provided the occasion for some of Marx's most important and profound analyses of the relation between class and politics.

Upon his ascension to the presidency, Bonaparte had appointed a ministry from the party of Order. Together with his ministers, the president conspired behind the backs of the Constituent National Assembly, first, to commit French troops to an expedition in Rome, and then, to force the dissolution of the Assembly itself before it had completed its

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*"When the French peasant paints the devil, he paints him in the guise of a tax collector" (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:273).

business of finishing the constitution. In a session marked by the watchful presence of the military, the Constituent National Assembly voted to dissolve itself in January, 1849. Thus, an alliance between Bonaparte and the party of Order (represented in the ministry) began its assault on the institutions of the republic.

That alliance, as suggested above, was an uneasy one. The party of Order was itself a tenuous coalition of the separate interests of capital, brought together under the bourgeois republic. The disposition of the party of Order toward the bourgeois republic was, at best, ambivalent: On the one hand, the republic provided the foundation for their common rule as capital; on the other hand, it increased their vulnerability by making them more visible. In short, the equivocations of the party of Order between republicanism and royalism, and toward Bonaparte himself, reflected the dilemma of their political rule.

> It was a feeling of weakness that caused them to recoil from the pure conditions of their own class rule and to yearn for the former more incomplete, more undeveloped and precisely on that account less dangerous forms of this (monarchist) rule. On the other hand, every time the royalists in coalition come in conflict with the pretender that confronts them with Bonaparte, every time they believe their parliamentary omnipotence endangered by the executive power, every time, therefore, that they must produce their political title to their rule, they come forward as republicans and not as royalists . . . (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:423).

The playing out of these political contradictions took a fateful turn with the convening of the Legislative National Assembly in May, 1849.* There, the party of Order had to contend not only with Bonaparte, but with a third force, the social-democratic party. The social-democratic party, and its parliamentary representation, the Montagne, was a coalition of the

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*The Legislative National Assembly was provided for under the constitution drafted by the Constituent National Assembly. The latter was dissolved in January, 1849.

petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat. After the June days (1848), the petty bourgeoisie had recognized that the democratic guarantees of its material interests were threatened by the counter-revolution. Consequently, it allied itself with the working class and its socialist leaders. The result was a compromise between the socialist demands of the working class and the democratic demands of the petty bourgeoisie. The latter took precedence. In the process, the nature of the opposition changed with the class it represented.

> The peculiar character of Social-Democracy is epitomised in the fact that democratic-republican institutions are demanded as a means, not of doing away with two extremes, capital and wage labour, but of weakening their antagonism and transforming them into harmony . . . . (The) content is the transformation of society in a democratic way, but a transformation within the bounds of the petty bourgeoisie . . . , (which) believes that the special conditions of its emancipation are the general conditions within the frame of which alone modern society can be saved and the class struggle avoided (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:423-424).

By contending with the party of Order for the preservation of the republic and the protection of the "rights of man," however, the social-democratic party presented a threat to the rule of the coalesced bourgeoisie: "The bourgeoisie now felt the necessity of making an end of the democratic petty bourgeois, just as a year before it had realised the necessity of settling with the revolutionary proletariat" (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:424). The pretext was the invasion of Rome by French troops, which the Montagne protested as a violation of the constitution. A bill of impeachment was brought against Bonaparte, but it was rejected by the Legislative National Assembly. The Montagne left parliament, declaring that Bonaparte was outside the constitution. Street demonstrations were broken up by the military, a state of siege was declared, and part of the Montagne fled the country, while another part was arrested. The Montagne was crushed.

The social-democratic party had deluded itself into thinking that the army would join its revolt. That delusion was endemic to the petty bourgeois mentality:

> . . . (T)he democrat, because he represents the petty bourgeoisie, that is, a transition class, in which the interests of two classes are simultaneously mutually blunted, imagines himself elevated above class antagonism generally. The democrats concede that a privileged class confronts them, but they, along with all the rest of the nation, form the people. What they represent is the people's rights; what interests them is the people's interests. Accordingly, when a struggle is impending, they do not need to examine the interests and positions of the different classes. They do not need to weigh their own resources too critically. They have merely to give the signal and the people, with all its inexhaustible resources, will fall upon the oppressors (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:426-427).

With the defeat of the Montagne, and the defense of Bonaparte's unconstitutional commitment of troops in Rome, the party of Order had managed to subordinate the constitution to the majority decisions of the National Assembly. It was not, however, only a victory for the party of Order, but

> . . . a direct victory for Bonaparte, his personal triumph over his democratic enemies. The party of Order gained the victory; Bonaparte had only to cash in on it. He did so. On June 14 a proclamation could be read on the walls of Paris in which the President, reluctantly, against his will, as it were, compelled by the sheer force of events, comes forth from his cloistered seclusion and, posing as misunderstood virtue, complains of the calumnies of his opponents and, while he seems to identify his person with the cause of order, rather identifies the cause of order with his person (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:429).

The National Assembly was reconvened in October of 1849. On November 1, Bonaparte, feeling his strength, announced the dismissal of the ministry from the party of Order. Thus severed from its base of power in the executive, the party of Order was forced to rely on its rule in the National Assembly. Ironically, while the Assembly, an institution of the republic, provided the basis for its joint rule, it was also the vehicle through which the interests of antagonistic classes were expressed:

> The bourgeoisie had a true insight into the fact that all the weapons which it had forged against feudalism turned their points against itself . . . . It understood that all the so-called bourgeois liberties and organs of progress attacked and menaced its class rule at its social foundations and its political summit simultaneously . . ." (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:434).

That realization was brought home forcefully when, in the by-elections of March 10, 1850, called to replace the dispersed Montagnards, Paris elected all social-democrats. Bonaparte, fearing the possibilities of another revolutionary situation, hid behind the party of Order, begging its forgiveness. Rather than demanding the return of its ministry, however, the party of Order contented itself with Bonaparte's public humiliation and sought to consolidate its rule in the National Assembly. The latter was accomplished in a law passed on May 31, 1850, abolishing universal suffrage. The quiescent response of the social-democrats to their own disenfranchisement was possible because the proletariat, somnambulant during a period of general prosperity, surrendered its leadership to the petty bourgeoisie, which placed its faith in popular resistance to the law. Thus, "(t)he law of May 31, 1850, was the coup d'etat of the bourgeoisie" (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:440).

At this point, the remaining contenders on the political scene were the party of Order, whose parliamentary rule was solidified by the abolition of universal suffrage, and Bonaparte, who controlled the executive. Bonaparte wrested control of the army away from the National Assembly. The party of Order was no longer able to enforce its authority, or the authority of the constitution against the president. The party of Order decomposed into its separate factions, Legitimists against Orleanists and, within the latter, aristocracy of finance against industrial bourgeoisie.

In its weakness, the parliamentary party of Order lost the support of

the bourgeoisie outside of parliament which, from the standpoint of its separate factional interests, clamored for tranquility. The disintegration of the party of Order shifted hope for tranquility to Bonaparte.

> (T)he extra-parliamentary mass of the bourgeoisie . . . , by its servility towards the President . . . , declared unequivocally that it longed to get rid of its own political rule in order to rid itself of the troubles and dangers of ruling (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:466).

In October of 1851, Bonaparte announced his decision to restore universal suffrage, thus bypassing the National Assembly and appealing directly to the people. In December, he dissolved parliament. The coup d'etat was complete.

> France, therefore, seems to have escaped the despotism of a class only to fall back beneath the despotism of an individual, and, what is more, beneath the authority of an individual without authority. The struggle seems to be settled in such a way that all classes, equally impotent and equally mute, fall on their knees before the rifle butt (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]: 476).

If all classes were equally impotent and fell on their knees, it would seem that the enormous power of the French state, its bureaucratic and military organizations, was in fact independent of any particular class, a state separate from civil society. But, that was not the case: ". . . (T)he state power is not suspended in mid air. Bonaparte represents a class, and the most numerous class of French society at that, the small-holding peasants" (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:478).

First, the crushing of the revolutionary proletariat; then, the defeat of the "democratic" petty bourgeoisie; and, finally, the disintegration of the party of Order, of capital, into its separate interests--history had, indeed, moved in a backwards direction. No class had been able to consolidate its political rule. How was it possible, then, that the peasantry could find its political expression in a single individual, in Bonaparte? Marx's answer, contained in a key passage that says much about

what constitutes a class, was that the peasantry was incapable of political self-representation.

> The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, members of which live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse . . . . In this way, the great mass of the French nation is formed by simple addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes. In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organisation among them, they do not form a class. They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interests in their own name, whether through a parliament or through a convention. They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them, as an unlimited governmental power that protects them against the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above. The political influence of the small-holding peasants, therefore, finds its final expression in the executive power subordinating society to itself (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:478-479).

The apparent backward movement of history, from the failure of proletarian revolution to the success of peasant reaction, was, however, only a momentary setback. Bonaparte's base in the small-holding peasantry was doomed with the erosion of that base itself, both through the imposition of taxes to maintain the state apparatus, and through its transformation under the social relations of capitalism. The future of the peasantry, the modern peasantry, lay, rather, with the urban proletariat, the only class which directly confronts capital. Furthermore, Bonaparte's illusion that he was above classes, that he was the benefactor of all, could not withstand the contradictory demands of antagonistic classes, his promise of order could only lead to chaos. The period of French history from the February (1848) republic to the coup d'etat was but a retrenchment in the larger, forward movement of history.

In summary, Marx's analysis of French politics was significant for his general theory of classes for at least two reasons. First, in contrast to Marx's general discussion of the history of classes and class struggle, the application of his argument to particular historical circumstances revealed a more complicated relation between the mode of production and the political struggle between classes; i.e., the contours of the class struggle could not be summarily derived from social relations in a given historical stage in the development of productive forces. That is not to say, however, that the actual conduct of the struggle between classes did not reflect the material circumstances of the various classes, or factions within classes. It is more a matter of saying that the class struggle does not, at all times, conveniently fall into line with the more general trajectory of history; or, to use the language of contemporary Marxist structuralism, there is a "relative autonomy" between the political and the economic, the mode of production is only "determinant in the last instance" (see, e.g., Althusser, 1970).

Second, the "simplification of class antagonisms" traverses through an enormously complex path. In a period of transition from feudalism to capitalism, when remnants of the old order comingle with elements of the new, the array of class forces, and the interests that divide them, are anything but simple. In his analysis, for example, Marx identified at least seven separate classes, or factions that acted on behalf of their own "class" interests: landed property; aristocracy of finance; industrial bourgeoisie; petty bourgeoisie; proletariat; lumpenproletariat; and, peasantry. Furthermore, relations between these classes, or factions within classes, changed significantly as circumstances varied. Alliances were formed, and then dissolved. Consolidation led to disintegration.

The complexity of class relations in a period of transition, when the productive forces were not fully developed under the social relations of capitalism, begs the obvious question as to how the simplification actually occurs. That question occupied Marx's attention, at least indirectly, when he returned to his study of political economy and the analysis of capitalist production.

Classes and the Political Economy of Capitalism

After Marx had settled in London, he resumed his extended study of political economy in the British Historical Museum, interrupted occasionally by the travails of personal poverty, illness, legal battles, and polemical interludes. During 1857-1858, Marx drafted his Outlines (Grundrisse) of the Critique of Political Economy, culminating fifteen years of research. Emerging from that work were, most notably, the Critique of Political Economy (1859), Theories of Surplus Value (1862-1863), and three volumes of Capital (1865-1879). Of the latter two, only the first volume of Capital was published during his lifetime; after Marx's death, Engels took responsibility for editing and publishing the second and third volumes. The Theories of Surplus Value, originally intended as the fourth volume of Capital, was later edited and published separately in three volumes by Karl Kautsky.

A comprehensive review of Marx's economic studies is far beyond the scope of the present concerns. Accordingly, only those aspects that reflect on the further development of a theory of classes will be examined. Primary attention will be focused on Capital, drawing on the other texts only to the extent that they serve to illuminate the central work. It should further be noted that the economic studies do not directly address the theory of classes and class struggle; rather, the latter is

embodied in an analysis of the process of capitalist production.

Perhaps most significant addition to the theory of classes contained in the economic works was the concept of surplus value. In his earlier works, Marx had described the relation between classes in capitalist society, in philosophical terms, as a necessary relation (proletariat as the negation of private property) or, in economic terms, as exploitation based on the reduction of labor to a mere commodity. In the later economic studies, however, the fundamental relation between classes was defined in terms of the production and appropriation of surplus value.

Briefly, Marx asked how it was possible that, after paying for buildings, machinery, raw materials, labor, etc., the capitalist was left with a product that was worth more than the costs of production. In other words, what is the source of this surplus value?

The first section of Capital began with an analysis of the two forms of a commodity: use value and exchange value. Use value is derived from the utility of a commodity, i.e. its usefulness; as such, it refers to the commodity itself. When commodities are exchanged, however, there is an implied quantitative relation between them, such that the value of one commodity is capable of being expressed in proportion to the value of another commodity. There must be, then, some common element inherent in the different commodities exchanged. But, how is that possible? How, to use Marx's example, can the value of x quantity of corn be expressed in relation to the value of y quantity of iron? What, in essence, is the common element in corn and iron that enables their value to be expressed in equivalent proportions?

Marx's answer: The common element in commodities is that they are all the product of human labor. The exchange value of a commodity is thus determined by the amount of

> . . . labour-time socially necessary . . . to produce an article under the normal conditions of production, and with the average degree of skill and intensity prevalent at the time . . . . Commodities, therefore, in which equal quantities of labour are embodied, or which can be produced in the same time, have the same value (Marx, 1906:46).

Money, insofar as it represents the universal equivalent through which the value of different commodities is measured, is nothing but the expression of the common element contained in those commodities, viz. labor.

This very sketchy account of a complex argument at least provides some basis for returning to the original question concerning the source of surplus value. The capitalist does not realize surplus value merely by profitable sale of commodities in the marketplace, i.e. by retrieving whatever sum, in addition to the costs of production, that the market will bear; seen in this way, whatever the capitalist gains, the buyer loses, so there is no increase in the aggregate surplus. The origin of surplus value is not in exchange, but in production, for what the worker sells to the capitalist in return for wages is not his/her labor like any other commodity, but labor power, or the capacity to produce value. In essence, the worker produces, in a certain amount of time, the number of commodities equal in value to the money wages received from the capitalist that are required to purchase commodities (food, clothing, shelter, etc.) necessary for the worker's survival. The capitalist, however, forces the worker to work x number of hours beyond this necessary labor time; accordingly, this surplus labor produces a surplus product, which the capitalist then sells in order to realize surplus value. The production (by the worker) and appropriation (by the capitalist) of surplus value thus provides the dynamic of capital accumulation; as such, it is the foundation from which classes are formed and the antagonism between those classes develops.*

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*I am indebted at this point to Martin Nicolaus' succinct account of a complicated argument (Nicolaus, 1967:33-34).

In order to increase surplus value, the capitalist must increase the amount of surplus labor. Marx described two ways in which this is accomplished: the production of absolute surplus value, or an increase in the length of the working day; and, the production of relative surplus value, or an increase in the productivity of labor.

The production of absolute surplus value characterized the early period of capitalist development. It ran up against two obstacles, however. The first was the physical limits of labor power itself; i.e., by lengthening the working day and pushing the workers to the point of exhaustion, the capitalist risked the health, and even the life, of the workers. The second obstacle was the limits placed on the capitalist by the class struggle, particularly the struggle to establish a normal working day. With respect to the latter, Marx surveyed a series of English Factory Acts, enacted between 1833 and 1864. The purpose of these acts, and their counterparts on the continent and in the United States, was to regulate female and child labor, and to legislate limits on the normal working day. These acts were, in large part, the product of working class resistance, as evidenced, for example, by the Chartist movement's agitation for a ten-hour day. "The creation of a normal working day is, therefore, the product of a protracted civil war, more or less dissembled, between the capitalist class and the working class" (Marx, 1906:327).

The class struggle, then, forced the capitalist to seek an increase in surplus value through a different route, i.e. by increasing the productivity of labor. In doing so, the capitalist was forced to revolutionize not only the means of production but, by extension, the mode of production and, ipso facto, the social relations of production. Why this was the case provided the occasion for Marx's analysis of the formation of the modern working class and its fundamental relation to capital.

In the early period of capitalist development, a period dominated by the production of absolute surplus value, the capitalist effected no significant change in the mode of production. Commodities were produced in the context of existing forms of labor. The capitalist assembled, in one place, various craftspeople who were responsible for producing x number of commodities, which the capitalist then sold. Although these craftspeople were subjected to long hours and an intensified pace of work, the form of labor itself--craft production--remained intact.

> At first, capital subordinates labour on the basis of the technical conditions in which it historically finds it. It does not, therefore, change immediately the mode of production. The production of surplus-value--in the form hitherto considered by us--by means of simple extension of the working-day, proved, therefore, to be independent of any change in the mode of production itself. It was not less active in the old-fashioned bakeries than in the modern cotton factories (Marx, 1906:339).

The assemblage of a number of craftspeople into a common workplace appeared, at first, to be only a quantitative difference from earlier forms of craft production; however, a modification had occurred. The means of production (buildings, storehouses for raw materials, tools, etc.) were now used in common, rather than separately by individual workers. This "socialization" of the means of production under ownership of the capitalist was further accompanied by new forms of cooperative labor which not only increased the productive power of the individual laborer, but also created a new power--that of collective labor (Marx, 1906:357-358). In addition, the massing of large numbers of workers in one place required a directing authority, which became the special function of the capitalist in this simple form of production.

> All combined labour on a large scale requires, more or less, a directing authority . . . . A single violin player is his own conductor; an orchestra requires a separate one. The work of directing, superintending, and adjusting, becomes one of the functions of capital, from the moment that the labour under the control of capital becomes cooperative. Once a function of

> capital, it acquires special characteristics.
>
> The directing motive, the end and aim of capitalist production, is to extract the greatest possible amount of surplus-value, and consequently to exploit labour-power to the greatest possible extent (Marx, 1906:363).

This simple form of cooperative labor in which the means of production were socialized under the ownership of the capitalist, who also subsumed traditional forms of labor under his/her direct control, provided the basis for the transformation of the labor process itself. The rise of capitalist manufacture from craft production was predicated upon an extension of the division of labor, which took two forms: 1) The bringing together of workers from different crafts, who each contributed to the overall production of a commodity; and, 2) the bringing together of workers from one craft who, rather than separately creating a whole product, worked on only a part of it. In both cases, the net effect was to subdivide a craft into various forms of detail labor. To the individual worker, then, belonged the constricted sphere of detail labor, while the craft as a whole belonged to the collective laborer. Within this collective laborer, there further developed a differentiation in the value of skills (based on complexity, training, etc.), thus creating a hierarchy of labor power.

Equally important in this decomposition of crafts was the separation of the knowledge of the production process from the individual worker and its reinvestment in the capitalist.

> The knowledge, the judgment, and the will, which, though in ever so small a degree, are practised by the independent peasant or handicraftsman . . .--these faculties are now required only for the workshop as a whole. Intelligence in production expands in one direction, because it vanishes in many others. What is lost by the detail labourers, is concentrated in the capital that employs them. It is a result of the division of labour in manufacture, that the labourer is brought face to face with the intellectual potencies of the material process of production, as the property of another, and as a ruling power (Marx, 1906:397).

Thus, the capitalist was no longer merely the directing authority over existing forms of labor, but had taken control of the labor process itself.

The transformation in the mode of production resulting from the rise of manufacture was further extended with the introduction of machinery, albeit from a different direction. "In manufacture, the revolution in the mode of production begins with the labour-power, in modern industry it begins with the instruments of labour" (Marx, 1906:405). The machine, in its rudimentary form, was nothing but the tools of craft manufacture converted into the implements of a mechanism.

> The machine, which is the starting point of the industrial revolution, supersedes the workman, who handles a single tool, by a mechanism operating with a number of similar tools, and set in motion by a single motive power, whatever the form of that power may be (Marx, 1906:410).

The machine, then, reversed the relation between the worker and his/her tool, a reversal which found its fullest expression with the integration of the single machine into a complex system of machinery.

> The implements of labour, in the form of machinery, necessitate the substitution of natural forces for human force, and the conscious application of science, instead of rule of thumb. In Manufacture, the organisation of the social labour-process is purely subjective; it is a combination of detail labourers; in its machinery system, Modern Industry has a productive organism that is purely objective, in which the labourer becomes a mere appendage to an already existing material condition of production (Marx, 1906:421).

The introduction of machinery both revolutionized the mode of production and transformed the manner in which surplus value was produced. By superseding the muscle power of the worker with the motor power of the machine, the physical differences between workers was minimized; for example, it made possible the introduction of child labor into the factories. The complex system of machinery further encouraged the capitalist to lengthen the working day in order to use the machinery to its optimum capacity. With the passage of the Factory Acts (see p.39 above),

however, ". . . capital threw itself with all its might into the production of relative surplus-value, by hastening on the further improvement of machinery" (Marx, 1906:447). The shorter work day, in essence, compelled the capitalist to intensify the amount of labor expended in a given time, which was accomplished both by control of the pace of work afforded by the complex system of machinery and by improvements in the machinery itself. The net effect was to increase the rate of surplus value.

The machine-based factory system effected a change in the division of labor from the previous system of manufacture.

> Along with the tool, the skill of the workman in handling it passes over to the machine. The capabilities of the tool are emancipated from the restraints that are inseparable from human labour-power. Thereby the technical foundation on which is based the division of labour in Manufacture, is swept away. Hence, in the place of the hierarchy of specialised workmen that characterises manufacture, there steps, in the automatic factory, a tendency to equalise and reduce to one and the same level every kind of work that has to be done by the minders of the machines . . . .
>
> So far as division of labour re-appears in the factory, it is primarily a distribution of the workmen among the specialised machines . . . . The essential division is, into workmen who are actually employed on the machine (among whom are included a few who look after the engine), and into mere attendants (almost exclusively children) of these workmen . . . . In addition to these two principal classes,* there is a numerically unimportant class of persons, whose occupation it is to look after the whole of the machinery and repair it from time to time; such as engineers, mechanics, joiners, &c. This is a superior class of workmen, some of them scientifically educated, others brought up to a trade; it is distinct from the factory operative class, and merely aggregated to it. This division of labour is purely technical (Marx, 1906:459-460).

The thrust of the argument thus far has been to describe how, in the immediate process of production, the division of labor was reduced to a purely technical form within a relatively homogeneous mass of workers, who were subordinated, on the one hand, to the rhythm and pace of a complex

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*The term "class," as it is used here, can only be taken to mean a general reference to a grouping, rather than a reference to class in the more specific sense.

system of machinery and, on the other hand, to the capitalist's control of the labor process. But, what of the division of labor outside the factory, and its significance for the nature of class relations?

In his earlier discussion of manufacture, Marx had made a distinction between the division of labor in manufacture and the division of labor in society:

> Since the production and the circulation of commodities are the general pre-requisites of the capitalist mode of production, division of labour in manufacture demands, that division of labour in society at large should previously have attained a certain degree of development (Marx, 1906:387-388).

That is, the social division of labor is predicated on the fact that commodities are not only produced, but exchanged.

Stated differently, the social division of labor is tied to the general process of capital accumulation, or the reconversion of surplus value into capital. This reconversion results in a rise in the organic composition of capital, i.e. the ratio of constant capital (machinery, etc.--"dead" labor) to variable capital (living labor). In order for this reconversion to take place, it was first necessary that commodities be sold in exchange for money, part of which was then reinvested in capital equipment (constant capital), with other parts going to wages, profits, interest, etc. Thus, the reproduction of capital goes through various stages in a circulation process:

> First stage: The capitalist appears as a buyer on the commodity- and the labour-market; his money is transformed into commodities, or it goes through the circulation act M-C.
> Second stage: Productive consumption of the purchased commodities by the capitalist. He acts as a capitalist producer of commodities; his capital passes through the process of production. The result is a commodity of more value than that of the elements entering into its production.
> Third stage: The capitalist returns to the market as a seller; his commodities are turned into money, or they pass through the circulation act C-M (Marx, 1967[2]:23).

Upon re-entering the first stage from the third, the capitalist thus

reconverts surplus value into capital.

What, then, are the consequences of this accumulation process for the social division of labor or, more specifically, for the nature of class relations? On the one hand, the rise in the organic composition of capital causes an increase in the productivity of labor and, therefore, an increase in the rate of surplus value produced, insofar as labor power is capable of producing a greater quantity of commodities in a given amount of labor time. The reconversion of this greater mass of surplus value into capital thus results in the concentration of capital in the hands of the individual capitalist. Corresponding to this trend is the centralization of capital, or the merging of separate capitals. One consequence of the concentration and centralization of capital is that small-scale commodity producers are unable to compete, and they are either absorbed by big capital or forced into wage labor. The petty bourgeoisie gradually disappears as a class. On the other hand, the relative diminution of the variable part of capital (living labor) leads to the formation of a relative surplus population, or industrial reserve army--i.e., a mass of workers displaced from their jobs. The industrial reserve army plays an important role in the class struggle, insofar as it serves to depress wages by causing a competition among workers and reduces the militance of the working class by providing a constantly available supply of replacement labor.

The circulation process, however, creates a division of labor within capital itself, i.e., between merchant capital (commercial capital and money-lending capital) and commodity capital. The former presides over the sphere of circulation in a manner analogous to the way in which commodity capital presides over the sphere of production. Merchant's capital, however,

> . . . simply capital functioning in the sphere of circulation. The process of circulation is a phase of the total process of reproduction. But no value is produced in the process of circulation, and, therefore, no surplus-value. Only changes of form of the same mass of value takes place . . . . If a surplus-value is realised in the sale of produced commodities, then this is only because it already existed in them (Marx, 1967[3]:279).

The division of labor within capital itself, then, complicates the problem of class relations, especially when considered in light of the general argument about the ultimate simplification of class antagonisms. If merchant's capital produces no surplus value, but merely assists in its realization, what is the class character of workers employed by merchant's capital?

Stated briefly, Marx's answer is unclear. In Capital, he seemed to suggest that productive and unproductive labor share certain characteristics in common, insofar as both are subjected to the capitalist labor process: "Just as the labourer's unpaid labour directly creates surplus-value for productive capital, so the unpaid labour of the commercial wage-worker secures a share of this surplus-value for merchant's capital" (Marx, 1967[3]:294). Although, initially, the commercial worker "belongs to the better-paid class of wage-workers," the distinction between the commercial worker and the productive worker tends to diminish with the advance of the capitalist mode of production.

> This is due partly to the division of labour in the office, implying a one-sided development of the labour capacity, the cost of which does not fall entirely on the capitalist, since the labourer's skill develops by itself through the exercise of his function, and all the more rapidly as division of labour makes it more one-sided. Secondly, because the necessary training, knowledge of commercial practices, languages, etc., is more and more rapidly, easily, universally and cheaply reproduced with the progress of science and public education the more the capitalist mode of production directs teaching methods, etc., towards practical purposes . . . . With few exceptions, the labour-power of these people is therefore devaluated with the progress of capitalist production. Their wage falls, while their labour capacity increases (Marx, 1967[3]: 300).

Whether or not the common subordination of productive and commercial workers to the capitalist labor process creates common interests was not, however, addressed.

Elsewhere, Marx took up the matter of a different kind of labor, service labor, in a way which suggested that the distinction between productive and unproductive labor, in fact, creates opposing interests. In the Grundrisse, for example, Marx discussed "labor as mere performance of services," which does not produce surplus value, but rather consumes a portion of the capitalist's revenue.

> This . . . consumption of revenue . . . always falls within simple circulation; it is not consumption of capital. Since one of the contracting parties does not confront the other as a capitalist, this performance of a service cannot fall under the category of productive labor. From whore to pope, there is a mass of such rabble (Marx, 1973:272).

In his critique of Ricardo in the second volume of the Theories of Surplus Value, Marx seemed to suggest that service labor, by virtue of the fact that its livelihood depends on the surplus value created by productive workers, shares interests in common with the exploiting class:

> . . . (D)ue to machinery and the development of the productivity of labour in general the net revenue (profit and rent) grows to such an extent, that the bourgeois needs more menial servants than before; whereas previously he had to lay out more of his product in productive labour, he can now lay out more in unproductive labour, (so that) servants and other workers living on the unproductive class increase in number. This progressive transformation of a section of the workers into servants is a fine prospect. For the worker it is equally consoling that because of the growth in the net product, more spheres are opened up for unproductive workers, who live on his product and whose interests in his exploitation coincides more or less with that of the directly exploiting class (Marx, 1968[2]:571).

Or, again:

> What he (Ricardo) forgets to emphasize is the constantly growing number of the middle classes, those who stand between the workman on the one hand and the capitalist and landlord on the other. The middle classes maintain themselves to an ever increasing extent directly out of revenue, they are a

> burden weighing heavily on the working base and increase the social security and power of the upper ten thousand (Marx, 1968[2]:573).

This argument, however, was never developed any further, and it is difficult to find its equivalent anywhere outside of these few relatively obscure passages. One is forced to conclude with Nicolaus (1967:40), then, that Marx failed to develop the argument further because this "middle class" was not a dominant factor in mid-nineteenth century capitalism.*

Finally, Marx addressed the question of the impact of the accumulation process on the most rudimentary form of the social division of labor, that between town and country. Briefly, the destruction of feudal property and the conversion of land into a form of capital created a class of small-holding peasants; however, the accumulation process, greatly augmented by the introduction of mechanized agriculture, either drove the peasantry into the factories or transformed them into agricultural wage laborers. Correspondingly, the interests between large-scale agriculture, large-scale industry, and merchant capital tended to converge:

> Large-scale industry and large-scale mechanised agriculture work together. If originally distinguished by the fact that the former lays waste and destroys principally labour-power, hence the natural force of human beings, whereas the latter more directly exhausts the natural vitality of the soil, they join hands in the further course of development in that the industrial system in the country-side also enervates the labourers, and industry and commerce on their part supply agriculture with the means for exhausting the soil (Marx, 1967[3]:813).

Always lurking behind this conversion of land into capital, however, was the large landowner who, without contributing anything whatsoever to the

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*Nicolaus' further claim that ". . . one of Marx's great scientific achievements . . . (was) to have not only predicted that such a new middle class would arise, but also to have laid down the fundamental economic and sociological principles which explain its rise and its role in the larger class structure" (Nicolaus, 1967:46) is, however, a matter of contention, one which is addressed in succeeding chapters of the present work.

creation of value, was able to appropriate a portion of the surplus value derived from the productive use of land (agriculture, mining, logging, etc.) as ground rent. Thus, landed property, by virtue of its revenues based on ground rent, constitutes one of the "three great classes," along side of capital (profit) and labor (wages).

By way of summary, the alignment of class forces emerging from Marx's analysis of capitalist production looks something like this: The accumulation process leads, on the one hand, to the concentration and centralization of capital; in the process, small-scale commodity production falls by the wayside, and the petty bourgeois class gradually disappears. On the other hand, a mass of workers is created, brought from previous forms of isolated labor into new forms of cooperative labor, but subordinated to the capitalist's ownership of the means of production and control of the labor process itself. The capitalist class is divided into commodity and merchant's capital, but the overriding interest they share in common is the appropriation of surplus value. The working class is divided into wage laborers and a relative surplus population (industrial reserve army) which, in the short run at least, serves to reduce its militance by creating competition among workers. Corresponding to the separation of capital and wage labor in industry is the rise of capitalist agriculture, which merges the interests of large-scale agricultural capital with capital as a whole and that of agricultural wage laborers with the industrial proletariat. Between capital and labor is a group of unproductive workers, whose political interests are unclear but probably defined by the fact that they live off surplus value approriated from productive workers. Finally, there is landed property which, owing to the transformation of land into capital, appropriates part of the surplus value produced from the land as ground rent; accordingly, its

interests are allied with capital, at least as against wage labor. The fundamental conflict within which all classes align themselves, however, is the conflict between wage labor and capital, based on the production and appropriation of surplus value.

What is the result of this conflict? At the end of the first volume of Capital, Marx summarized the historical tendency of capital accumulation. There, he restated the argument about the concentration and centralization of capital, the socialization of labor under the capitalist mode of production, etc. He then described the historical culmination of the accumulation process:

> Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated (Marx, 1906:836-837).

And, lest there be any doubt that the figure of Hegel is lurking behind even the "mature" economic works:

> The capitalist mode of appropriation, the result of the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This is the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the labour of the proprietor. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of Nature, its own negation. It is the negation of the negation (Marx, 1906:837).

Thus, the long-run historical tendency of capitalist accumulation leads to the formation of a revolutionary working class, the negation of capital, which expropriates the means of production developed under capitalism and re-establishes them on the basis of genuine cooperation and collective ownership.

It would be remiss, however, to simply leave the matter at this point. If Marx's theoretical resolution of the class struggle seems to reflect too much the "worst" of his Hegelian legacy--i.e., his reliance on the immanent laws of history (albeit, with a material base)--there is also an aspect which reflects the "best" of that legacy--specifically, the discussion of class consciousness. Unfortunately, the latter does not resolve the theoretical problem of the class struggle, but rather complicates it further by adding a new dilemma.

Briefly, this dilemma may be called a "transformation problem"--not the one most commonly considered in Marxist theory (the transformation of value into price), but a different one: the transformation from a class in itself to a class for itself. In the opening chapter of the first volume of Capital, Marx began with an analysis of commodities. In the final section of that chapter, he undertook an investigation into the "fetishism of commodities," i.e., the irony that commodities, as the products of social labor, take on a thing-like character, or what Lukacs (1968) has called a "phantom objectivity." In order to clarify the nature of this mystical inversion, Marx resorted to an analogy with

> . . . the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities. This Fetishism of commodities has its origin . . . in the peculiar social character of labour that produces them (Marx, 1906:83).

In essence, commodities, as the products of social labor and thereby imbued with value, are separated from their producers in the process of exchange; accordingly, the value of one commodity appears to have meaning only in relation to the value of another commodity (or, both in relation to money).

This apparent independent existence of commodities--i.e., their mystification--thus obscures their true social character as products of labor. To cite Marx at his rhetorical best, this time from the third volume of Capital, the social relations between capital, landed property, and wage labor are

> . . . represented as the connection between the component parts of value and wealth in general and its sources, (i.e.,) we have the complete mystification of the capitalist mode of production, the conversion of social relations into things, the direct coalescence of the material production relations with their historical and social determination. It is an enchanted, perverted, topsy-turvy world, in which Monsieur le Capital and Madame la Terre do their ghost-walking as social characters and at the same time directly as mere things (Marx, 1967[3]:830).

The thrust of this general argument was aimed at the mystifications that enshroud bourgeois political economy; however, it has profound implications for the consciousness of the proletariat as well.* Insofar as the real social character of labor is obscured in the exchange of commodities, i.e., insofar as value appears to reside in the process of exchange, the recognition by the working class of its own collective power is thereby diminished. In other words, to the extent that wage labor is seen as a simple exchange of one commodity (labor) for another (money wages) between worker and capitalist, the collective power of social labor is concealed from the working class itself. Thus, although the accumulation process socializes the conditions of labor, the festishism of commodities acts an inhibitor on the formation of a revolutionary consciousness.

In short, what Marx describes optimistically in relation to the objective formation of the proletariat and its antagonism toward capital, he contradicts whenever he directly takes up the question of class

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*This latter theme was elaborated by Lukacs in his important essay, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat" (Lukacs, 1968).

consciousness. The transformation from a class in itself to a class for itself, then, contains a fundamental ambiguity.

Classes and the State

Before concluding this review of Marx's writings on class, it is important to briefly consider the question of the relation between classes and the state. In his Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction, Marx posed the question in terms of the relation of classes formed in civil society to the state (Marx, 1964:41-60). In The German Ideology, Marx and Engels argued that, in contrast to tribal property which appears as state property, the separation of private property from the community created a state which stood outside civil society; however, this state

> . . . is nothing more than the form of organisation which the bourgeois necessarily adopt both for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests . . . . (T)he State is the form in which the individuals of a ruling class assert their common interests, and in which the whole civil society of an epoch is epitomised . . . (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:77-78).

In the Manifesto, the modern state was described as ". . . a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" (Marx and Engels, 1969[1]:110-111). In the analysis of French politics between 1848-1851, the state was seen as an instrument for the suppression of the revolutionary working class but, to the extent that no class was as yet capable of expressing its ruling interests through the state, the power of the state fell into the hands of an individual (Bonaparte), whose base was in the peasantry.

In two of his later writings, specifically the Civil War in France (1871) and the Critique of the Gotha Programme (1875), Marx again took up the matter of the state as a class state. In the immediate aftermath of

the defeat of the Paris Commune (1871), Marx assessed the significance of the Commune in an address to the International Working Men's Association, of which he was a member. Marx quoted a passage from the manifesto of the Commune's central committee:

> The proletarians of Paris . . . amidst the failures and treasons of the ruling classes, have understood that the hour has struck for them to save the situation by taking into their own hands the direction of public affairs . . . . They have understood that it is their imperious duty and their absolute right to render themselves masters of their own destinies, by seizing upon the governmental power (Marx and Engels, 1968:288).

Marx added: "But the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes" (Marx and Engels, 1968:288). The enormous power of the centralized French state, with its bureaucracy, army, police, etc., had originated during the days of the absolute monarchy. The French Revolution (1789) had swept away some of the feudal remnants in the state, but its effectwas to consolidate the victory of capital over the old feudal order. The political character of the state, however, was transformed.

> At the same pace at which the progress of modern industry developed, widened, intensified the class antagonism between capital and labour, the State power assumed more and more the character of the national power of capital over labour, of a public force organised for social enslavement, of an engine of class despotism. After every revolution marking a progressive phase in the class struggle, the purely repressive character of the State power stands out in bolder and bolder relief (Marx and Engels, 1968:289).

Although the Second Empire established by Louis Bonaparte claimed to represent all classes, the apparent independence of the state was possible only because no class was capable of expressing its class rule.

The Commune stood in stark contrast to the empire. All officials were elected by universal suffrage and subject to revocation at any time; officials were paid the same wages as workers; the standing army was replaced by an armed populace; the police and the clergy were deprived of

their political influence; etc. In short, the Commune embodied the nascent forms of political decentralization and economic cooperation. The defeat of the Commune, with the assistance of the Prussian army, on the other hand, represented the common interest of international capital in wielding the power of the state as a means for maintaining its domination over labor. It was the task of the international working class, then, to organize itself into a political party in order to destroy the power of the capitalist state, first in its national manifestations, since that was the immediate reality, but ultimately on an international basis.

It was essential to see the state as an instrument for the domination of capital over labor if the working class was to avoid being deceived into thinking that simple maneuvers within the existing state would foster the socialist transformation of society. That was the position Marx maintained in his criticism of the draft program of the Gotha Congress (1875), which was held to unite the two factions in the German working class movement--the Social-Democratic Workers' Party, led by Bebel and Liebknecht, and the General German Workers' Union, led by Lassalle--into the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany. Marx addressed the draft Gotha Program section by section. To cite just one example from that draft program:

> The German workers' party, in order to pave the way to the solution of the social question, demands the establishment of producers' co-operative societies with state aid under the democratic control of the toiling people. The producers' co-operative societies are to be called into being for industry and agriculture on such a scale that the socialist organisation of the total labour will arise from them (Marx and Engels, 1968:329).

Besides taking the authors to task for resorting to "a newspaper scribbler's phrase" like "the social question," etc., Marx criticized the demand for its fundamental naivete.

> Instead of arising from the revolutionary process of transformation of society, the "socialist organisation of the total

> labour" "arises" from the "state aid" that the state gives to the producers' co-operative societies and which the state, not the worker, "calls into being." It is worthy of Lassalle's imagination that with state loans one can build a new society just as well as a new railway (Marx and Engels, 1968:329)!

The political naivete of such a demand was based on a profound misconception of the nature of the state.

> The German workers' party--at least if it adopts the programme--shows that its socialist ideas are not even skin-deep; in that, instead of treating existing society (and this holds good for any future one) as the basis of the existing state (or for the future state in the case of future society), it treats the state rather as an independent entity that possesses its own intellectual, ethical and libertarian bases (Marx and Engels, 1968:330-331).

The essential question is what kind of transformation the state must undergo if the creation of a communist society is to be possible.

> Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat (Marx and Engels, 1968:331).

The basic view of the state that emerges from Marx's writings, then, is that the state is a vehicle for class rule; as such, the working class movement for a socialist transformation of society cannot rely on reforms within the existing state. Instead, the goal of the revolutionary movement must be that of asserting its own class rule as a precondition for the creation of a communist society.

Review and Summary: Elements of Marx's Theory of Classes in Capitalist Society

In the opening section of this chapter, two passages were cited--one from the Manifesto and one from the third volume of Capital (see pp.8-9, above)--both of which suggest that the relations between classes become increasingly simplified with the development of the capitalist mode of production. It is now possible, however, to draw out a subtle, but important, differerence between those two statements. The first, from the

Manifesto, says that "the epoch of the bourgeoisie . . . has simplified the class antagonisms;" the second, from Capital, says, on the other hand, that "middle and intermediate strata . . . obliterate lines of demarcation" but "this is immaterial for our analysis," since the "continual tendency and law of development of the capitalist mode of production" is to transform "labour into wage-labour and the means of production into capital." It is one thing to say that class relations have actually become simplified; it is another thing to say that the simplification is what is relevant for analysis. It is in this difference, as well as in the similarities, that the elements of Marx's theory of classes in capitalist society are to be retrieved.

From his earliest writings until his last, Marx maintained the position that, in order for a class to be a truly revolutionary class, it must represent its interests as the interests of the whole of society. What transpired over the course of those writings, however, was an analysis of how the proletariat becomes that class in capitalist society.

In its earliest formulation, the argument was quite primitive: the proletariat is brought into existence by private property, as its negation. As the argument about the formation of classes began to take on a historical character, however, the ability of the proletariat to express its interests as the interests of the whole of society became tied to the full development of the productive forces under the capitalist mode of production. The formation of the proletariat as a revolutionary class, then, passed through various stages, corresponding to the development of those productive forces. In the analysis of French politics, for example, Marx described how the proletariat asserted its revolutionary interests during a period of transition, only to be crushed by the military power of capital. That defeat was, in part, a consequence of the immaturity of the proletariat as a revolutionary class. At first, it fought to establish the republic in

conjunction with the ascendant bourgeoisie, seeing its interests as tied to the development of industry and the overthrow of monarchy; after its defeat during the June days (1848), the proletariat allied itself with the petty bourgeoisie, thereby diluting the socialist demands of the working class with abstract appeals for democracy and justice, the latter reflecting the delusions of a transition class (petty bourgeoisie) which embodied the blunting of class antagonisms.

The ability of the proletariat to represent its particular interests as the general interests of society was advanced by the continued development of capitalist production. In the process of capital accumulation, the conditions of labor were socialized as the concentration and centralization of capital destroyed hitherto isolated forms of production and subjugated increasingly larger parts of the population to new forms of cooperative labor under the domination of capital. Thus, the expansion of capital brought into being the force of collective labor on an ever larger scale, a force continuously bolstered by the addition of sections of previously separate classes (peasantry, petty bourgeoisie) that were transformed into wage laborers by the general process of capital accumulation.

Although the objective conditions for the formation of the proletariat were a direct result of the capitalist accumulation process, the question remains as to <u>how</u> the proletariat becomes a <u>revolutionary</u> class. Marx's comments on the French peasantry are instructive in this regard. To the extent that the peasants were isolated from one another and formed no national bonds, no political organization, they were incapable of self-representation. The proletariat, on the other hand, is increasingly brought under the conditions of cooperative labor. It forms combinations (trade unions) to confront capital directly. It must also constitute itself into

a political party in order to confront the domination of capital through the power of the state.

In order to so constitute itself into a revolutionary class, however, the proletariat must become conscious of its own interests as fundamentally antagonistic to those of capital. The transformation from a class in itself to a class for itself requires that the proletariat shed itself of all illusions that its interests in any way coincide with those of capital, or that the state is anything but an instrument for the political rule of capital. That coming to consciousness of the proletariat, however, constantly runs up against obstacles. It falls sway, at various stages in its development, to the interests of other classes. It is subjected to the "ruling ideas as the ideas of the ruling class." It is forced to reclaim its sense of collective power from the mystifications inherent in the production and exchange of commodities.

What about the existence of other classes? The peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie, as already mentioned, gradually disappear as separate classes--the small-holding peasant and the small-scale commodity producer are transformed by the accumulation process either into components of big capital or into wage labor. The division of labor within capital itself, corresponding to the separation of functions between the production (commodity capital) and realization (merchant's capital) of surplus value, creates a category of unproductive workers insofar as those employed by merchant's capital produce no surplus value, but merely assist in its appropriation. Added to this mass of unproductive workers is service labor, which consumes a portion of the capitalist's revenue. The class interests of unproductive workers are unclear: To the extent that unproductive workers live off the surplus value created by productive workers, their interests are allied with the exploiting class; on the

other hand, to the extent that unproductive workers are subjected to capitalist domination of the labor process, their situation is roughly analogous to that of productive workers. Finally, there is landed property which, in the capitalist mode of production, appropriates a portion of the surplus value produced from the land as ground rent.

It is now possible to return to the statement at the end of the third volume of Capital that "middle and intermediate strata . . . obliterate lines of demarcation" but "this is immaterial for our analysis," because the "continual tendency and law of development of the capitalist mode of production" is to transform "labour into wage-labour and the means of production into capital." The phrase "middle and intermediate strata" refers, on the one hand, to those residual classes--peasantry and petty bourgeoisie--that are in the process of decomposition and, on the other hand, to the mass of unproductive workers who exist between wage labor and capital. They are "immaterial for our analysis," however, because the "continual tendency and law of development of the capitalist mode of production" makes them increasingly peripheral to the fundamental conflict between capital and wage labor. Even the divisions between capital and landed property, or within capital itself, may give rise to separate interests in relation to one another, but those interests coalesce against labor insofar as all depend upon the production and appropriation of surplus value. At certain stages in the development of capitalist production, the divisions between capital and landed property, or within capital, may take precedence, but only so long as the proletariat is incapable of asserting itself as a revolutionary class. With the continued development of the productive forces, however, the proletariat becomes increasingly capable of representing its interests as the interests of the whole of society, against which the various factions

of the exploiting class must unite for its survival. The line of development to the decisive moment is not smooth, it takes many detours, and the path to the simplification of class antagonisms is enormously complex; however, "with the inexorability of a law of nature," capitalist production "begets its own negation."

CHAPTER 2

THE RESTRUCTURING OF CLASS RELATIONS IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN CAPITALISM: THE EMERGENCE OF NEW MIDDLE STRATA

The present chapter explores the restructuring of class relations in twentieth-century American capitalism, focusing particularly on the rise of new "middle strata." The framework for the discussion is derived from the review of Marx's writings on class contained in the previous chapter. That framework, however, should be regarded more as a point of departure than as a consummated theoretical outline. It is intended to establish a basis for rescuing the concept of class from theoretical oblivion while, at the same time, revealing the limitations of Marx's arguments with respect to the contemporary United States.

From his earliest writings to his last, Marx argued that the objective capacity of the proletariat to represent its interests as the interests of the whole of society was tied to capitalist development, i.e., residual classes (peasantry, petty bourgeoisie) and other middle strata would gradually disappear or decline in importance, and the fundamental conflict between capital and labor would become the defining characteristic of capitalist social relations. Although the actual development of twentieth-century American capitalism has indeed led to the gradual disappearance of the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie (see Tables 1 and 2), it has simultaneously brought into being new forms of labor, new middle strata which have increased, rather than reduced, the

TABLE 1: Decline of the Petty Bourgois Class

Year	Percent Wage and Salaried Employees	Percent Self-Employed Entrepreneurs	Percent Salaried Managers and Officials	Total
1969	83.6	9.2	7.2	100.0
1960	80.6	14.1	5.3	100.0
1950	77.7	17.9	4.4	100.0
1940	78.2	18.8	3.0	100.0
1930	76.8	20.3	2.9	100.0
1920	73.9	23.5	2.6	100.0
1910	71.9	26.3	1.8	100.0
1900	67.9	30.8	1.3	100.0

Source: Adapted from Michael Reich, "The Evolution of the United States Labor Force," in Richard C. Edwards et al, The Capitalist System (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p.175

TABLE 2: Decline of the "Peasant" Class
Number in Thousands
(Percent)

Year	Employed in Agriculture	Employed in Nonagricultural Occupations	Total
1979	3,297 (03)	93,648 (97)	96,945 (100)
1970	2,750 (04)	73,804 (96)	76,554 (100)
1960	4,257 (07)	60,383 (93)	64,639 (100)
1950	6,876 (12)	48,912 (88)	55,788 (100)
1940	8,449 (19)	36,621 (81)	45,070 (100)
1930	10,472 (21)	38,358 (79)	48,830 (100)
1920	10,666 (26)	30,948 (74)	41,614 (100)
1910	12,388 (32)	25,779 (68)	38,167 (100)
1900	10,382 (36)	18,691 (64)	29,073 (100)

Source: Adapted from Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Series D 11-25, Decennial Census); and, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1980 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, No. 680)

complexity of class relations. The structural factors underlying the emergence of these new middle strata constitute the central concern of the present chapter.

Specifically, the discussion that follows attempts to make a link between the emergence of new middle strata and what has been variously described as a transition from competitive to monopoly (Baran and Sweezy, 1966) or state (O'Connor, 1973) capitalism, from industrial to post-industrial society (Touraine, 1971b; Bell, 1973), or from liberal to organized capitalism (Habermas, 1975). Briefly, the defining features of that transition may be characterized in terms of an increasing tendency toward the rationalization of work and everyday life, supplanting the simple forms of control within the immediate relations of production and the regulation by the market in the society as a whole associated with nineteenth-century capitalism. The middle strata, then, are seen as new forms of mental labor occupied with the administration of work and everyday life; as such, they must be accounted for within a reconceptualization of the nature of class in advanced capitalist societies.

The discussion relies heavily on recent theoretical works on the labor process (Stone, 1974; Marglin, 1974; Braverman, 1974; Edwards, 1978 and 1979; Aronowitz, 1978; Zimbalist, 1979; Clawson, 1980), the integration of science and technology into capitalist production (Bell, 1973; Noble, 1977), the state (Miliband, 1969; O'Connor, 1973 and 1981; Poulantzas, 1978 and 1980), and the rationalization of everyday life (Marcuse, 1964; Horkheimer, 1974a and 1974b; Adorno, 1978; Horkheimer and Adorno, 1972 and 1973; Habermas, 1970 and 1975). It is intended to lay the basis for a consideration of recent class theory, particularly

with regard to debates over the new middle strata (Chapter 3). The final chapter (Chapter 4) then takes up an analysis of recent political developments in the United States--most notably, the rise of a "new right"--from the standpoint of a reconstructed theory of class.

The Labor Process and the Division of Labor within Manufacture

As the previous chapter has suggested, Marx's argument about the formation of the proletariat evolved from an essentially philosophical argument about the proletariat as a historical necessity to a more concrete analysis of capitalist production. Although, contrary to some interpretations (see, e.g., Althusser, 1970), there was no decisive break--the metaphysics of the working class loomed behind even his "mature" works (see p. 50 above)--it is nevertheless useful to take the progression of Marx's writings seriously and to begin the discussion of class from the standpoint of Capital.

The core of Marx's argument about the formation of the modern working class was contained in his analysis of the capitalist labor process in the first volume of Capital, especially the sections on the "Division of Labor in Manufacture" and "Machinery and Modern Industry." It was there that Marx described, in concrete terms, the progression through which labor was increasingly subsumed under the domination of capital, resulting in the relative diminution of all labor to a common form. To summarize briefly, Marx argued that, in the earliest stages of capitalism, commodities were produced within existing forms of labor, as craft production was collectivized under the directing authority of the capitalist. The division of labor within simple manufacture coincided with the subdivision of crafts into various forms of detail labor,

with a hierarchy of labor power based on a differentiation in the value of skills. The subdivision of crafts, however, enabled the capitalist to take control of the labor process itself, insofar as knowledge of the production process as a whole passed from the individual producer to the collective laborer; stated differently, that knowledge was reinvested in the capitalist as directing authority. The rise of modern industry and the introduction of a complex system of machinery further disinvested the individual producer, as skill was transferred to the machine and the worker was reduced to a mere appendage. The net effect was to level the division of labor previously characteristic of simple manufacture to a mere distribution of workers among specialized machines and a "numerically unimportant" group of workers who looked after the machines. Modern industry, then, ushered in a "purely technical" division of labor within a relatively homogenous mass of workers.

Marx's argument was limited by the vantage point of nineteenth-century capitalism. Although he was able to describe certain tendencies inherent in capitalist production, the actual historical development of those tendencies introduced into the configuration of class relations a greater complexity than Marx had anticipated. Accordingly, just as Marx's analysis of the immediate process of production provided the core of his argument about the formation of the modern working class, so too does it provide a starting point for an anslysis of the emergence of new middle strata situated between capital and labor.

The Labor Process and Monopoly Capitalism

The twin tendencies of capital accumulation, as Marx pointed out, are toward the concentration and centralization of capital; i.e., the reconversion of surplus value into capital results in its concentration

within the enterprise, while the merging of separate enterprises results in its centralization. American capitalism during the nineteenth century was characterized by fierce competition between several firms within particular markets. In order to survive the competitive battles, individual firms were forced to borrow or to reinvest profits in new, cost-efficient technologies. The enormous levels of capital investment not only cut into profits, but made the uncertainties of the market intolerable. Around the turn of the century, a wave of mergers occurred, which had the effect of stabilizing relative shares of national markets. Although consolidation of firms in oil, sugar, and tobacco had taken place prior to 1890, they were the exception; as the end of the depression in 1897 freed up investment capital, however, between a quarter and a third of all manufacturing capital was consolidated during the period 1898-1902 alone (Edwards, 1979:43-44).

While the centralization of capital vastly increased the market power of the newly-consolidated firms, reducing the risks which threatened their capital investments, stability in the new era of monopoly capitalism was further threatened from below. Outbreaks of strikes and labor organizing drives around the turn of the century challenged the rule of capital in the new order:

> In 1892, striking steelworkers fought a bitter and historic struggle with the Carnegie Company, which was aided by several hundred Pinkerton Agency troops and eventually the Pennsylvania National Guard. In 1894, the Pullman strike quickly encompassed several hundred thousand workers who joined the boycott of Pullman cars, and federal troops were required to restore "law and order." The militant resistance and countering violence continued--near-open warfare in the Colorado mines in 1903 and 1904; the great IWW strike at McKees Rocks (1909), Lawrence (1912), and Akron and Patterson (1913); the coal miners' struggle (1914) . . . ; the enormous wave of strikes and labor actions during the First World War, involving workers in almost every industry and including especially sharp strife at Harvester

> and General Electric; and the final "holocaust" of 1919, including the massive strike at U.S. Steel, the Boston policemen's strike, and the Seattle general strike. The monopoly phase of capitalism, like capitalism itself, was ushered in with "force as its midwife" (Edwards, 1979:50).

Having overcome the vagaries of competition through consolidation, the new monopoly corporations could not tolerate the disruptions and uncertainties caused by labor strife. The planning and coordination of production for national markets required stability. Moreover, that stability could not be maintained solely through the use of repressive force. Although government troops, police, and hired goon squads continued to be used to suppress worker revolts, the transformation of the labor process proved to be a more effective, long-run strategy for gaining control over the workforce.

Katherine Stone's excellent study of the steel industry between 1890-1920 is illustrative in that regard. Stone described how, in the nineteenth century, steel was produced through a contracting system, in which teams led by skilled workers controlled the productive process using employers' capital. Hiring, training, and remuneration were handled through the structure of these work teams, which were divided roughly into "skilled" and "unskilled" workers. As the demand for steel increased toward the end of the century, boosted by the rapid growth of the railroads, competition intensified within the U.S. steel industry. The skilled workers' control of the production process, however, proved to be a impediment to the employers' attempts to introduce labor-saving technology; i.e., the contracting system had to be eliminated if the employers were to gain control over steel production. In 1892, just before the Carnegie Steel Company's contract with the skilled workers' union at the Homestead Mill was due to expire,

the company constructed a fence around the mill, built barracks inside to house strikebreakers, hired Pinkerton guards to fortify the fences, and then announced that Homestead would operate without a union. By the time the lock-out and strike had ended, state and federal troops had intervened on the side of the company and dozens of workers had been killed.

The defeat of the union opened the way for the mechanization of steel production:

> The decade that followed the Homestead defeat brought unprecedented developments in every stage of steelmaking. The rate of innovation in steel has never been equaled. Electric trolleys, the pig casting machine, the Jones mixer, and mechanical ladle cars transformed the blast furnace. Electric traveling cranes in the Bessemer converter, and the Wellman charger in the open hearth did away with almost all the manual aspects of steel production proper. And electric cars and rising-and-falling tables made the rolling mills a continuous operation (Stone, 1974:66).

The mechanization of steel production transformed the labor process. The skills once belonging to the workers, as well as their control over the rhythm and pace of work, were transformed to the machines. In place of the division between skilled and unskilled workers, a relatively homogenous class of semi-skilled workers was created.

Mechanization and the deskilling of workers, however, presented the employers with new problems: On the one hand, workers--especially the skilled workers--had lost their stake in production, which created problems of motivation; on the other hand, the leveling of distinctions based on skill increased the potential for unified resistance. The employers' response took several forms: Wage incentive schemes, such as the piece rate and premium plans, were developed to increase output and individualize the social relations of work; those tendencies were further encouraged by the creation of job ladders and new promotion

policies; and, company welfare policies were established to maintain the loyalty of the workforce.

Perhaps more significant in the long run, however, was the extensive redivision of labor, which shifted knowledge and control of production to the side of management. Unlike the old skilled workers, whose knowledge encompassed the whole of the production process, the new semi-skilled workers were limited to the performance of specific tasks. With the destruction of the contracting system, employers took control over the hiring and training of workers. Training programs were set up to teach job-specific skills, which also served to accommodate the workers to the new material conditions of labor and to subordinate them to the employers' control of the labor process. A more direct form of control was exercised through the role of the foreman. Under the previous contracting system, skilled workers were responsible for coordinating the activities of the unskilled workers. Under the new system, the role of foremen was distinguished from that of skilled workers, and they became responsible solely for supervising the work of others. Foremen went through formal training courses, where they learned how to manage workers. They were, in essence, " . . . management's representatives on the shop floor" (Stone, 1974:81). Management of the labor process, however, was not limited to the shop floor. Increasingly, management became a specialized function, with its own hierarchical division of labor. Graduates of colleges, technical schools, and apprenticeship programs were recruited to fill positions within the management hierarchy. Management, in short, became the subdivided mental work, overseeing and coordinating the workers.

Stone's study of the steel industry contains the seeds of a more

comprehensive analysis of the transformation of the labor process in the era of monopoly capitalism. It also suggests the forces that led to the emergence of new middle strata within the immediate relations of production. In general terms, the rationalization of the labor process redivided work along the lines of mental and manual labor--what Braverman (1974:114) has called the "separation of conception from execution." More specifically, the redivision of labor corresponded to changes in both the material conditions and social relations of production.

The contracting system described by Stone was a legacy of the early stages of industrial capitalism, when craft production formerly carried out in small workshops was reorganized and brought together under a single roof. This primitive factory system enabled the capitalist, as directing authority (the "orchestra conductor"), to assume a rudimentary form of control over production (Marglin, 1974; Clawson, 1980). Although it was merely a formal control, insofar as the labor process was still governed by the relatively autonomous structure of craft production, it nevertheless contained the embryo of management as a specialized function. The earliest function of management entailed supervision of existing forms of labor; more than that, however, to the extent that the primitive factory system made possible the assemblage of a large workforce in one location, management also involved bookkeeping, coordinating activities among various branches of the factory, and the like (Braverman, 1974:63-65).

The merely formal subsumption of labor under the control of the capitalist established the basis for more direct control of the labor process itself. Management, then, became increasingly occupied with

the internal structure of work. The most notorious expression of this new concern was articulated by Frederick Winslow Taylor under the guise of "scientific management." Taylor's emergence as a management theorist coincided with the rise of monopoly capitalism. Beginning his public career (lectures, published papers, etc.) in the 1890s, Taylor was able to address the needs of the new monopoly corporations for developing ways to gain greater control over their workforces.

A central concern that occupied Taylor's attention was the problem of "soldiering" on the job. Based on his experience as a gang boss at a steel plant, Taylor discovered that the piece rate system enabled workers to set their own levels of production. Soldiering, Taylor argued,

> . . . is done by men with the deliberate object of keeping their employers ignorant of how fast work can be done.
>
> So universal is soldiering for this purpose, that hardly a competent workman can be found in a large establishment, whether he works by the day or on piece work, contract work or under any of the ordinary systems of compensating labor, who does not devote a considerable part of his time to studying just how slowly he can work and still convince his employer that he is going at a good pace (Braverman, 1974:98).

Taylor conceded that, in restricting their output, workers were merely acting in their own best interests; moreover, they were able to do so because they knew better than management what constituted a full day's work. Accordingly, if greater efficiency and productivity were to be achieved, it was essential that management reorganize and take direct control over the labor process.

> The conclusions which Taylor drew . . . may be summarized as follows: Workers who are controlled only by general orders and discipline are not adequately controlled, because they retain their grip on the actual processes of labor. So long as they control the labor process itself, they will thwart efforts to realize to the full the potential inherent in their labor power. To change this situation, control over the labor

> process must pass into the hands of management, not only in a formal sense but by the control and dictation of each step of the process, including its mode of performance (Braverman, 1974:100).

The substance of "Taylorism" has been much discussed elswhere (Braverman, 1974:85-123, 169-183; Edwards, 1979:97-104; Clawson, 1980: 202-253), and it need not be gone into in any great detail here. It is sufficient to mention that Taylorism and its legacy were responsible for introducing time and motion studies, the minute subdivision of work into specific tasks, the creation of standards for the performance of those tasks, close supervision to enforce the standards, and so on. In short, scientific management rationalized the labor process by decomposing work into so many component parts and reinvesting control over the process as a whole in management.

The extent to which scientific management was actually put into practice in American industry has been a matter of some controversy (see, e.g., Edwards, 1979:97-104; Clawson, 1980:202-253). What is important here, however, is that Taylorism transformed the function of management from one of mere coordination to one of direct control. Although Taylorism was the most extreme expression of that transformation, later approaches to management, such as the "human relations" school, were concerned primarily with adapting the worker to a labor process that had been conceptualized, planned, structured, and directed by management; or, as Braverman has put it, "Taylorism dominates the world of production; the practitioners of 'human relations' and 'industrial psychology' are the maintenance crew for the human machinery" (Braverman, 1974:87).

Scientific management, which had its heyday around the turn of the

century, provided the context for the integration of science and technology into capitalist production and for the development of new forms of bureaucratic administration in increasingly large corporations. The further rationalization of production, and of the social relations of production, were thus not only a means of increasing efficiency and productivity, but of enforcing control within the enterprise as well. Moreover, the social character of the new forms of labor brought into being by the rationalization process reflected this duality: On the one hand, they embodied the technical expertise and bureaucratic rationality integral to production and administration; on the other hand, they represented collective mental labor, the roots of which had been severed from craft production and refashioned as a function of management.

Scientific and Technical Labor

The transformation of science into a force of production, or what David Noble (1977) has called the "wedding of science to the useful arts," coincided roughly with the beginnings of the monopoly stage of capitalism. Until the end of the nineteenth century, scientific and technological innovation had been largely the product of independent inventors--"inspired and talented tinkerers," as Daniel Bell (1973:20) put it--or, it had emerged from the practical applications of craft knowledge (Braverman, 1974:131-135). By way of contrast,

> (m)odern science-based industry--that is, industrial enterprise in which ongoing scientific investigation and the systematic application of scientific knowledge to the process of commodity production have become routine parts of the operation--emerged very late in the nineteenth century. It was the product of significant advances in chemistry and physics and also of the growing willingness of the capitalist to embark upon the costly, time-consuming, and uncertain path of research and development. This willingness reflected both the intensifying demand to

> outproduce competitors at home and abroad and the unprecedented accumulation of sufficient surplus capital--the product of traditional manufactures, financial speculation, and industrial consolidation--with which to underwrite a revolution in social production (Noble, 1977:5).

The immediate effects of the mechanization of industry on the worker, made possible by the development of new production technologies, were well-described by Marx. In addition, however, the "revolution in social production" vastly increased the demand for scientifically- and technically-educated labor, a demand that was met through the reorientation of university departments toward technological studies, the rise of technical schools, and direct training in corporate research laboratories (Noble, 1977:20ff). Probably no occupation reflects this trend more than that of engineering, the bastard child of science and technique:

> In the early part of the nineteenth century, the engineering professions scarcely existed; it has been estimated that there were no more than some 30 engineers or quasi-engineers in the United States in 1816. The first census which enumerated the profession separately, that of 1850, showed about 2,000 civil engineers, few of whom had gained their titles through academic training and most of whom were engaged in canal and railroad construction. It was only with the rise of manufacturing industry that the older categories of engineering came into significant existence, and between 1880 and 1920 the number of engineers of all sorts increased by nearly 2000 percent, from 7,000 to 136,000; now the civil engineer was overshadowed by mining, metallurgical, mechanical, electrical, and chemical engineers. Where, in 1870, only 866 engineering degrees had been granted in the United States, more than that number were enrolled in engineering colleges in the single year 1890, and by 1910 enrollment had risen to 30,000 (Braverman, 1974:242).

More generally, the introduction of massive, planned technological innovation into American industry continued to expand throughout the twentieth century, branching beyond production technology into such new fields as electronics and information processing. The effect was to dramatically increase the demand for scientific and technical labor.

> (T)here were in 1970 some 1.2 million technical engineers in the United States, employed chiefly in the goods-producing

> industries but also in transportation and communications, as independent consultants, by government, etc. At the same time, there were about a million technicians, including draftsmen, as well as some 365,000 natural scientists of all kinds. Since this total of close to 2.5 million in these occupations may be compared with a total of no more than 80,000 in the same occupations in 1900, it is clear that these are virtually new occupational groupings, produced by the revolution in production of the past century (Braverman, 1974:241).

What is most important about these new forms of scientific and technical labor is not their relative numerical size--they made up only about 3% of the total labor force in 1970 (Braverman, 1974:241)--but their position within the social relations of production. They came into being at a time when knowledge and control of the production process were divorced from craft and reestablished as a function of management; as such, they are the inheritors of that legacy. Over and against manual workers, then, they represent " . . . the intellectual potencies of the material process of production, as the property of another, and as a ruling power" (Marx, 1906:397); i.e., they embody the technical expertise that is sedimented in production technology, a material force whose origin lies in the separation of mental and manual labor.

There is, however, another side to scientific and technical labor. To the extent that science has become an "adjunct of capital" (Braverman, 1974:156), scientific and technical labor has itself become subject to the capitalist division of labor. The rise of the automatic factory "objectified" the separation between mental and manual labor, reducing the latter to various forms of detail work. Similarly, mental labor has been increasingly subdivided, fragmented, and, to some extent, transferred to the very technology it has produced, thereby decomposing knowledge of the production process as a whole into so many constricted

spheres of technical detail. Again, the transformation in the function of the engineer provides a useful illustration:

> The engineer's job is chiefly one of design, but even design, where a project has grown large enough, may be subjected to the traditional rules of the division of labor . . . . (M)any engineers are restricted to a design specialty or an engineering routine, while the conception to which they have been subordinated remains "engineering management's business." At the same time, so-called computer-aided design and computer-aided engineering encourage the translation of the traditional graphic language of the engineer into numerical form so that it may be handled by computers and numerical control instrumentation. This opens the way for the transfer of part of the engineer's function to electronic equipment . . . . Since such techniques are used in accord with the management-favored division of labor, they replace engineers and draftsmen with data-entry clerks and machine operators, and further intensify the concentration of conceptual and design knowledge. Thus the very process which brought into being a mass engineering profession is being applied to that profession itself when it has grown to a large size, is occupied with duties which may be routinized, and when the advance of solid-state electronic technology makes it feasible to do so (Braverman, 1974:243-245).

Seen from the standpoint of an analysis of the labor process, then, scientific and technical knowledge, like the craft knowledge that preceded it, has itself been subordinated to the redivision of labor within capitalist production. Scientific and technical workers thus stand between capital and labor, representing, on the one hand, the mental labor embodied in the material conditions of production (plant and job design, production technology, etc.)--a force confronting manual workers as the objective circumstances of their subordination--and, on the other hand, a form of mental labor that has become increasingly subject to specialization, fragmentation, and managerial control.

Managers, Clerical Workers, and Office Technicians

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the entrepreneur, according to Sidney Pollard, " . . . wrote his own letters, visited his own customers, and belaboured his men with his own walking stick"

(Braverman, 1974:259-260). In the twentieth century, those functions have been transformed into a massive clerical staff and advanced information-processing technology, marketing and sales divisions, and a management hierarchy spanning from the shop floor to the executive offices. In short, the increased scale of production, resulting from the concentration and centralization of capital, converted the personal direction of the capitalist into an elaborated vertical and horizontal division of labor.

Management as a specialized function emerged from the separation of mental and manual labor. Stone's study of the steel industry, for example, indicated that one of the earliest and most direct forms of managerial control was the separation of the role of foremen from that of skilled workers. Foremen became responsible for supervising workers in the performance of their tasks and for seeing that they met production standards established by management.* The integration of science and technology into capitalist production, however, increased the productivity of labor--or, in Marx's terms, led to a rise in the organic composition of capital--which released a larger proportion of the workforce from directly productive labor. Not only did the ratio of foremen to manual workers increase (Table 3), but, more generally, the ratio of administrative to production workers (Table 4).

Management, in essence, became a form of administration, arrayed both horizontally and vertically. Corporations were divided into separate departments, each with their own specialized function--

*C. Wright Mills described how, after the emergence of labor unions, the role of foreman was squeezed from both sides. To the extent that work rules were formalized in the collective bargaining process, foremen became accountable not only to management, but to union representatives, for the proper enforcement of those rules (Mills, 1956a:87-91).

TABLE 3: Foremen as a Percentage of All Manual Workers Number in Thousands (Percent)

Year	Foremen	Total
1970	1,617 (15)	11,082 (100)
1960	1,186 (13)	9,465 (100)
1950	856 (10)	8,205 (100)
1940	585 (09)	6,203 (100)
1930	551 (09)	6,246 (100)
1920	485 (08)	5,482 (100)
1910	318 (07)	4,315 (100)
1900	162 (05)	3,062 (100)

Source: Adapted from Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Series D 233-682)

TABLE 4: Ratio of Administrative to Production Workers

Year	Administrative	Production	Administrative/ Production Ratio
1947	2,578,000	11,916,000	21.6%
1937	1,518,000	8,553,000	17.7
1929	1,496,000	8,361,000	17.9
1923	1,280,000	8,187,000	15.6
1909	750,000	6,256,000	12.0
1899	348,000	4,496,000	7.7

Source: Braverman, 1974:240

production, marketing, finance, personnel, public relations, and so on. Moreover, within each department a managerial hierarchy was responsible for administering its operations. Thus, mental labor, with its roots severed from craft and converted into a function of management, was transformed in the mold of bureaucratic rationality.

Management, however, is more than collective mental labor organized to control others--what C. Wright Mills has called "the centralized say-so" (Mills, 1956a:80). It has also become a labor process in its own right.

> The particular management function is exercised not just by a manager, nor even by a staff of managers, but by an organization of workers under the control of managers, assistant managers, supervisors, etc. . . . Taken all together, this becomes the administrative apparatus of the corporation. Management has become administration, which is a labor process conducted for the purpose of control within the corporation, and conducted moreover as a labor process exactly analogous to the process of production, although it produces no product other than the operation and coordination of the corporation (Braverman, 1974: 267).

If, for example, the physical symbols of the separation of mental and manual labor were once the office and the factory, they have become less so. The rationalization of the labor process within the office has mirrored that of the factory--the separation of conception from execution, a rigorous division of labor, and mechanization. The evolution of the office over the twentieth century thus contains a fundamental antinomy: On the one hand, it is the location of collective mental labor, directing and coordinating the activities--including production--of the corporation; on the other hand, collective mental labor has itself become subject to the more general transformation of the labor process, resulting in the creation of its own management structure and its own detail workers.

Social relations within the early office can be likened to craft production in the simple form of manufacture. Although the small office staff carried on its work under the watchful eye of the employer, "(m)aster craftsmen, such as bookkeepers or chief clerks, maintained control over the process in its totality, and apprentices or journeymen craftsmen--ordinary clerks, copying clerks, office boys--learned their crafts in office apprenticeships, and in the ordinary course of events advanced through the levels of promotion" (Braverman, 1974:299). The transformation of the office and the assertion of direct managerial control over the labor process began with the emergence of the office manager, who replaced the bookkeeper as the chief representative of management. This transition occurred in full force around the turn of the century, when large-scale enterprises demanded greater efficiency from an expanding office staff.

With the rise of the office manager came the application of scientific management practices to the office. Tasks, methods, and time allowances were measured, directed, and assigned to different workers by the office manager. The "craft" elements of office work were thus subordinated to a redivision of labor.

> Just as in manufacturing processes--in fact, even more easily than in manufacturing processes--the work of the office is analyzed and parcelled out among a great many detail workers, who now lose all comprehension of the process as a whole and the policies which underlie it. The special privilege of the clerk of old, that of being witness to the operation of the enterprise as a whole and gaining a view of its progress toward its ends and its condition at any given moment, disappears. Each of the activities requiring interpretation of policy of contact beyond the department or section becomes the province of a higher functionary (Braverman, 1974:314).

One long-run consequence of this transformation has been the creation of a new category of detail labor--the clerical worker.

Clerical work, in fact, has been the fastest-growing occupational category over the past century, making up only 3% of the workforce in 1900 but increasing to 18% by 1979 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1975:141; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980:419). While those figures are by no means confined to manufacturing enterprises--they include government and service sectors, as well as a few extraneous categories such as mail carrier--they nevertheless reflect a clear historical trend that applies to corporations in the manufacturing sector.*

Clerical work is at the bottom end of an administrative hierarchy. In large offices, each worker may be confined to a particular task--typing, filing, copying, mailhandling, etc.; in a small office, a clerical worker may perform several tasks. In either case, the work is generally routine and devoid of any responsibility (or opportunity) for conception. Conception has been translated into bureaucratic rationality, so that control of the labor process

> . . . is embedded in the social and organizational structure of the firm and is built into job categories, work rules, promotion procedures, discipline, wage scales, definitions of responsibilities, and the like. Bureaucratic control establishes the impersonal force of "company rules" or "company policy" as the basis for control (Edwards, 1979:131).

Authority to determine policies and procedures varies between levels of a management hierarchy. Executive management, which is directly accountable to stockholders, is responsible for the performance of the organization as a whole. As such, they have ultimate authority for establishing policy and procedure guidelines, which are usually codified in an administration manual or some such organizational tome. Managers at different levels are responsible for the scope of operations under

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*The matter of different sectors will be addressed in the following section on "The Division of Labor in Society."

their control, and they are accountable for the performance of their fiefs to the next highest level. They must operate within the guidelines set by executive management. Directly over and above the clerical workers are the office "foremen" (or, more often, "forewomen") --administrative assistants or immediate supervisors--who answer to lower level managers.

Census data do not break down the management category into different levels. It continues to be, however, a very small group. Within manufacturing, for example, managers at all levels comprised just over 3% of the workforce in 1900, while the figure had increased slightly to about 4% in 1970 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1975:141). More important than numbers has been the transformation of management into an administrative process, encompassing not only managers at various levels, but a large administrative workforce.

In recent decades, a new force has invaded the office--automation. While mechanical devices such as the typewriter or adding machine have been used throughout much of the past century, the new office technology is the product of recent developments in electronics. The computer, which was developed during World War II (Kraft, 1979:3), has not only taken over much of routine clerical work--billing, filing and storage, payroll, etc.--it has also been applied to more complex operations such as accounting, market projections, production planning, and the like. The introduction of computer technology brought its own division of labor. The "craft" of computer programming, for example, was hastily dismantled (Kraft, 1979), and a hierarchy of computer specialists was created: "systems managers, systems analysts, programmers, computer console operators, key punch operators, tape librarians, stock

room attendants, etc." (Braverman, 1974:329). Roughly speaking, systems managers, systems analysts, and some expert programmers became responsible for conception and program design, while the occupations below those levels became the technicians. Again, census data do not allow specific estimates of computer-related employment by level of occupation or by industry, but the number of computer specialists in the workforce as a whole doubled between 1972 and 1979 alone, increasing from 273,000 to 534,000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980:419).

Another more recent example of office automation is the word processor. The typewriter has gone through various stages of improvement, first with respect to its mechanical design and then in its conversion into an electrical machine. With the word processor, however, the typewriter has been linked to computer technology, which gives it an electronic memory. "The memories allow for storage of form letters or sections of reports (which would not have to be typed at all the next time they were needed) and for quick corrections and revisions" (Dollars and Sense, 1981). Word processors, in addition to reducing typing time, fit neatly into a trend toward the centralization of office functions. Word processing centers--with taped dictation, electronically-stored correspondence and documents, and telephone linkages to the various departments within the corporation--assemble clerical workers in a central location rather than having them dispersed throughout different offices. In short, word processors provide the technological basis for transforming the office into an assembly line.

The transformation of the office during the twentieth century, then, has recast the meaning of the separation of mental and manual labor. It has, in the process, created new middle strata, situated

between capital and labor within the social relations of production. On the one hand, over and against manual workers, the administrative apparatus of the corporation represents the conception and control disenfranchised from productive labor. On the other hand, the institutionalization of capital in the form of bureaucratic administration and, increasingly, technical control has created an elaborate management hierarchy with varying degrees of authority, a mass of detail workers, and a growing stratum of technical labor linked to computer technology.

The Division of Labor in Society

Marx's distinction between the division of labor in manufacture and the division of labor in society was based on the premise that commodities are not only produced but exchanged. That is to say, the division of labor in society corresponds to the circulation process, in which commodities are exchanged for money, part of which is then reinvested in capital equipment, buildings, etc., with other parts going to wages, profits, interest, and the like. The circulation process thus creates a division of labor within capital between what Marx called commodity capital (production) and merchant capital (commercial capital and money-lending capital). Marx's argument about the formation of the working class tended to concentrate on labor employed by commodity capital, i.e., the "factory proletariat." The evolution of American capitalism over the twentieth century, however, has underscored the importance of the division of labor in society to the extent that it has become a crucial factor in class relations.

As Marx pointed out, the tendency of capital accumulation, or the reconversion of surplus value into capital, is toward a rise in its

organic composition--i.e., the ratio of constant capital (machinery, or "dead" labor) to variable capital (living labor). The resulting increase in the productivity of labor means that fewer workers are required to produce the same amount of commodities. Conversely, to the extent that the rise in the organic composition of capital is accompanied by an increase in the scale of production, the demand for directly productive labor, although diminished in relative terms, is increased in absolute terms. As suggested above, part of the workforce released from directly productive labor has been reabsorbed by commodity capital in the form of scientific and technical labor, labor engaged in administration, etc.

Merchant capital on the other hand, implies a somewhat different trajectory. While merchant capital also expands with the increase in the scale of production, it is based almost exclusively on office labor; as such, it has been less amenable to the technological displacement of its workforce. Although computer technology contains the potential for automating a much larger share of office work, it is a fairly recent development, and its effects are just beginning to take hold. Thus, the expansion of merchant capital has depended very much on living labor--subject to the transformation of the labor process within the office, described above.

The consequences of the different composition within commodity capital and merchant capital are reflected in changes in the relative distribution of labor over the twentieth century (Table 5). If Marx's concept of commodity capital is loosely translated into census terminology as the "goods-producing" category, it can be seen that the number of workers so employed increased from just over 7 million in 1900 to

TABLE 5: Nonagricultural Workers, By Major Industry
Number in Thousands
(Percent)

Year	Goods-Producing				Service-Producing						Total
	Mining	Contract Construction	Manufacturing	Total	Transport. & Public Utilities	Wholesale & Retail Trade	Finance Ins. & Real Estate	Services	Gov't	Total	
1980	1,014	4,723	20,720	26,458	5,202	20,434	5,104	17,548	15,885	64,173	90,630
	(01)	(05)	(23)	(29)	(06)	(23)	(06)	(19)	(18)	(71)	(100)
1970	622	3,345	19,369	23,336	4,504	14,922	3,690	11,630	12,535	47,281	70,616
	(01)	(05)	(27)	(33)	(06)	(21)	(05)	(16)	(18)	(67)	(100)
1960	712	2,885	16,796	20,393	4,004	11,391	2,669	7,423	8,353	33,840	54,234
	(01)	(05)	(31)	(38)	(07)	(21)	(05)	(14)	(15)	(62)	(100)
1950	901	2,333	15,241	18,475	4,034	9,386	1,919	5,382	6,026	26,747	45,222
	(02)	(05)	(34)	(41)	(09)	(21)	(04)	(12)	(13)	(59)	(100)
1940	925	1,294	10,985	13,204	3,038	6,750	1,502	3,681	4,202	19,173	32,376
	(03)	(04)	(34)	(41)	(09)	(21)	(05)	(11)	(13)	(59)	(100)
1930	1,009	1,372	9,562	11,943	3,685	5,797	1,475	3,376	3,148	17,481	29,424
	(03)	(05)	(32)	(41)	(13)	(20)	(05)	(11)	(11)	(59)	(100)
1920	1,180	850	10,702	12,732	4,317	4,012	902	3,100	2,371	14,702	27,434
	(04)	(03)	(39)	(46)	(16)	(15)	(03)	(11)	(09)	(54)	(100)
1910	1,068	1,342	7,828	10,238	3,366	3,570	483	2,410	1,630	11,459	21,697
	(05)	(06)	(36)	(47)	(16)	(16)	(02)	(11)	(08)	(53)	(100)
1900	637	1,147	5,468	7,252	2,282	2,502	308	1,740	1,064	7,926	15,178
	(04)	(08)	(36)	(48)	(15)	(16)	(02)	(11)	(07)	(52)	(100)

Source: Adapted from Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Series D 127-141); and, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1980 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, No. 689)

over 26 million in 1980, while, as a percentage of the nonagricultural workforce, they decreased from 48% to 29% during the same period.* On the other hand, the number of workers employed by merchant capital--equated roughly with the "wholesale and retail trade" and "finance, insurance, and real estate" categories--increased from a combined total of under 3 million in 1900 to well over 25 million in 1980, representing an increase from 18% to 29% of the total nonagricultural workforce during the same period. In essence, by 1980 the percentage of the total nonagricultural workforce employed by commodity capital and merchant capital were roughly equal (29% in both cases).

What is even more significant with respect to Marx's conception of the division of labor in society, however, is the increase in employment in the "services" and "government" categories. The percentage of the nonagricultural workforce employed in the services increased from 11% in 1900 to 19% in 1980, while the figures for government employment increased from 7% to 18% over the same period. Their combined totals increased from 18% to 37%, making them larger than either commodity capital or merchant capital. More than mere numbers, however, the growth of employment in services and government reflects a profound transformation of capitalist society over the past century, in which the commodity form has been extended to all areas of social life and the state has become responsible for managing the contradictions of the society as a whole. Accordingly, those developments need to be explored in greater depth.

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*Looking at data for the United States alone is somewhat misleading, since the internationalization of capital has shifted some production to lower-wage areas abroad. It is nevertheless helpful for understanding the structure of class relations within the United States.

Services

When Marx spoke of service labor--or, to be more exact, "labor as mere performance of services"--he was referring to a form of unproductive labor which merely consumed a portion of the capitalist's revenue (see p. 47, above). Marx's conception of service labor was based on the premise that the introduction of machinery into capitalist production, and the resulting increase in the productivity of labor, enabled the capitalist to hire more menial servants. Since this service labor produced no surplus value, but rather lived off the surplus value generated within the sphere of production, it belonged to the category of unproductive labor. While his example was a wood cutter, the category of unproductive service labor ranged "from whore to pope."

Marx's conception of service labor reflected the vantage point of nineteenth-century capitalism, when the conquest of the market of areas of social life had achieved only a limited scope. The early stages of industrial capitalism emerged in the context of a largely rural population. In 1900, for example, over 40% of the U.S. population still lived on farms (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1974:457). Accordingly, many of the activities of daily life were carried on within the framework of family and community: food production, cooking and canning, sewing, care for the young and elderly, house construction, entertainment and leisure activities, etc.

The rise of large-scale production and monopoly corporations transformed the character of social life. Not only was it necessary to adapt a rural and immigrant population to the new conditions of wage labor, but the preconditions for the expansion of capital required that a culture of self-sufficiency be replaced with a culture of consumption

in which the needs of daily life were mediated by the marketplace. In part, the culture of consumption was a "natural" consequence of urbanization and industrialization, insofar as urban life proscribed the possibilities for self-sufficiency characteristics of the farm and income derived from jobs provided the wherewithal to purchase the necessities of daily life. More than that, however, the insertion of commodities, in Phillip Slater's (1976) words, "between every itch and its scratch" had to overcome the force of tradition in order to create a new weltanschauung of consumption in which the market mediated between needs and their satisfaction.

> Clearly, part of the origin of mass culture (advertising, mass media, mass proliferation of images) lay in the capitalist necessity to generate ever expanding markets. At the same time, however, we must recognize that the creation of these markets necessitated an abolition of the social memories which militated against consumption. The new markets, by necessity, had to present a world view in which nature was not merely separated from humankind, but was portrayed as inhospitable and-or a hopeless anachronism; totally overcome by an industrial force and imagination which proclaimed for itself, the right and power of creation (Ewen and Ewen, 1978:48).

Thus, urbanization, the extension of the commodity form into the activities of daily life, and the rise of a consumer culture refashioned the context of social existence. Just as, in the realm of production, craft was subordinated to the domination of capital, so too, in the realm of exchange, tradition gave way to domination by the market.

> . . . (T)he population no longer relies upon social organization in the form of family, friends, neighbors, community, elders, children, but with few exceptions must go to market and only to market, not only for food, clothing, and shelter, but also for recreation, amusement, security, for the care of the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped. In time not only the material and service needs but even the emotional patterns of life are channeled through the market (Braverman, 1974:276).

It is in this context that service labor must be understood.

Services can no longer be considered exclusively as a form of unproductive labor which consumes revenue. Services have, in fact, become commodities, bought and sold in the marketplace. Moreover, service "industries" employ an ever-expanding workforce, be they in restaurants or hospitals, beauty salons or nursing homes, airline ticket counters or night clubs, janitorial services or community mental health centers. The character of service labor, then, embodies that history. Not only does it represent the "rationalization" of daily life--i.e., the supplanting of exchange embedded in tradition with the impersonal rationality of the market--but, as a form of labor which "produces" services as commodities, it is increasingly subject to a managed labor process.

The State

In addition to the rise of the service sector, the expanded functions of the state have become a central aspect of the division of labor in society. Although many of Marx's writings focused on the state (see pp. 53-56, above), they provide only a limited basis for understanding its contemporary character. In his early writings, for example, Marx posed the problem as one of the relation between the state and civil society; i.e., the state was seen as a vehicle for class rule, embodying the structure of class relations formed in civil society. In the Manifesto, he described the state as "a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie," while, in his writings on French politics, he emphasized the "purely repressive character" of the state as the enforcer of class rule. In The Critique of the Gotha Programme, Marx took the newly-formed Socialist Workers' Party of Germany to task for failing to recognize that "the existing society" was the basis for the state, and that demands for political reforms

within the capitalist state ignored its essential class character.

The modern interventionist state, however, can no longer be regarded solely as a reflection of class relations formed in civil society. The state has become increasingly responsible for establishing the preconditions for the private accumulation of capital, as well as for the reproduction of capitalist social relations. It is, in fact, constitutive of "civil society" itself--if nothing else, the nearly one-fifth of the workforce employed directly by the state at various levels (federal, state, and local governments) introduces a new element into the configuration of class relations. Moreover, the state, as an object of the contest for political power, is not simply (though, maybe, "complexly") an instrument of the capitalist class; rather, the very terms of its intervention have been shaped by the level of class struggle* (see, e.g., Esping-Anderson et al, 1976).

The emergence of the liberal American state coincided with the rise of monopoly capitalism. The new corporate leaders and middle class social reformers, facing the threat of a growing socialist movement, turned to the state as a solution for administering the new social order. In contrast to the uncontrolled competition of nineteenth-century laissez faire capitalism, the Progressive Era established the foundation of the state's role in ". . . the stabilization, rationalization, and continued expansion of the existing political economy . . ." (Weinstein,

*The suggestion that state intervention has been shaped by the level of class struggle takes on greater meaning if one looks at the variation between advanced capitalist countries with respect to the extent of nationalization and public investment, social insurance, welfare, state health services, public housing, and the like. Those measures have been, in very large part, the product of organized working class political parties, and the degree to which they have been enacted and supported vary with the relative strength of those parties.

1968:x). It was in the midst of a general crisis of capitalism some twenty years later, however, that state regulation of the market economy and guarantees of minimal protection against its inherent inequities become firmly entrenched. Keynesian economic policies became the cornerstone of the New Deal state; banking, securities, and currency were subjected to increased regulation; industrial production was stimulated through loans, foreign trade agreements, etc. Moreover, new waves of labor militance, sparked by the CIO organizing drives, and movements of the unemployed, elderly, veterans, and farmers resulted in formal recognition of labor's right to organize (National Labor Relations Act, 1935) and passage of social security, unemployment insurance, and welfare legislation (Carman et al, 1967:575-648).

The role of the state in economic and social life, however, is marked by contradition. As O'Connor has argued,

> . . . the capitalistic state must try to fulfill two basic and often mutually contradictory functions--accumulation and legitimization . . . . This means that the state must try to maintain or create the conditions in which profitable capital accumulation is possible. However, the state also must try to maintain or create the conditions for social harmony. A capitalist state that openly uses its coercive forces to help one class accumulate capital at the expense of other classes loses its legitimacy and hence undermines the basis of its loyalty and support. But a state that ignores the necessity of assisting the process of capital accumulation risks drying up the source of its own power, the economy's surplus production capacity and the taxes drawn from this surplus (and other forms of capital) (O'Connor, 1973:6).

That is to say, insofar as the state does not organize production and derive its revenue directly (socialized profits), it depends, both politically and economically, on the successful private accumulation of capital. Accordingly, it falls upon the state to provide the wherewithal for that accumulation to occur: infrastructure (highways

and roads, railroads, water and sewage, postal service, etc.); research and development; a trained and moderately healthy labor force; and so on. On the other hand, in order for it to maintain its legitimacy, the state must also bear the burden of political demands that may not only be unproductive (welfare, civil rights, affirmative action) but, from the standpoint of the accumulation process, "counterproductive" (environmental and workplace safety legislation).

While those contradictory functions may be ultimately unmanageable with respect to the budgetary crisis they create,* what is of primary interest here is the form in which the state attempts to manage competing political demands. As O'Connor argued, if the state is to maintain legitimacy, it cannot simply help one class accumulate capital at the expense of others; i.e., the state is not merely an instrument of the capitalist class. The state, in fact, claims to be "above" class interests. Whether in its administrative, judicial, representative, or even military branches, the state professes impartiality. It acts on behalf of a transcendent rationality.

While the core of such a claim is transparently ideological, the state nevertheless does maintain a degree of independence. In his investigations into the origins of the modern state, Poulantzas (1980) began by asking why, unlike its predecessors (Asiatic, slave, and feudal states), the capitalist state is not immediately reducible to the social relations of production--i.e., why, in the language of French structuralism, the state is "relatively autonomous"--and yet manages to be the mechanism through which capitalist power is exercised.

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*O'Connor's argument about the fiscal crisis of the state will be taken up in the last chapter as part of the discussion of the new right.

His argument is that a precondition for the modern state is grounded in the separation between mental ("intellectual") and manual labor within the immediate process of production. The constituents of his argument are as follows:

> (a) the characteristic separation of intellectual elements from the labour performed by the direct producer, which, through differentiation from intellectual labour (knowledge), becomes the capitalist form of manual labor; (b) the separation of science from manual labour at a time when the former enters "the service of capital" and tends to become a directly productive force; (c) the development of specific relations between science-knowledge and the dominant ideology . . . in the sense that power is ideologically legitimized in the modality of scientific technique, as if it flowed automatically from a rational scientific practice; and (d) the establishment of organic relations between, on the one hand, intellectual labour thus dissected from manual labour and, on the other hand, the political relations of domination; in short, between capitalist knowledge and capitalist power (Poulantzas, 1980:55).

That is to say, within the division of labor in society, the state embodies mental labor, wedded to the ideology of scientific rationality. It thus transforms competing political demands into matters of "administration."

Writing in a similar vein, Aronowitz also draws a parallel between management of the labor process and the character of the modern state:

> . . . (T)he logic of subsumption, in which capital presses all social institutions into its service either as ideological or economic apparatuses, forms the core of what may be termed "managed" capitalism, which extends from the labor process to society as a whole. Management is a technological expression of the logic of domination, a means of creating a closed universe such that contradictions, far from disappearing take the form of the appearance of "social problems" subject to manipulation by social policy. In the wake of this displacement, a virtual army of social workers, educators, and other strata of the technical intelligentsia arise as the personification of the state--as personifications of the ideology adequate to an epoch of capitalism in which, in conformity with the degradation of labor, the social world is broken up into a series of "problems" (Aronowitz, 1978:139).

Thus, the state seen as mental labor, operating in a manner analogous

to the management of the labor process within the immediate relations of production, has become the administrative apparatus for the society as a whole.

It is in this sense that the role of the state within the division of labor in society becomes central to the discussion of the emergence of new middle strata. Insofar as the state is the incarnation of mental labor occupied with management of the economy and society, it has brought into being new forms of labor as the personification of administrative rationality.

Services, the State, and Social Taylorism

The transformation of services into commodities and the rise of an interventionist state are the primary structural factors underlying the emergence of new middle strata within the division of labor in society. Managerial and professional labor have become integral to the material and ideological reproduction of capitalist social relations. They represent an extension of the "logic of domination" of mental labor over manual labor within the immediate relations of production into the society as a whole. They symbolize, in short, a form of "social Taylorism."

It is useful to begin with at least a rough estimate of the empirical contours of the phenomenon under consideration. Table 6 indicates that the combined categories of "professional, technical, and kindred" labor and "managers, officials, and proprietors" increased from 10% of the total U.S. workforce in 1900 to 27% in 1979. Those figures should be taken only as a crude indicator of a general trend, since they do not distinguish sources of employment (manufacturing, services, government, etc.) or discriminate between levels in an occupational hierarchy

TABLE 6: Managerial, Professional, and Technical Labor as a Percentage of the Total Labor Force
Number in Thousands
(Percent)

Year	Managers, Professionals, & Technicians			Total Labor Force
	Professional, Technical & Kindred	Managers, Officials & Proprietors	Total	
1979	15,050 (16)	10,516 (11)	25,566 (27)	96,945 (100)
1970	11,561 (14)	6,463 (08)	18,024 (22)	79,802 (100)
1960	7,090 (10)	5,708 (08)	12,798 (18)	67,990 (100)
1950	5,000 (08)	5,096 (09)	10,096 (17)	59,230 (100)
1940	3,879 (07)	3,770 (07)	7,649 (14)	51,742 (100)
1930	3,311 (07)	3,614 (07)	6,925 (14)	48,686 (100)
1920	2,283 (05)	2,803 (07)	5,086 (12)	42,206 (100)
1910	1,758 (05)	2,462 (07)	4,220 (12)	37,291 (100)
1900	1,234 (04)	1,697 (06)	2,931 (10)	29,030 (100)

Source: Adapted from Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Series D 182-232); and, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1980 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Nos. 696, 697)

(executive managers, low-level technicians, etc.). They do suggest, however, that management and professional and technical expertise have become a significant social force.

As suggested above, state intervention into the economy, especially since the New Deal, has become a central feature of American capitalism. While, unlike some Western European countries, that intervention has fallen short of direct organization of production, it has nonetheless given material form to the "invisible hand." The state has assumed responsibility for regulating supply and demand through subsidies for research and development, investment tax credits, manipulation of foreign trade, monetary and fiscal policy, agricultural support payments, government-backed loans, and so on. It has, in the process, created an infrastructure of technical intelligence consisting of economists, planners, tax experts, foreign trade specialists, business people, scientists, and consultants specializing in one branch or another of the state's various activities. While the scope of technical intelligence may be circumscribed by the limits of specialization, the functioning of the apparatus as a whole is devoted to establishing conditions favorable to the private accumulation of capital.

In addition to direct intervention in the economy, the state has become responsible for economically-related functions not mediated directly through the mechanism of the market--education, social security, welfare, health care for the aged and poor, etc. These functions serve to lower the reproduction costs of labor (education, social security) and to subsidize portions of the population excluded from the distributive logic of the marketplace (welfare, health care for the aged and poor). The state thus employs teachers, administrators,

social scientists, case workers, and the like, whose labor contributes indirectly to the private accumulation of capital.

The state must also accommodate political demands which contribute neither directly nor indirectly to the accumulation process. They may, in fact, run counter to the logic of accumulation. The labor, civil rights, feminist, and environmentalist movements, for example, have forced the state to take on the burden of managing social contradictions through administration of the collective bargaining process (National Labor Relations Board), civil rights, affirmative action, environmental protection, and workplace safety. The state thus employs labor within its various administrative agencies designed to maintain social harmony.

Management of society, however, is not the exclusive province of the state. Mass advertising emerged early in this century as a way of introducing the commodity form into new areas of social life (Ewen, 1976). Not only were food, clothing, and household items subjected to exchange within the market, but even the fundamental relation to one's own body became mediated by commodities (mouthwash, deodorants, facial paints, etc.). The effect was to sever knowledge of the constituents of everyday life from traditional culture and recast it within the apparatus of the culture industry. The commodification of services extended that cultural divestment into the realms, among other things, of eating; relaxing; learning; caring for the young, sick, and elderly; and dying.

Insofar as the commodification of everyday life coincided with the ascendancy of management within the immediate relations of production and the state, it became an aspect of the more general administration of culture. Just as, in the realm of production, scientific and technical knowledge superseded craft, so too, in the society as a whole,

everyday knowledge embedded in tradition became subordinated to professional expertise. The professionalization of services corresponded to the expansion of the mechanism of the market, as the emergence of new professions created new markets based on claims to monopoly over specialized knowledge. Access to that knowledge was restricted by professional associations, which gained control over training and licensing, and by the creation of specialized languages. Professionalism thus codified knowledge and located it within privileged occupational groupings (see, e.g., Larson, 1977).

Professional expertise, moreover, embodies the ideology of scientific rationality; i.e., in the language of the Frankfurt School, it has become increasingly characterized by "instrumental reason" (Horkheimer, 1974a) or "one-dimensional" thought (Marcuse, 1964). The compatibility between positive philosophy and the managed society has converged in the supremacy of technique. Human action is decomposed into a series of "behaviors" to be modified. Society is cast in the framework of systems theory, to be engineered. Expertise, in short, has not only become the exclusive domain of a professional stratum, its form has been shaped by an administrative world-view.

The professionalization of services, whether administered through the market or the state, thus carries forward the logic of domination characteristic of mental labor within the immediate relations of production. Nearly every aspect of human activity is subject to professional intervention: raising children (Parent Effectiveness Training); making love ("gourmet" sex guides), or at least trying to (with the help of sex therapists); coping with the death of a loved one (grief counselors); or, adjusting to the hardships of unemployment

(psychiatric social workers). More generally, however, the widespread professionalization of services has constricted the spheres of everyday life activities in which traditional culture presides. Expertise, to recall a quote of Marx from another context, represents "the intellectual potencies" of social life "as the property of another, and as a ruling power."

However, managerial and professional labor employed by the state and the service sector, like the "middle strata" within the immediate relations of production, is also a labor process, subject to its own internal division of labor and forms of administrative control. Management is dispersed throughout a bureaucratic hierarchy, described above (see pp. 80ff). Even the professions, whose roots are in independent forms of labor, have become subject to administrative control: As Szymanski (1972:107) has shown, the real growth has been in the salaried professions, which increased from about 3% of the workforce in 1900 to 13% in 1970, while the percentage of independent professionals remained relatively stable (1.1% in 1900 and 1.5% in 1970). Thus, although managerial and professional labor may be described abstractly as forms of mental labor engaged in the management of social life, they are, more concretely, embedded in a hierarchically-ordered and administered labor process.

Postscript on Reactionary Romanticism and Luddite Sentimentality

The thrust of the argument has been that the emergence of new middle strata can be located within the separation of mental and manual labor; moreover, that separation was characterized in terms of a logic of domination, in which, among other things, craft knowledge and

traditional culture were supplanted by technical and professional expertise as forms of managerial control. The latter has been subjected to criticism for romanticizing craft and tradition, while ignoring the progressive character of scientific and technological innovation and professional expertise. Braverman, for example, has been called a "neo-Luddite" for his analysis of the degradation of labor during the twentieth century (Szymanski, 1978).

There is no question that advances in scientific, technical, and professional knowledge have unleashed enormous potential for emancipating people from the drudgeries of work (whether in the factory, the office, or the home) and the cultural sandbags of tradition. The issue, however, is the social forms in which those developments are embedded. The suggestion, for example, that craft skills were "transferred to machinery" is a metaphor that refers to the social relations which define the character of technological innovation. It is about the loss of control over aspects of one's life. Insofar as technical knowledge was invested in a specialized stratum of mental workers and cast in the larger framework of managerial control over production, the possibilities for collective empowerment were usurped.

There are, of course, inherent limits to the dispersion of specialized knowledge. It is hard, for example, to conceptualize democratic brain surgery. Again, the issue is the larger social context in which that specialization occurs. To continue with the example of medicine, one of the early themes of the contemporary women's movement was to point out how the medical profession had not only monopolized medical knowledge, but used that knowledge as a form of control (see, e.g., Ehrenreich and English, 1978). While it is difficult to be a hunter

in the morning, a fisher in the afternoon, and a brain surgeon after dinner, when the division of labor conforms to a logic of domination, it becomes a question of power.

The argument about the supplanting of craft and tradition with scientific, technical, and professional knowledge, then, is fundamentally part of a phenomenology of dispossession. It refers to a sense of loss, in which progress is translated into an architecture of control. Its significance with respect to the meaning of class will be explored in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 3

THE NEW MIDDLE STRATA AND CLASS THEORY: A REVIEW OF THE DEBATES

The analysis in the previous chapter of the structural factors underlying the emergence of new middle strata sustained a level of abstraction, insofar as it concentrated on the "logic of capital" within the immediate relations of production, the society, and the state. More than that, however, the argument about the subsumption of labor, science, and the state under the domination of capital infers a closed system, in which all opposition is contained. As Aronowitz has argued:

> The inescapable conclusion from the drawing together of the three strands of contemporary Marxism--the degradation thesis, the notion of one-dimensionality, and the new functions of the state in capitalist society--is that we have come to the end of the inner dialectic of capitalism's development and decline. For the inference that may be drawn from these positions, when taken as part of a single theoretical system, is that capitalism is able to repress its contradictions, not because of this or that policy, but because the logic of integration and subsumption makes the concept of a "class in radical chains" absurd within the prevailing order (Aronowitz, 1978:128).

Historically, marxist theory has sought its way out of that bind by attempting to locate the crisis tendencies that would lead to the "breakdown" of capitalism (see, e.g., Sweezy, 1968:190-213); most recently, those tendencies have been characterized in terms of problems of surplus absorption (Baran and Sweezy, 1966), legitimation crisis (Habermas, 1975), or the fiscal crisis of the state (O'Connor, 1973).

All marxist theory, however, rests ultimately on a theory of class. The breakdown of capitalism is no more automatic or inevitable than is its hegemony complete. The "laws" of capital accumulation are merely tendencies, and the forms in which its contradictions are acted out are historically indeterminate. Class is the concrete expression of those contradictions, and the subjective force which transforms them into political contest. To understand the political dynamics of capitalist society, then, requires an understanding of class.

Accordingly, insofar as the reorganization of capitalism during the twentieth century has brought into being new forms of labor corresponding to new forms of control--and of opposition--the "middle strata" have become a central focus in the theoretical debates over class. They have been viewed not only from the standpoint of their "structural" position within capitalist social relations, but with an interest in their political consequences as well. The remainder of the present chapter takes up a review of those debates.

Precursors to the Recent Debates

As early as 1892, Karl Krautsky, in his "Catechism of Social Democracy," took note of the rise of an "educated proletariat." For Kautsky, the transformation of the "aristocracy of intellect" into one more form of wage labor meant that "(t)he time is near when the bulk of these proletarians will be distinguished from the others only by their pretensions" (Kautsky, 1971:40). That basic position characterized discussions of a "new middle class" during the 1920s and 1930s. In Germany, Emil Lederer and Jacob Marschak (1937) argued that the new middle class of salaried employees and public officials had tried,

before World War I, to remain independent of class antagonisms in the tradition of the old middle class, but found itself in a position after the war of having to become organized and establish collective bargaining agreements. In short, there was no longer any "middle" position, as salaried employees and public officials cast their lot with that of organized labor. Similarly, Lewis Corey (1935), writing in the United States during the 1930s, described the "crisis of the middle class" as one in which the attempts of new strata of salaried workers to carry forward the privileged legacy of the old middle class were eroded with the increasing proletarianization of the conditions of their labor.

There was, on the other hand, a theoretical strain which emphasized the new bases of power inherent in emergent occupational groupings. In the early part of the twentieth century, Veblen railed against the extravagances and general social irrelevance of the entrepreneurial Vested Interests, arguing that engineers and technicians had become the heart of the new order by virtue of their technological knowledge. If there was to be any revolutionary overturn in the United States, he wrote sardonically, it would result in a "Soviet of technicians" (Veblen, 1948:441). In the late 1930s, as part of the congressional Temporary National Economic Committee's investigation into the concentration of economic power, Adolf Berle and Gardiner Means issued a report on The Modern Corporation and Private Property (Berle and Means, 1967), in which they argued that the separation of ownership and control within the corporation had invested the latter function in a specialized stratum of managers. That thesis, in conjunction with the broadened management functions of the New Deal State, was extended by James Burnham (1941) into an argument that a "managerial revolution"

had occurred.

During the 1950s, two major studies stressed the inherent political ambiguity of the "new middle classes." In White Collar, C. Wright Mills (1956a) concluded that the new middle classes lacked political coherence--they were "dependent variables" in the power structure, and politically "up for sale." Similarly, Dahrendorf (1959) argued that the new middle classes lacked any organic character, that they were "born decomposed." For both Mills and Dahrendorf, the political valence of the new middle classes was ultimately ambiguous.

In one way or another, and with varying degrees of influence, those three theoretical strains have been carried forward into the recent debates over the new middle strata; i.e., the middle strata have been characterized in terms of their subordination, their power, and their political ambivalence. What is different about the recent debates, however, is the context in which they have occurred. In contrast to their growing, but relatively passive, significance throughout the first half of this century, the new middle strata burst into the center of political attention during the 1960s. Not only did they represent new forms of control (described in the previous chapter), but they embodied new forms of opposition as well:* student opposition to the Vietnam War; the "counter culture"; May, 1968 in France; the new left; feminism; gay liberation; environmentalist and (later) anti-nuclear movements. In short, the new middle strata became a political force in their own right, which pushed them to the center of theoretical debate.

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*The bipolar character of the new middle strata was no more evident than in relation to the Vietnam War. While opposition to the war was based in the universities and the "educated strata," it was also the "best and the brightest" (Halberstam, 1972) of the technical intelligentsia who were the architects of American intervention in the war.

The New Working Class

The theory of the "new working class" grew out of a specifically French political context, and had its greatest currency there. Although there were some attempts to apply the argument to circumstances in the United States (Denitch, 1970; Gintis, 1970), they met with limited success (Aronowitz, 1971). Notwithstanding the political differences between France and the United States, however, the theoretical core of the argument casts a valuable light on the nature of the middle strata.

The term "new working class" is most commonly associated with the work of the French sociologist and activist Serge Mallet, whose La Nouvelle Classe Ouvrière first appeared in 1963. Mallet had been active in the French Communist Party (PCF) during the 1950s, but he became increasingly disenchanted with the Party's "Stalinist metaphysics of the working class" (Mallet, 1975b:3). According to Mallet, the failure of the PCF in particular, and of marxism in general, to understand the evolution of the working class during the twentieth century contributed substantially to its inability to pose an alternative to the Gaullist Fifth Republic. That failure was never more apparent than in May, 1968, when the organizations of the working class (PCF and CGT*) misunderstood the nature of the crisis and were upstages by students and the new working class.

Mallet's theory of the new working class grew out of his experience as an activist and from a series of case studies he conducted in the petroleum and electronics industries during the late 1950s and early 1960s (Mallet, 1975a:85-205). He found that the development of modern

*Confederation Generale du Travail (General Confederation of Labor), the largest trade union confederation in France, which is closely allied with the Communist Party.

industry, especially the advanced sectors (petroleum, chemicals, electronics, telecommunications), had created a stratum of technicians whose skills and knowledge of the production process distinguished their work from the characteristically fragmented labor of the factory proletariat. In political terms, this stratum of technicians (the new working class) tended to be concerned with issues related to control of the work process, as opposed to the basic wage demands of the traditional proletariat. To the extent that the labor movement continued to be based in the traditional sectors and focused its concerns on wages and benefits, it was unable to directly confront the logic of capitalist social organization--a confrontation whose possibilities shifted to the new working class.

The substance of Mallet's argument anticipated much of the later work on the labor process, discussed in the previous chapter (see pp. 66ff., above); in addition, he attempted to characterize the defining political features of each stage ("phase") in the development of the labor process. That is not to imply, however, that each stage represented a decisive break from the preceding one, with corresponding redefinitions of the working class. In fact, Mallet argued, the working class has never been a homogeneous "sociological community" (Mallet, 1975a:35); it has always been divided by levels of skills, organization, etc. The various stages in the development of the labor process, rather, form a

> . . . structural kernel around which the concepts, forms of organization, and action of the labor movement are organized (; i.e., insofar as) constant, fundamental change is the defining characteristic of the capitalist mode of production . . . (,) the ineluctable consequence of these changes is precisely to bring to the fore within the working class and its organized movement this or that fraction of the working

> class, while the leading sectors of the past lose their influence (Mallet, 1975b:24).

The new working class, then, emerged as the "leading sector" as a result of the transformation of the capitalist labor process.

Mallet divided the history of capitalist production into three phases, which, revealing the creative genius of French sociology, were called Phase A, Phase B, and Phase C. Phase A corresponded to the early period of capitalist production and simple forms of control, described in the previous chapter. The division of labor within the factory was primitive, consisting essentially of various craft workers laboring under the direction of the capitalist. "In a word, the only difference between the skilled worker of this period and the individual artisan is that the ownership of his means of production and of his labor have escaped him" (Mallet, 1975b:25). The prevailing political form of this period was the craft union, which was based on occupational solidarity. The craft union movement tended toward anarcho-syndicalism, aimed at reappropriating the means of production and reestablishing ". . . the harmony of the golden ages from the free communities of labor" (Mallet, 1975b:27). In essence, "(t)he reaction of the poly-valent skilled worker dispossessed of his instruments of production remains a proprietary reaction; he defends as his most valuable possession the sole property which is left him, his <u>metier</u> (skill)" (Mallet, 1975b:25).

Phase B corresponded to the reorganization of the labor process, the decomposition of skill, and the assertion of direct control over the material and social conditions of work. It was the period of scientific management, technological innovation, and industrial

psychology. The collective identity of fragmented labor shifted from its occupational base to the living place. Since not only craft, but craft consciousness, had been destroyed, political demands related to control over the conditions of work were subordinated to demands related to the rate of compensation within existing social relations of production. "What the semi-skilled worker was incapable of obtaining as a producer, he sought to gain as a consumer" (Mallet, 1975b:36). The focus of the industrial union movement, then, was on wages and benefits, conducted within the framework of the formalized collective bargaining process. The institutionalization of the union movement also characterized its relation to the state. Insofar as state intervention into the economy had become an important factor, organized labor shifted its attention more and more toward the state. However, the union movement's political orientation ". . . focused on narrowly technical criteria of general applicability" (Mallet, 1975b:37), such as the minimum wage and compensation indexes for civil servants.

> Instead of an economic program, the unions elaborated catalogs of demands . . . . (They) aided in the development of new economic notions: expansion, greater market stability, full employment. In a word, unionism, transformed into a pressure group, helped to create the conditions of development of technocratic capitalism (Mallet, 1975b:38).

Phase C corresponded to advances in automation, developed most fully in the advanced industries--oil and petrochemical, synthetic chemistry, electrical energy, telecommunications--but extending into the older manufacturing industries, such as automobile production. Automation, according to Mallet, represented ". . . a truly dialectical negation of the fragmentation of work" (Mallet, 1975b:38). It reintegrated skill within the labor process, but on an entirely new

basis: "Automated industry creates a new type of skill highly remote from the knowledge of the traditional metier, but which requires a much greater cultural and technological knowledge . . .: (Mallet, 1975b: 40-41). Accordingly, the new technician working class has a more effective base for exerting pressure within the enterprise, insofar as technical labor is less easily replaceable than semi-skilled workers. Moreover, the reintegrated skills of the technician changed the focus of political demands; i.e., technical knowledge of the production process was translated into demands for control over production, which extended to the level of the enterprise. In short, the new working class held out the possibility of challenging the capitalist organization of production based on demands for workers' control (autogestion), a possibility which had been relinquished by the traditional sectors of the working class.

Mallet was well aware that demands for workers' control within the enterprise could amount to a ". . . renaissance of modern anarchosyndicalism" (Mallet, 1975b:45); however, unlike the older craft unions, whose attempts to reestablish control over production were based on the ideal of autonomous guilds, the new technicians' demands for workers' control would have to take on the organization of the entire enterprise and the economy as a whole. Moreover, given the central importance of the interventionist state, the translation of demands for workers' self-management into a broader movement for socialism ". . . depends to a large extent on the possibility of forging a permanent alliance between the state technocracy and the working class movement" (Mallet, 1975b:54). Mallet argued, however, that in the short run at least, the state technocracy, insofar as its function was to "manage" social

contradictions, would attempt to subordinate the working class movement to itself. It was essential for a labor strategy, then, that the working class movement not attempt to win over the state technocracy first, but to push from below by setting up "nuclei of self management" (Mallet, 1975b:54; see also, 1975b:118).

The events of May, 1968--student occupations of the universities, battles in the streets, the general strike, and ultimate defeat--provided a dramatic test for the validity of Mallet's analytic and strategic arguments. In an article written for Le Nouvel Observateur in July of 1968 (Mallet, 1975b:153-165), Mallet attempted to assess the meaning of the May events. In brief, Mallet interpreted the failure to take power to be a result of divisions between the old and new sectors of the working class. Following the lead of student occupations of universities, workers in the advanced sectors began to occupy firms, putting forward demands for self-management. Those demands were supported by the Confederation Française Democratique du Travail (CFDT), a trade union confederation which included the "new working class" occupations. The organizations of the traditional sectors of the working class, on the other hand, were more cautious: The PCF failed to support the students until after a violent police invasion of the Sorbonne; the CGT, ignoring demands for workers' control, continued to call for an increase in the minimum wage, a 40 hour week, etc. Moreover, while workers in the occupied firms maintained essential services and regulated prices on their own in order to gain public support, the CGT remained tied to the strike as a weapon, which served to alienate the public. In essence, Mallet argued, the PCF and CGT would not support what they could not control. Self-management was a threat to their Stalinist bureaucracy

and their status as an opposition party within the state. They were ultimately a conservative force, contending that the time was not ripe for an assault on the state, preferring instead a compromise with the Gaullist regime.

In a somewhat more theoretical analysis of the May events, published as the Introduction to the fourth edition of The New Working Class, Mallet argued that "the antagonisms were in the heart of the labour movement and not between workers and students, as many students themselves tended to believe" (Mallet, 1975a:6). Those antagonisms were a result of technological divisions within the working class, which invested the will for self-management in the advanced sectors, while the traditional sectors remained wedded to the institutionalized forms of class conflict within the enterprise and the state. In short, "(a)s long as the technological division of work survives, the working class will only be 'theoretically' unified" (Mallet, 1975a:13).

A line of argument similar to that of Mallet was put forward by Andre Gorz, in his book, Strategy for Labor, first published in France in 1964. Gorz, like Mallet, combined theoretical analysis with arguments on behalf of a reformulated left strategy. As part of his attempt to reorient left strategy, Gorz made a distinction between what he called "reformist reforms" and "nonreformist reforms" (Gorz, 1968:7). The former referred to demands for reforms that could be accommodated within existing capitalist social relations. They included demands related to wages and benefits, national incomes policies, the minimum wage, etc. Those demands not only failed to confront the logic of capitalist social organization, but, given the divisions within the working class, they could ". . . no longer

furnish the working class with . . . (a) unifying perspective" (Gorz, 1968:25). For the unification of the working class to be possible, it was necessary to go "beyond the paycheck" to take up issues related to control of the work situation, the purposes of work, and the reproduction of labor power (Gorz, 1968:32). These "nonreformist reforms," Gorz argued, had to become the core of a new left strategy.

Much of Gorz's argument consisted of an analysis of the logic of capitalist domination within the workplace, culture, and the state, which need not be gone into here. What is important for present purposes, however, is Gorz's contention that the possibilities for a radical confrontation with the logic of capitalist domination were enhanced by the creation of a new stratum of educated labor, whose expectations for creative work were frustrated within the context of capitalist social relations:

> . . . (T)echnicians, engineers, students, researchers discover that they are wage earners like the others, paid for a piece of work which is "good" only to the degree that it is profitable in the short run. They discover that long-range research, creative work on original problems, and the love of workmanship are incompatible with the criteria of capitalist profitability . . . . They discover that they are ruled by the law of capital not only in their work but in all spheres of their life, because those who hold power over big industry also hold power over the State, the society, the region, the city, the university--over each individual's future (Gorz, 1968:104).

The subordination of educated labor to the power of capital thus has political consequences which are potentially far-reaching.

> It then becomes immediately evident that the struggle for a meaningful life is the struggle against the power of capital, and that this struggle must proceed without a break in continuity from the company level to the whole social sphere, form the union level to the political realm, from technology to culture (Gorz, 1968:104-105).

In short, the very development of capitalist society, which depends to

an ever-increasing degree on scientific and technical knowledge, has shifted the terms of struggle to a new ground, no longer confined exclusively to matters related to the material reproduction of labor: "The impossibility of living which appeared to the proletarians of the last century as the impossibility of reproducing their labor power becomes for the workers of scientific or cultural industries the impossibility of putting their creative abilities to work" (Gorz, 1968: 105).

The new demands of students and scientific, technical, and cultural workers not only had to confront the power of capital within the enterprise, but also forms of technocratic domination within the state--a struggle whose outcome depended on the capacity to overcome the technocratic ideology of a neutral state:

> By its very nature, technocracy tends . . . to locate itself "above the classes," to deny the necessity for class struggle, to set itself up as mediator and referee and in so doing to enter into contradiction with the classes . . . . "Depoliticization" is the ideology of technocracy itself . . . . The conflict of technocracy . . . is always ambiguous . . . . Objectively progressive (or "on the left") in its conflicts with the monopolies, technocracy is subjectively conservative ("on the right") in its conflicts with the working class (Gorz, 1968:122).

The transcendent rationality of the state technocracy, however, is inherently fragile. Only a militant and aggressive labor strategy ". . . will force technocracy to choose between the monopolies and the working class movement, and will win over a more than negligible portion of the 'caste' to its side" (Gorz, 1968:124).

Although there was no equivalent to the movement for workers' self-management in the United States, the "new working class" thesis had its American counterparts. The student-based anti-war movement, the "counter culture," and the new left were interpreted as political

developments that paralleled those in France. Richard Flacks, for example, argued that the student movement was the expression of the formation of a new class, the intelligentsia, whose ". . . trajectory is toward revolutionary opposition to capitalism" (Flacks, 1971:238). This new class, according to Flacks, was potentially revolutionary because its impulses toward democratic community and rejection of alienated labor could not be accommodated within capitalism; moreover, the roots of the student movement in struggles against racism (civil rights movement) and imperialism (anti-war movement) had put the young intelligentsia in opposition to key elements of American capitalist culture. Similarly, Herb Gintis (1970; 1972) argued that an emergent new working class of educated labor embodied the potential for revolutionary consciousness by virtue of its opposition to repressive schooling, alienated labor, and the consumer culture. Even Bogdan Denitch (1970), writing a conciliatory article in the parges of Dissent, an "old" left journal which had been notoriously cantankerous in its attitude toward the new left, argued that the democratic impulses of the new working class with respect to control in the community and the workplace contained the potential for uniting radical intellectuals with the working class movement.

Any discussion of "new working class" theory, however, must emphasize that it was a product of the optimism of the 1960s. As both the 1960s and the optimism faded, at least one of the proponents of the new working class thesis modified his original position. In an article entitled "Technical Intelligence and the Capitalist Division of Labor," Andre Gorz (1972) reassessed the nature of scientific and technical labor from the standpoint of its function within the accumulation process and the

reproduction of capitalist social relations. One of Gorz's earlier arguments had been that scientific and technical workers, by virtue of their knowledge of the production process and their subordination to the power of capital, were led to challenge not only capitalist control over the conditions of their labor, but also the very purposes for which their labor was employed. In his more recent article, however, he was decidedly less optimistic. Gorz contended that, until the 1930s, most technological innovation had been aimed at the capital goods sector, resulting in labor-saving technology; beginning in the 1950s, innovation focused more on consumer goods, resulting in the expansion of new markets. In short,

> . . . the main purpose of research and innovation is to create new opportunities for profitable capital investment . . . . (Accordingly,) technical and scientific knowledge, competence, and personnel is to a large extent functional only to the particular orientation and priorities of monopolist growth (Gorz, 1972:29).

For scientific and technical workers to link up with broader demands to reorient production toward more basic human purposes was thus diminished insofar as their technical knowledge bore little relation to those goals. Moreover, the isolation of scientific and technical workers from wider cultural critique was furthered by their narrow specialization.

> Each field of technology and science is a typical sub-culture, narrowly specialized in its relevance, generally esoteric in its language and thereby divorced from any comprehensive cultural concept . . . . The professionals of science and technology, and more specifically of research and development, must be seen as a kind of new mandarins whose professional pride and involvement in the particular fields of their activity is of little relevance to the welfare and the needs of the community and of humanity generally: most of their work is being done on problems that are neither the most vital nor the most interesting as regards the well-being and happiness of the people (Gorz, 1972:29-30).

In addition, Gorz argued that the conception of scientific and

technical workers as part of a new working class failed to distinguish between two different situations:

> a) situations where plants are run by an overwhelming majority of technicians doing repetitive or routine work and holding no authority or hierarchical privilege over production workers; and
> b) situations where technical workers supervise, organize, control and command groups of production workers who, whatever their skills, are credited with inferior knowledge, competence, and status within the industrial hierarchy (Gorz, 1972:30).

Whereas most new working class theory tended to focus on the first situation, it is the second which is most widespread and sociologically relevant. With respect to the latter group, they form part of the administrative apparatus which holds power over the workforce: "They are the workers' most immediate enemy: they represent the skill, knowledge, and virtual power of which workers have been robbed" (Gorz, 1972: 34). In political terms, then, there is an objective division between production workers and supervisory technical labor. The first group of technical workers (situation "a"), on the other hand, is increasingly subject to the proletarianization of the conditions of their labor. But even when they have rebelled against that proletarianization, they ". . . have not revolted <u>as</u> proletarians, but <u>against</u> being treated as proletarians" (Gorz, 1972:37). They are, in effect, in an ambiguous situation, expecting the advantages of privileged and meaningful work, but frustrated by the regimentation in their technical training and conditions of work. For there to be any political coherence within a technically-divided working class, then, there must be a "cultural revolution" which destroys ". . . the inequalities, hierarchizations and division between manual and intellectual work, between conception and execution; liberating the creative potentials of all workers which the

schools as well as the work organizations stifle" (Gorz, 1972:41).

The New Petty Bourgeoisie

Notwithstanding Gorz's recantation, the thrust of the "new working class" argument was to claim that sections of the new middle strata--technicians, engineers, scientists, students ("intellectual" labor)--constituted a vanguard force in opposition to the power of capital within the immediate relations of production and in the society as a whole. The work of Nicos Poulantzas (1975; 1978; 1979), on the other hand, portrayed not only the "new working class" occupations, but the entire middle strata, as a rearguard in relation to the only inherently revolutionary class, the working class.

Poulantzas' work was highly theoretical, consisting primarily of exegesis of Marxist tests rather than analysis of actually existing political movements. It constituted part of the Marxist structuralist tradition,* centered around the work of Louis Althusser (1970; 1971; see, also, Insurgent Sociologist, 1979) in France. In brief, Poulantzas argued that the wage-earning middle strata comprised a "new petty bourgeoisie," in conformity with their position in relation to the structural determinants of class--economic, political, and ideological.

Poulantzas began his analysis by asserting that, insofar as a particular social formation** is defined by the struggle between the

*In his last work, State, Power, Socialism (1980), Poulantzas departed from the orthodoxy of marxist structuralism, as he engaged the work of, especially, Michel Foucault.

***A note on terminology: Marxist structuralists make a distinction between "mode of production" and "social formation." "The mode of production constitutes an abstract-formal object which does not exist in the strong sense in reality . . . . The only thing which really exists is a historically determined social formation, i.e., a social whole, in the widest sense, at a given moment in its historical existence: e.g., France under Louis Bonaparte, England during the Industrial Revolution" (Poulantzas, 1978:15).

two dominant classes in the capitalist mode of production, the class position of the wage-earning middle strata must be derived from their relation to those two basic classes. With respect to the economic determinants of class,

> (t)he first point to note is that these groupings (wage-earning middle strata) do not belong to the bourgeoisie, in so far as they have neither economic ownership nor possession of the means of production. On the other hand, they do present the phenomenon of wage-labour, remunerated in the form of a wage or salary. The basic question that is raised here, therefore, is that of their relationship to the working class . . . . (Poulantzas, 1975:209).

The fundamental dynamic of exploitation within the capitalist mode of production, and therefore, the basis for the conflict between classes, Poulantzas argued, is the production and expropriation of surplus value; accordingly, the question of the relationship between the wage-earning middle strata and the working class, in addition to their common situation as wage-laborers, is essentially a question of whether the former may be considered to be productive labor.

Poulantzas adopted a strict constructionist interpretation of the meaning of productive labor:

> . . . productive labor, in the capitalist mode of production, is labour that produces surplus-value while directly reproducing the material elements that serve as the substratum of the relation of exploitation: labour that is directly involved in material production by producing use-values that increase material wealth . . . . In other words, labour producing surplus-value is broadly equivalent to the process of material production in its capitalist form of existence and reproduction (Poulantzas, 1975:216,221).

Thus, Poulantzas not only excluded from the working class labor employed by merchant's capital (commerce, advertising, marketing, accounting, banking, insurance), but labor employed in the service and state sectors as well, claiming that the latter two categories consume revenue

rather than produce surplus value (material commodities). Moreover, Poulantzas also excluded scientific labor, even when it was employed by industrial enterprises, on the grounds that it was separate from the direct producers and that the "products" of scientific labor were not reproducible as such (Poulantzas, 1975:221-223).

In addition to purely "economic" relations, however, the structural determinants of class include political and ideological factors. Managers and supervisors (including foremen), for example, are excluded from the working class on the grounds that their function, beyond the mere coordination of productive labor, reproduces the domination of capital over the working class (i.e., a "political" domination). In spite of the fact that they increasingly perform productive labor in purely economic terms, engineers and technicians are also excluded from the working class insofar as the separation of mental and manual labor within the capitalist mode of production "articulates" with the political domination of capital over productive labor.

In fact, the wage-earning middle strata as a whole may be characterized in terms of the separation of mental and manual labor, although not all are engaged in direct domination over the working class.

> With the exception of certain employees directly connected with the capitalist production and labour process in the strict sense, such as the managers and supervisors of the labour process, the engineers and the production technicians, the new petty bourgeoisie does not exercise, or at least does not directly exercise, functions of political domination over the working class. The articulation of ideological and political relations that locates these employees within the social division of labor follows its own roundabout paths (Poulantzas, 1975:271).

Those "roundabout paths" correspond to the bureaucratization of mental labor itself, which provides the key, on ideological grounds, to the

differentiation between even the most menial forms of mental labor and directly productive labor. In short, the bureaucratization of mental labor internalizes and reproduces ". . . the politico-ideological relations of class domination/subordination" (Poulantzas, 1975:276). Thus, unlike directly productive workers, whose exploitation is based on the production and expropriation of surplus value, the exploitation of unproductive mental workers is based on their subordination to a hierarchical division of labor. Accordingly, the tendency of the latter group is to fall sway to an interest in career and movement up the occupational ladder, rather than to assert revolutionary demands to reappropriate the product of their labor.

Poulantzas summarized the ideological character of the wage-earning middle strata in a chapter entitled, "The Petty-Bourgeois Ideological Sub-Ensemble and the Political Position of the Petty Bourgeoisie."* Briefly, he argued that the main ideological features of the wage-earning middle strate included a tendency toward "reformist illusions," translating their hostility toward "the rich" into demands for redistributing income, social justice, egalitarian tax policies, and the like; a tendency toward anti-authoritarian struggles that emphasize "participation" in the "decision-making" processes, rather than struggles for control (an obvious rejoinder to Mallet); a belief in the "neutrality of culture," expressed in terms of aspirations toward career, promotion, and "equality of opportunity"; and, "power fetishism," or a belief in the neutrality of the state (Poulantzas, 1975:290-292).

In sum, Poulantzas characterized the wage-earning middle strata as

*If it was not obvious by now, this phrase alone should make it clear that Poulantzas was never mistaken for a poet.

a new petty bourgeoisie because of their structural affinities toward the traditional petty bourgeoisie (small shopkeepers, artisans, independent producers, etc.). Both groupings were situated "between" capital and the working class. Although there was a fundamental difference, insofar as the traditional petty bourgeoisie was fighting against its extinction, while the new petty bourgeoisie was growing, both groups expressed their opposition to the power of the monopolies and the state in the form of an aggressive individualism. Their common structural position "outside" the fundamental conflict between capital and the working class--i.e., outside the dynamic of exploitation based on the production and expropriation of surplus value--provided the grounding for their common conception that they were "above" the class struggle and reinforced their shared illusions about reform, opportunity, and the neutrality of state and culture.

Finally, Poulantzas argued that, although the new petty bourgeoisie as a whole shared certain characteristics in common, there were "fractions" within the class that were "objectively" polarized toward the working class. Those fractions included:

> . . . the great majority of lower-level workers in the commercial sector . . . (,) employees who are affected by the introduction of machinery actually within the non-productive sector . . . (,) and those employed in certain parts of the service sector--workers in restaurants, cafes, theatres, cinemas, as well as lower-level health workers (e.g., hospital orderlies) . . . (;) subaltern agents of the public and private bureaucratized sectors . . . ; (and) technicians and subaltern engineers directly involved in productive labour . . . . (Poulantzas, 1975:316-326).

Those fractions were crucial to the formation of class alliance in the conduct of class struggle against the power of capital.

Poulantzas' analysis of the "new petty bourgeoisie" reflected the

dilemma of the left in Western Europe, where political parties of the traditional working class increasingly faced the prospect of having to form alliances with sections of the new middle strata. That was expressed, for example, in the Eurocommunist strategy of forming an "anti-monopoly" coalition (see, e.g., Carillo, 1978). The situation in the United States, on the other hand, is quite different. There is no explicitly working class political party, and the left, such as it is, is based largely in the new middle strata.* Accordingly, when Erik Olin Wright (1978), writing in the United States, took on Poulantzas from within the structuralist theoretical tradition, he was considerably more willing to allow for the possibility that the new middle strata could become a progressive force.

After reviewing the substance of Poulantzas' argument, Wright's criticism focused on two of its main features: the relationship between the new petty bourgeoisie and the working class; and, the nature of the divisions within the new petty bourgeoisie itself. With respect to the first, Wright argued that Poulantzas' distinction between productive and unproductive labor was an inadequate criterion for determining class position not only because the singular emphasis on the production of material commodities excluded workers who produce services as commodities, but also because it failed to demonstrate any correspondence to differences regarding objective class interests. In addition, Wright claimed that Poulantzas' use of political and

*That is not to deny the importance of the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Socialist Labor Party, or the various Trotskyist organizations, whose role in the formation of the CIO during the 1930s was crucial. The near-decimation of the American left during the 1950s, however, left those groups depleted and marginal. To the extent that there has been a revival of an American left, it has come from the legacy of the student movement during the 1960s.

ideological criteria served to override the basic determination of class position within economic relations. The effect was to narrow "the working class" to a relatively small proportion of the labor force:

> The working class--non-supervisory, manual wage-earners in the productive sector--constitutes less than 20 per cent of the American labour force. The new petty bourgeoisie, on the other hand, swells to a mammoth 70 per cent of the economically active population (Wright, 1978:55).

Wright further criticized Poulantzas' conception of the political unity of the traditional and new petty bourgeoisie. In economic terms, Wright contended that the traditional and new petty bourgeoisie were not only in different situations, but they were, in many respects, opposed to each other; for example, while the traditional petty bourgeoisie faced the threat of its own extinction at the hands of monopoly capital, the very existence of the new petty bourgeoisie was tied to the expansion of monopoly capitalism. In political terms, the traditional petty bourgeoisie is generally opposed to big government, while the new petty bourgeoisie has an interest in the expansion of the state. In ideological terms, Poulantzas' emphasis on the common tendencies toward individualism failed to discriminate adequately between the individualism of the traditional petty bourgeoisie, which is expressed as a desire for autonomy and independence, and the individualism of the new petty bourgeoisie, which takes the form of aspirations toward career and mobility; in essence, one is opposed to the idea of large organizations, while the other embraces them as the context of their existence (Wright, 1978:58-59).

Instead of seeing the wage-earning middle strata as part of a new class, allied with the traditional petty bourgeoisie, Wright argued that they are best characterized as occupying "contradictory class

locations." Insofar as the class structure of the advanced capitalist societies consists of the fundamental conflict between the two dominant classes, bourgeoisie and proletariat, plus the residual petty bourgeoisie, different sections of the wage-earning middle strata are arrayed at various points between those three classes. While Wright made his argument with the support of elaborate diagrams,* complete with boxes and dotted lines, the presentation here will have to rely on a written translation.

To begin with the "unambiguous" classes within the capitalist mode of production, the bourgeoisie and proletariat are defined as follows:

> The fundamental class antagonism between workers and capitalists can be viewed as a polarization on each of these three underlying processes or dimensions: capitalists control the accumulation process, decide how the physical means of production are to be used (investment decisions, etc.), and control the authority structure within the labour process. Workers, in contrast, are excluded from the control over authority relations, the physical means of production, and the investment process. These two combinations of the three processes of class relations constitute the two basic antagonistic class locations within the capitalist mode of production** (Wright, 1978:73).

The petty bourgeoisie is defined as ". . . self-employed producers who employ no workers" (Wright, 1978:74). With respect to the relative size of the three main classes, the bourgeoisie--those who own the means of production and investment--make up about 1-2% of the U.S. population; the working class, defined as non-supervisory, non-autonomous employees, makes up between 41-54% of the total workforce; and, the petty bourgeoisie comprises 4.5% of the population.

The remainder of the labor force occupies "contradictory locations" between these three classes. Between the bourgeoise and the

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*It is rumored that Erik Wright's secret ambition is to become the first Marxist to diagram an entire society.

**In mathematical terms, 2=3=2.

proletariat are two groups: top managers, middle managers, and technocrats, who are closest to the bourgeoisie, make up about 12% of the workforce; and, bottom managers, foremen, and line supervisors, who are closest to the proletariat, make up 18-23% of the employed population. Small employers (10-50 workers), representing 6-7% of the economically active population, are situated between the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. Finally, between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie are the semi-autonomous employees, who make up between 5-11% of the workforce.

In short, "(t)he total potential class basis for a socialist movement, consisting of the working class and those contradictory locations closest to the working class, is thus probably somewhere between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of the population" (Wright, 1978:87). The working class and the contradictory locations polarized toward it constitute the potential basis for a socialist movement because they share common objective class interests.

> Class interests in capitalist society are those potential objectives of struggle in the absence of the mystifications and distortions of capitalist relations. Class interests, therefore, are in a sense hypotheses: they are hypotheses about the objectives of struggles which would occur if the actors in the struggle had a scientifically correct understanding of their situations (Wright, 1978:89).

The Professional-Managerial Class

In a two-part article published in Radical America in 1977, Barbara and John Ehrenreich argued that sections of the new middle strata constitute a new class formation in advanced capitalistm, the "Professional-Managerial Class (PMC)." Their argument was addressed to a left audience, inspired by what they called an "anomaly" in orthodox

Marxist thought.

> To generations of radicals, the working class has been the bearer of socialism, the agent of both progressive social reform and revolution. But in the United States in the last two decades, the left has been concentrated most heavily among people who feel themselves to be "middle class," while the working class has appeared relatively quiescent. This "middle-class" left . . . is not a minority within a mass working class (or peasant) movement; it is, to a very large extent, the left itself (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977a:7).

This anomaly, they claimed, has been the source of much confusion within the left. The purpose of their article, then, was to develop an understanding of the origins of the "middle class" left and why it has been relatively isolated from the working class.

The Ehrenreichs began their analysis with a general discussion of classes in monopoly capitalist society. Inasmuch as classical Marxist analysis had centered on the tendency toward the formation of two classes in capitalist society, it failed to account for the proliferation of new middle strata, a process which had actually begun around the turn of the century. Although some attention had been given to the appearance of "new middle classes" by social theorists who were "outside the Marxian mainstream" (Lederer and Marschak, Mills), it was not until the early 1960s that the ". . . explosive growth and continued social distinctiveness of the stratum of educated wage earners . . . (became) impossible for Marxists to ignore" (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977a:9). They cited the work of, among others, Mallet, Gorz, and Poulantzas.

The limitation of those most recent theoretical works, however, is that they attempted to append the new middle strata to one existing class or another (working class, petty bourgeoisie). What they failed to comprehend, the Ehrenreichs argued, is that this "middle class"

(technical and managerial workers, "culture" producers, etc.) ". . . must be understood as comprising a distinct class in monopoly capitalist society" (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977a:11). They cannot be considered to be part of the working class, since they exist in an "objectively antagonistic relationship" to the working class; nor can they be included within a "residual" class like the petty bourgeoisie, since they are ". . . a formation specific to the monopoly stage of capitalism" (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977a:11). They are, in fact, a distinct class insofar as they embody the two main characteristics of class: ". . . a common relation to the economic foundations of society . . . (; and,) a coherent social and cultural existence" (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977a:12).

This new class, which they call the Professional-Managerial Class (PMC), is defined as

> . . . consisting of salaried mental workers who do not own the means of production and whose major function in the social division of labor may be described broadly as the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist social relations (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977a:13).

The occupational groupings comprising the PMC include managers, engineers, scientists, technicians, and "cultural" workers (teachers, social workers, psychologists, entertainers, writers of advertising copy and television scripts, etc.). While the Ehrenreichs admit that the boundaries of the PMC are "fuzzy," they estimate that it makes up between 20-25% of the U.S. labor force. The other classes, and their relative sizes, are as follows: the ruling class, 1-2%, the "old middle class" (self-employed professionals, small tradespeople, independent farmers, etc.), 8-10%; and, the working class (craftsmen, operatives, laborers, sales workers, clerical workers, service workers, non-college-

educated technical workers), 65-70% (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977a: 15).

The PMC is a "derivative" class that presupposes: 1) a social surplus adequate to sustain it; and, 2) that the relations between the two dominant classes (bourgeoisie and proletariat) had reached a point where it was necessary to have a class that specialized in the reproduction of capitalist class relations. More concretely, those conditions began to be realized around the turn of the century, corresponding to the transformation of control of the labor process into a function of management and the integration of science into capitalist production; the concentration of a large social surplus in private foundations and the state, aimed at regulating various aspects of social life (public education, public health, private "charity," etc.); and, the commodification of everyday life, especially the growth of services and professional expertise. In effect, the role of the PMC within the immediate process of production, the institutions of social control, and the commodification of everyday life means that they are in an "objectively antagonistic" relationship to the working class, insofar as the PMC exists ". . . only by virtue of the expropriation of the skills and culture once indigenous to the working class" (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977a:17).

The Ehrenreichs presented a brief historical overview of the PMC, locating its origins in the period between 1890-1920. Insofar as the PMC emerged as part of the reform movements of the Progressive Era, its role was ". . . to mediate the basic alsss conflict of capitalist society and create a 'rational,' reproducible social order" (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977a:20). The rationalization of capitalism underwrote

the growth of the PMC, whether in the corporation (managers, scientists, engineers, technicians, financial experts, lawyers, etc.) or in the society at large (teachers, social workers, health and safety inspectors, city planners, architects, statisticians, civil engineers, specialists in public regulatory agencies, etc.). Moreover, the growth of the PMC fostered the development of a ". . . class outlook which was distinct from, and often antagonistic to, that of the capitalist class" (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977a:22). Their interests in autonomy, objectivity, and rationality often put them at odds with the goals of capitalist society. Veblen, for example, was an articulate spokesperson for the technocratic critique of capitalism. The strongest expression of PMC opposition to capitalism, however, was manifest in the Socialist Party, which was a significant force in American politics in the early part of the twentieth century.

The consolidation of the PMC occurred, in part, through the institution of the professional association. "Between the 1880's and 1920, medicine, law, social work, engineering and teaching emerged in their modern form, complete with professional organizations and journals and legally enforced criteria for admissions . . . ." (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977a:26). While the dispersion into separate professional organizations tended to undermine the solidarity of the PMC as a coherent class, they nevertheless shared, in common, claims to monopoly over specialized bodies of knowledge, access to which could only be gained through prolonged periods of training, and autonomy from outside interference. Moreover, the PMC increasingly developed a common culture or lifestyle. Unlike the ruling class, whose positions were hereditary, the PMC could reproduce itself only through formalized education. Their

tenuous status as a class, mitigated to some extent by endogamy and intergenerational occupational stability, resulted in an anxiety over class reproduction.

> . . . (A)ll of the ordinary experiences of life--growing up, giving birth, childraising--are freighted with an external significance unknown in other classes. Private life thus becomes too arduous to be lived in private; the inner life of the PMC must be continuously shaped, updated and revised by--of course--ever mounting numbers of experts: experts in childraising, family living, sexual fulfillment, self-realization, etc. etc. The very insecurity of the class, then, provides new groupd for class expansion. By mid-century the PMC was successful enough to provide a new mass market for many of its own services--and unsuccessful enough to need them (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977a:29).

In the second half of their two-part article, the Ehrenreichs undertook an analysis of the new left as a "case study" of PMC radicalism. In particular, they attempted to show how the new left's character was shaped by its origins in the PMC, how it later tried to transcend those origins, and how it went about resolving the dilemma.

The new left emerged during the 1960s, when the material position of the PMC had advanced significantly. Sputnik and the crisis of education, accelerated funding for scientific research, and the expansion of government and services dramatically increased the demand for PMC skills. The tremendous growth of university education not only drew in the sons and daughters from PMC families, but increasingly from the working class as well.

The first wave of campus-based activism came from the ranks of students with PMC backgrounds. SDS's Port Huron Statement (1962), the Berkeley Free Speech Movement (1964), the anti-war movement, and, later, the ecology and women's liberation movements, thus displayed ". . . both elements of traditional PMC class consciousness: scorn for

the capitalist class and elitism toward the working class" (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977b:9). This dual character of the early student activism was reinforced by the fact that they were, on the one hand, fighting against the subordination of the university to the demands of monopoly capitalism; and, on the other hand, that they regarded themselves as the only progressive force (support for the civil rights movement, opposition to the Vietnam War), over and against a working class which had been thoroughly integrated into the consumer society.

Several factors, however, forced the student radicals to reexamine their class position. One factor was the increasing demand for PMC labor, which brought larger numbers of students from working class backgrounds into the universities. Campus rebellion shifted from the elite universities (Columbia, Berkeley, Harvard) to the less elite (Kent State, Penn State, San Francisco State). Another factor was the black liberation movement and ghetto uprisings in the northern cities. White student participation in the civil rights movement in the south, the Ehrenreichs contended, often had paternalistic overtones. The militant rhetoric and actions of the black liberation movement in the north (e.g., the Black Panther Party) and the urban rebellions of 1967 (Detroit, Newark) raised the possibility of armed struggle, under the leadership of working class blacks; in short, white student radicals were confronted with the prospects of having to take sides.*

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*A personal note: When I entered graduate school at Wayne State University in Detroit in the fall of 1967, just after parts of the city (including my neighborhood) had been burned out, I picked up a campus newspaper to discover that the editorship had been taken over by John Watson of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. The paper's logo had a black panther on either side, with a banner that read: "One class conscious worker is worth a thousand students." It was a far cry from anything I had experienced in the anti-war movement or picketing produce terminals for the United Farm Workers.

Factional splits within SDS occurred not only over the rejection of student politics, but of students themselves. The new left was in a state of crisis: "Where does a movement go when it comes to feel that the concerns which motivated it were trivial, if not illegitimate? Or that the people in it are irrelevant, if not objectively enemies?" (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977b:14). For many women, the answer was the feminist movement, which was rooted in their own experience and hardly "irrelevant." But, for much of the new left, the answer was much less clear.

By 1969, the Ehrenreichs argued, the new left tended in two general directions: One they called the "radicals in the professions"; the other was the "new communist movement." The first tendency sought to use the PMC occupations--teachers, social workers, doctors, lawyers, journalists, etc.--to advance the radical cause. They put their skills to work on behalf of the poor, minorities, and working class people. Some created new organizations (Student Health Organization), attached themselves to existing ones (National Welfare Rights Organization), or worked to establish alternative institutions, such as neighborhood health centers, poverty law firms, and the like. The radicals in the professions, in essence, ". . . embodied a critical self-consciousness of the PMC itself--a kind of negative class consciousness . . . . The rule of experts would be abolished--by the young experts" (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977b:16).

The new communist movement, on the other hand, adopted Marxist-Leninist politics, and constituted themselves as the vanguard that would lead the working class to revolution. Many left the universities, or renounced their degrees, to enter the factory or to take

other "working class" jobs. They, in effect, became proletarians.

The prospects for a broad-based movement for socialism in the United States, however, is fraught with difficulties, reflecting the legacy of antagonism between the PMC and the working class. Whether in the form of a technocratic socialism of the radical professionals, or the vanguard politics of the new communist movement, the new left retains an aspect of domination with respect to the working class. For a unified socialist movement to develop, it must directly confront that tension. On the one hand, it cannot fall back on a romantic vision of the proletariat's historical mission; on the other hand, the antagonism cannot be wished away. The PMC must purge itself of condescension and elitism. Moreover, a unified left cannot confine itself to "bread and butter" issues; it must address itself to "cultural" questions as well (the division of labor, science and technology, art, psychology, sexuality, education, etc.).

> For it is on these issues that the historic antagonism between the PMC and the working class rests. Both classes confront the capitalist class over the issue of ownership and control of the means of production. They confront each other over the issues of knowledge, skills, culture (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1977b:22).

Variations on the New Class Theme

While the arguments about a new class formation reviewed up to this point have attempted to align it with one or another existing class ("new working class," "new petty bourgeoisie"), or to situate it between capital and labor ("contradictory class locations," "professional-managerial class"), another line of argument holds that, by virtue of the knowledge it possesses, a new class had become the dominant force in the advanced societies. Moreover, this new class no

longer conforms to the social relations specific to capitalist society; in fact, it transcends any distinction between capitalism and socialism. The argument has been expressed, although not exclusively, as part of "post-industrial" society theory.

As suggested above (see pp.), the claim that sections of the new middle strata have moved into positions of potential power go back at least as far as Veblen, who argued that engineers' and technicians' knowledge of the production process made them indispensable, while the entrepreneurial Vested Interests had become superfluous. The work of Berle and Means emphasized the importance of management within the firm, resulting from the separation of ownership and control. Schumpeter (1962) chronicled the decline of the entrepreneurial function and the "expropriation of the bourgeoisie," a theme that was later elaborated by Galbraith (1967) in his argument about the functional centrality of the "technostructure." Burnham's argument about a "managerial revolution" had included the expanded function of management within the state. The influence of Milovan Djilas' (1959) analysis of the "new class" within the party and state bureaucracies of the Eastern European countries laid the basis for drawing parallels between the power of managers in both capitalist and socialist societies.

More recently, however, the "new class" theme has been tied to a more comprehensive analysis of the centrality of <u>knowledge</u> in the advanced societies. Although the social basis of this knowledge may or may not be translated into direct forms of political power, it has nevertheless rendered obsolete the class relations characteristic of capitalist society. If it can be said that there is "class conflict" in the advanced societies, it operates on a new terrain, with new

participants; it is a struggle for control of culture, rather than production in the narrow sense.

In his work, The Post-Industrial Society, for example, Alain Touraine (1971b) argued that growth in the advanced capitalist societies is no longer simply the result of capital accumulation, but rests more and more on knowledge, insofar as all aspects of social life (education, consumption, information, etc.) have been integrated into the production process. Moreover, the fundamental dynamic of social conflict arises less from economic exploitation in the restricted sense than from a broader alientation.

> A man (sic) is alienated when his only relationship to the social and cultural directions of his society is the one the ruling class accords him as compatible with the maintenance of its own dominance. Alienation means canceling out social conflict by creating dependent participation . . . . Ours is a society of alienation, not because it reduces people to misery or because it imposes police restriction, but because it seduces, manipulates, and enforces conformity (Touraine, 1971b:8-9).

The basic conflict, then, is not over control of production, but over control of "knowledge" or "culture"; it is a ". . . confrontation between dependent participation and creative opposition" (Touraine, 1971b:26).

The form in which that conflict is expressed conforms to the relationship between the new dominant class and the type of opposition it creates.

> If property was the criterion of membership in the former dominant classes, the new dominant class is defined by knowledge and a certain level of education . . . (; i.e., its power is based on the fact that it) dispose(s) of knowledge and control(s) information (Touraine, 1971b:51,61).

The new dominant class consists first and foremost of technocrats, who are not technicians, but managers within the state and the business

enterprises. They identify themselves with the forces of development and social progress, and with the large organizations that make it possible. They are supported by the bureaucrats, who administer the complex organizations, and the "technicists," who possess the knowledge and skills for rationalizing the production process.

Opposition within the "programmed society" is based on the protection of one's "space," or the conflict between the needs of the social system and individual needs; i.e., ". . . the new conflicts focus on the direction of society as a whole and arouse defense of self-determination" (Touraine, 1971b:63). Resistance arises not from marginal social groups, but from those who are central to the organizations of power. There are the professionals, whose ambivalent relationship to hierarchical authority leads them to sometimes join and sometimes fight the technocrats. Then there are the exeprts, who stand in a sometimes critical relation to the functioning of the bureaucratic apparatus. And, there are the skilled workers who, no longer occupying the center of struggle, nevertheless play an important critical role in their relation to the rationalizing tendencies within production.

A crucial question, however, ". . . is whether the university will become the locus of integration or of confrontation" (Touraine, 1971b: 13), insofar as the university plays a central role in the knowledge society. The crisis of May, 1968 in France, for example, began as a conflict arising from student opposition to the technocratic society: "The password of the technocrats who run society is adaptation. The May Movement replied, self-expression" (Touraine, 1971a:24).

The student movement emerged from the context of a transformed university.

> If the students played a decisive role, not as an intelligentsia but as a social factor, it is primarily because the university's role in this programmed society is no longer the same as it was in liberal society. It can no longer be a conservatory of social and cultural values; by becoming a massive institution it becomes affiliated more and more with the new production apparatus; it trains, especially through the social sciences, persons who will carry out the functions of integration and manipulation without which the social and economic system cannot develop (Touraine, 1971a:29).

By refusing to accept the subservience of the new university, the student movement thus resonated with the broader tension between technocratic domination and demands for autonomy. The students' struggle, for example, was not against capitalism as such, but against technocracy. They were not lodged in mortal combat to defeat their enemy, but to unmask it. They proclaimed an "anti-society," freed of administrative and commercial domination of all aspects of social life. Moreover, the forces that aligned themselves with the student movement were not the traditional working class, but the professionals, whose own struggles for autonomy had more in common with the students'.

In short, the university reflects the larger conflict between technocracy and self-determination. That conflict extends not only to the organizations of production and the state, but to mass culture as well. The terrain of struggle has shifted to the realm of knowledge and culture, and the participants are those who seek to control it and those who demand autonomy.

While Daniel Bell's (1973) analysis of "post-industrial" society differed, in many respects, from that of Touraine--most notably, in Bell's utter lack of sympathy for the forces of opposition--they shared at least one feature in common: an emphasis on the central importance of knowledge. There is no intention here to review the entire corpus

of Bell's work; rather, only the most basic constituents of his argument will be summarized, particularly as they relate to the question of class.

Briefly, post-industrial society, according to Bell, can be defined along five dimensions: the transition from a goods-producing to a service-producing society; the rise of a professional and technical class; the centrality of theoretical knowledge; the control of technological innovation; and, the creation of a new intellectual technology (Bell, 2973:14). The rise of science-based industries, the accelerated pace of technological innovation, and the increase in the percentage of the workforce employed in "services"--especially in health, education, research, and government--has led to the expansion of a new intelligentsia, consisting of scientists, engineergs, educators, and other professional and technical occupations. Theoretical knowledge has become a dominant force in post-industrial society, replacing traditional and intuitive knowledge. Moreover, the development of forecasting techniques has made it possible to plan and control the introduction of technological innovation, thereby reducing the indeterminancy of the future. In short, the very basis of post-industrial society rests on a new "intellectual technology," or reproducible techniques for managing organized complexity, which can be applied not only to production or information processing, but to the management of society as well.

The centrality of knowledge has changed the configuration of class relations in post-industrial society: "If the dominant figures of the past hundred years have been the entrepreneur, the businessman, and the industrial executive, the 'new men' are the scientists, the mathematicians, the economists, and the engineers of the new intellectual technology" (Bell, 1973:344). In industrial capitalist society, social

power derived from business and the control over production.

> In the post-industrial society, production and business decisions will be subordinated to, or will derive from, other forces in society; the crucial decisions regarding the growth of the economy and its balance will come from government, but they will be based on the government's sponsorship of research and development, of cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis; the making of decisions, because of the intricately linked nature of their consquences, will have an increasingly technical character. The husbanding of talent and the spread of educational and intellectual institutions will become a prime concern of society; not only the best talents but eventually the entire complex of prestige and status will be rooted in the intellectual and scientific communities (Bell, 1973:344-345).

That is not to say, however, that the new intelligentsia will necessarily become a ruling class. The social basis of power in the Western societies, according to Bell, is still distributed between property, technical skills, and political office. Increasingly, though, technical skill is becoming the foundation upon which the other two forms of power depend.

The ascendance of a knowledge class shifts the locus of conflict. The dominant form of social conflict will no longer center around class issues, but will focus on tensions between professionals and the populace. In a concluding coda, Bell argued that post-industrial society is based upon the principles of meritocracy. Unlike property, which is gained through inheritance, or political office, which is gained through organizational membership, the mode of access to the new intelligentsia is through formal education and training. Thus, post-industrial society raises the issue of meritocracy versus equality. During the 1960s, expressions of that conflict took the form of critiques of I.Q. as a measure of intelligence, demands for open admissions to the universities, affirmative action quotas, and attacks

on the validity of credentials and the university itself. This populist revolt, according to Bell, went beyond demands for equality of opportunity to demands for equality of result. The outcome of the conflict between meritocracy and equality will shape the moral basis of legitimacy in the new order.

In a slightly different variation on the "new class" theme, Alvin Gouldner (1979) argued the case for a "flawed universal class" of intellectuals and technical intelligentsia that transcends not only the distinction between capitalism and socialism, but developed and developing nations as well. This new class is the bearer of scientific, technical, and cultural knowledge. It is both revolutionary and conservative, cohesive and internally divided. It is egalitarian with respect to the old class, but anti-egalitarian when it comes to protecting its own "guild advantages." It is like the working class, inasmuch as it makes its living through the wage system; it is unlike the working class in that it will not concede control over its work and environment in exchange for higher wages, although it does expect compensation commensurate with its elevated status.

Beyond this list of charming contradictions (there are more), there are at least two characteristics of the new class that seem central to Gouldner's argument: The new class is a "cultural bourgeoisie" and a "speech community." With respect to the first, Gouldner argued that the autonomy of thenew class, grounded in its claim to specialized knowledge and expressed as the ideology of professionalism, is a form of "cultural capital."

> Capital . . . is a produced object whose public goal is increased economic productivity but whose latent function is to increase the incomes and social control of those possessing it. In this

> perspective it is plain that education is as much capital as are a factory's buildings or machines (Gouldner, 1979:22).

The new class is also a speech community, characterized by a "culture of critical discourse." The nature of this critical discourse demands justification for assertions, which cannot rely on appeals to authority and which seeks consent based on the validity of arguments made.

Cultural capital and the culture of critical discourse are a unifying factor within the new class, both in terms of its internal contradictions and its relation to the old moneyed class. In what might otherwise be (and often is) a division between humanistic intellectuals and the technical intelligentsia, the culture of critical discourse provides a common bond. The technical intelligentsia, for example, are distinguished from the old line bureaucrats, who rely on authority and obedience. Thus, both the intellectuals and the technical intelligentsia are a revolutionary force, insofar as the culture of critical discourse alienates them from tradition. The alienation of the new class, however, goes beyond critical discourse (a); it also derives from

> . . . (b) the blockage of their opportunities for upward mobility; (c) the disparity between their income and power, on the one side, and their cultural capital and self-regard, on the other; (d) their commitment to the social totality; (e) the contradictions of the technical especially the blockage of their technical interests (Gouldner, 1979:58).

While the alientation of the new class may shape its trajectory, its political prospects are another matter. The strengths of the new class are its cultural capital, upon which the old class depends for its own reproduction, and its capacity for political diagnosis and strategy; "(m)oreover, the New Class's orientation to the 'totality'

allows it to claim that very 'nonpartisanship' which is the essence of all political legitimacy" (Gouldner, 1979:86). On the other hand, the new class is politically limited by the situation-free character of its discourse, which dulls it to the uniqueness and complexity of different situations. The political prospects of the new class, however, may depend as much on the weakness and vulnerability of the old class as any particular virtue of its own. The old class was ". . . born with a 'legitimation crisis'" (Gouldner, 1979:87); its social power now rests on productivity and consumerism. To the extent that declines, so too will the social position of the old class.

The Debates in Retrospect: A Critical Assessment

The debates within recent class theory have attempted to account for the social and political consequences of the restructuring of the advanced capitalist societies during the twentieth century. Those debates have centered around the question whether sections of the new middle strata constitute some form of "new class," either aligned with an existing class, situated between classes, or transformed into a new base of power. In order to assess the relative merits of the various arguments, however, it is first necessary to consider briefly some of the criteria for discussing the question of class.

Much of class theory has been debated, either explicitly or implicitly, within the framework of Marx's distinction between a "class in itself" and a "class for itself"--i.e., between class as an "objective" formation and class as a political "subject." The debates over the role of the party, for example, have been concerned essentially with how to effect the transformation from an objective class

into a class that is the revolutionary subject of history. The distinction, however, presupposes that class "exists" as a "thing," to use E. P. Thompson's (1963) characterization, prior to (and irrespective of) its level of political organization and struggle.

That distinction has been both a strength and a weakness within the marxist tradition. It was the basis for Marx's claim that the "ability of the proletariat to represent its interests as the interests of the whole of society" was tied to the development of capitalist production; i.e., the objective capacity of the proletariat to become the revolutionary class was a consequence of the increasing consumption of labor under the social relations of capitalist production. The virute of that argument is that it focuses attention on the structural underpinnings of political struggle. It establishes the "boundary conditions" within which that struggle occurs.

On the other hand, the distinction also leads to the conception that somehow the determinants of political struggle can be derived from the (economic) structure of class relations. That conception is not simply a matter of false interpretation. It is endemic to Marx's metaphysic of the proletariat as the necessarily revolutionary class. As Adam Przeworski has recently argued, however, class analysis cannot rest upon that distinction, insofar as the formation of a class is at least as much a product of political struggle as it is of any "objective" constitution.

> Class analysis is a form of analysis that links social development to struggles among concrete historical actors. Such actors, collectivities-in-struggle at a particular moment of history, are not determined uniquely by objective conditions, not even by the totality of economic, political, and ideological conditions. Precisely because class formation is an effect of

> struggles, outcomes of this process are at each moment of history to some extent indeterminate (Przeworski, 1977:343).

It is in this sense, then, that the debates over the new middle strata will be considered. The analysis presented in the previous chapter attempted to locate the "objective" formation of the new middle strata in the separation of mental from manual labor, conforming to a logic of domination; moreover, it was argued that, insofar as mental labor is itself a labor process subject to a hierarchical division of labor and relations of authority, the middle strata are in an inherently ambiguous situation. While the "boundary conditions" of the new middle strata may suggest certain political valences or tendencies, their constitution into some form of new class, and their relations to other classes, must be understood from the standpoint of concrete historical action. It is that which is of utmost interest in assessing the relative merits of the debates.

The great strength of the "new working class" thesis was in its ability to point to the profound differences between the politics of the "old" and "new" working class. Although the argument referred to the specific situation in France, where there was an actual movement for workers' control among the technicians of the advanced industries, it had obvious relevance to the United States to the extent that it more broadly portrayed the politics of students and educated labor as directed toward a confrontation with capitalist culture as a whole, rather than a more narrow economism. Active support for the civil rights movement, the emphasis on community control in the early new left, opposition to American military intervention from the anti-war movement, the anti-authoritarianism and anti-consumerism of the

"counter culture," the challenge to the logic of capitalist development implicit in the environmentalist and anti-nuclear movements, and the confrontation over issues related to family and sexuality raised by the feminist and gay movements all represented a cultural assault that was clearly distinguishable from (and sometimes opposed by) the trade union movement. While they were often politically incoherent and organizationally isolated from one another, those movements nevertheless shared a vague political sensibility that could be characterized as a primitive class outlook. That they never congealed into a common political thrust is testimony to just how primitive it was.

On the other hand, the abject failure of new working class theory, with the possible exception of Gorz's more recent article, was its inability to understand the relationship between the "old" and "new" working class, both structurally and politically. Mallet's singular emphasis on the new working class as the "leading sector" within the broader working class movement, for example, glossed over the contradictions between technical workers and manual workers as an expression of the domination of mental over manual labor. He was restricted to castigating the organizations of the traditional working class (PCF, CGT) for being a political rearguard. That tendency was even more pronounced in the United States, where new working class theory (and much of the new left) bordered on self-righteous arrogance with respect to its own political significance.* The working class had been thoroughly integrated into the consumer society, and it was only

*Bogdan Denitch is exempt from that criticism, insofar as he viewed the "new working class" from the standpoint of the trade union movement. His interest was primarily in the potential of demands for autonomy and community control as a source of revitalization for the union movement.

revolutionary youth and educated labor that could pose the challenge to capitalist hegemony. The brief career of new working class theory in the United States was thus not only a product of the relative isolation of its social base, but of its own inability to comprehend the broader political dynamics of American society. That failure was dramatically highlighted by the emergence of a new right, a subject that will be explored in the last chapter.

The work of Nicos Poulantzas, in contrast, focused particularly on the antagonism between the working class and what he called the "new petty bourgeoisie." The value of Poulantzas' argument rested in his recognition that, while the working class and the new middle strata shared certain characteristics in common--specifically, their common situation as wage-laborers--they were nonetheless divided along political and ideological lines. However, Poulantzas' characterization of, for example, the petty bourgeois mentality (individualism, reformism, a belief in the neutrality of state and culture, etc.) and its relation to the new middle strata was as rigid as it was useful. Ideology, like economic and political relations, was a "structure" that could be determined theoretically. Class, then, became a matter of <u>definition</u>, rather than an actual historical formation. Poulantzas resorted ultimately to the orthodox Marxist position that the proletariat was the only truly revolutionary class; while "fractions" of the new petty bourgeoisie that were objectively polarized toward the working class could become its political allies, they could only be allied from the rear.

Erik Wright's critique of Poulantzas acknowledged the inherently ambiguous situation of the new middle strata, over and against

Poulantzas' rigid categorization. Wright's notion of "contradictory class locations" with respect to economic, political, and ideological criteria left room for a degree of indeterminacy in the constitution of classes; however, Wright managed to raise orthodoxy to a new, grotesque level. In his variant of structuralist analysis, Wright reduced ideology to a "distortion" of reality, which betrayed "objective" class interests--interests which could only be revealed by a "scientifically correct" understanding. Wright thus repeated Poulantzas' tendency to transform class into a matter of definition. His analysis of the structural indeterminacy of class offered little in the way of a capacity to understand how "contradictory class locations" are translated into concrete, historical action. His utter lack of sensitivity to the roots of ideology in everyday life experience, as the way in which people make sense of their contradictory situations, effectively stifled any potential for understanding how classes are actually, as opposed to merely theoretically, formed.

The Ehrenreichs, on the other hand, managed to avoid the major pitfalls of the arguments reviewed to this point. Their analysis of a "Professional-Managerial Class (PMC)" not only accounted for the differences in political sensibilities, but also the nature of the new middle strata; i.e., they transcended the myopia of new working class theory, while resisting Poulantzas' theoretical determinism. Consistent with the best of Erik Wright, they understood the inherently ambiguous, or contradictory, situation of the PMC. Unlike Wright, however, they established the basis for understanding the PMC as a concrete, historical formation, embodying various political and ideological traditions.

But, the question arises: Why a class? The Ehrenreichs contended that the PMC is a class because of its common relationship to the economic foundations of society and its common culture and lifestyle. Beyond the problems of its "fuzzy" boundaries and the questionable coherence of its common culture, the real issue is whether the PMC has actually constituted itself as a class through political action and outlook. That is not to say, however, the the Ehrenreichs confined themselves to describing the PMC as a "class in itself"; on the contrary, they provided a valuable historical analysis of the various political expressions of the PMC. Their case study of the new left as an instance of PMC radicalism was a good example. The thrust of their analysis of the new left, however, was to show how the economic, political, and ideological contradictions of the PMC shaped the new left, not to argue that the new left represented the PMC as a whole. It thus seems more appropriate to say that the PMC, or the sections of the new middle strata that it represents, continues to be characterized by ambiguity and contradiction. To call it a class is premature at best.

The same objections can be raised with respect to the various "new class" arguments. Touraine's analysis of the shifting terrain of conflict in the programmed society, Bell's argument about the increasing dependence of property and political office on technical knowledge, and Gouldner's discussion of the cultural basis of intellectuals and the technical intelligentsia provided a useful corrective to the view that the struggle between capital and labor is the only foundation upon which the political dynamics of the advanced societies rest. However, the claim that technocrats, scientists and professionals, or

intellectuals and the technical intelligentsia constitute a new dominant class seems to be an overstatement on at least two counts. First, the autonomy of the new class is constantly invaded by the logic of capital, whether through the labor process or through the limits on the ability to determine the purposes for which knowledge is employed. Not only in the corporations and the state, but in the universities and research institutions as well, knowledge is directed toward problems that presuppose the framework of capitalist social relations; in the first instances (corporations and the state), the directing mechanism is employment, while in the second (universities and research institutions), the lever is funding. While the subordination of the new class does not approximate that of, say, factory workers, neither is its independence as complete as the new class argument would suggest. Second, although some antagonism may arise from the constraints imposed on the new class, there is no evidence that it has been translated into a coherent political expression. To say that a new class has been formed on the basis of the knowledge it possesses is insufficient. It has not used that new base of power to effect its own political independence. Rather than becoming a "class for itself," it has remained, to a large extent, a "class for others."

In sum, the thrust of the review of the debates has been to argue that the new middle strata are in an inherently ambiguous, or contradictory, situation. Moreover, the new middle strata, either in whole or in part, have not constituted themselves into a political class; i.e., they remain politically ambivalent. How they enter into the configuation of class relations thus requires a broader analysis of the political

dynamics of American society--a matter which forms the heart of the final chapter.

CHAPTER 4

CLASS AND POLITICS IN THE UNITED STATES: AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEW RIGHT

The analysis to this point has attempted to argue that, contrary to Marx's claim about the simplification of class antagonisms, the actual development of American capitalism during the twentieth century has led to the creation of new middle strata; that the emergence of the new middle strata corresponded to the separation of mental from manual labor within the immediate relations of production, and in the division of labor in society as a whole; that the social character of the new middle strata is inherently ambiguous, both "objectively" and in terms of its actual political expressions; and, that the implications of the new middle strata with respect to the configuration of class relations in the United States requires a broader analysis of existing political forces and their interrelationships. The latter claim was based on the argument that an analysis of class cannot rely upon Marx's distinction between a "class in itself" and a "class for itself," insofar as that distinction suggests that the formation of class occurs at separate "moments" in history--first objectively (economic class), then subjectively (political class). Instead, as Przeworski has argued, the constitution of a class is as much the product of concrete political action as it is of any "objective" characteristics, whether economic, political, or ideological. Accordingly, in order to arrive at some

understanding of the nature of class in the United States, it is necessary to look not only at the restructuring of American capitalism, but at the realignment of political forces as well.

The question of class is especially problematic in the United States. Unlike the capitalist countries of Western Europe, where there are at least elements of overt class politics, class appears to be hidden from view in American politics. There is, for example, no working class political party equivalent to even the social democratic parties of Western Europe. Instead, organized labor, especially since the New Deal, has been confined by and large to acting as an interest group within the Democratic Party. The emergence of political movements based in the new middle strata thus further complicates an already confusing picture. As a result, even some within the marxist tradition have abandoned the concept of class altogether (see, e.g., Aronowitz et al, 1976; Alt, 1976; Plotke, 1981). That conclusion, however, seems to underestimate the extent to which class provides the scaffolding for American politics. To be sure, that scaffolding is well-concealed; and, even when it appears, it is splintered and in pieces. But, with a little effort, it can become recognizable. The point here is not to argue that American politics can be understood as a coherent expression of class, but rather to suggest that the rudiments of class appear in fragments. More than that, however, the ways in which those fragments are aligned and realigned shape the potential for a more explicit class politics to emerge.

It is the intention of the present chapter, then, to attempt to unravel those fragments, and to understand the extent to which they embody elements of class. The analysis includes a review of the politics

of the "working class,"* as well as the new middle strata and the relationship between the two. The particular emphasis on the recent emergence of a "new right" affords a unique opportunity to examine the relationship between class and politics in somewhat sharper focus, insofar as the new right reflects a significant realignment of political forces. Although it is too early to tell whether the new right represents a long-rum restructuring of American politics** or whether, to use a favorite phrase of Stanley Aronowitz, it is merely "a pimple on the ass of history," it nevertheless draws together many of the themes discussed throughout this work. Moreover, the nature of the political alignments that emerge to oppose the new right suggest not only the future of American politics, but the future of class as well.

The Countours of American Politics and the Rise of a New Right

For the past forty-five years or so, American politics has been dominated by a loose coalition of organized labor, sections of capital, liberals of the new middle strata, minorities, and the poor, formed under the New Deal banner of the Democratic Party. The core of the political alliance forged in the New Deal coalition was a class compromise, predicated upon support for expanded state intervention into the economy. From the standpoint of "class conscious" sections of capital--as opposed to the more narrow self-interest of competitive capital--the New Deal state represented the potential for rationalizing

*The term "working class" is intentionally placed in quotations in order to remain consistent with Przeworski's caveat about what constitutes a class; i.e., the "working class" remains an abstract category to the extent that it has not constituted itself as a coherent political class, irrespective of its "objective" circumstances.

**For an interesting left analysis, which argues the case for the Right's potential to consolidate its power, see Bill Resnick's (1981) "The Right's Propsects: Can It Reconstruct America?".

the economic and social order. Keynesian economic policies, social investment (education, research, public infrastructure, etc.), and regulation, designed to improve the conditions favorable to the private accumulation of capital, became the defining characteristics of the New Deal state. Although there have continued to be antagonisms between capital and the state, the conflict has been more over who is to control regulation, and on what terms, rather than the fact of regulation itself. The state, in short, promised stability through system maintenance.

The general crisis of capitalism in the 1930s, however, was more than an economic crisis; it was a social crisis as well. Growing labor militance and demands on the state from, among others, the elderly and the unemployed, expanded the scope of system maintenance to include concessions sufficient to maintain social harmony. Social insurance, welfare, and, later civil rights and health care legislation, established the social wage and minimal protections against the most perverse aspects of the market economy.

The political compromise reflected in the New Deal state was sustained by a compromise effected within the immediate relations of production. Essentially, the latter recognized labor's right to organize itself (formalized by the National Labor Relations Act in 1935) and capital's right to organize production. The terms of the agreement were routinized after World War II, when increases in wages and benefits were tied to productivity, thus wedding the interests of labor to the fortunes of capital. Moreover, with the exception of seniority and negotiations over work rules, control over investment and the labor process were conceded to capital as part of the "managerial prerogatives" excluded from collective bargaining. In effect, the compromise within the

immediate relations of production tied the fate of both capital and labor to continued economic expansion, safeguarded the legal basis of private property, and subsidized the New Deal state.

If, as Dahrendorf (1959) says, class conflict was "institutionalized," conflict nevertheless appeared in other forms. Beginning with the civil rights movement in the 1950s, political conflict shifted more broadly to the realm of "culture." That general thrust was carried forward during the 1960s and after by the student (anti-war, "counter culture"), black power, feminist, gay, environmentalist, and anti-nuclear movements. With the exception of the civil rights and parts of the black power movements,* the new militance was based in the middle strata. In short, the initiative for an oppositional politics, however, diffuse, had shifted from the "working class" to a new social base.

More recently, however, the contours of American politics have undergone a significant change. There is evidence, for example, that the New Deal coalition has fallen apart and, with it, the nature of the compromise between capital and labor. Escalating energy costs, a declining competitive position in the world economy, a deteriorating industrial infrastructure, shifting patterns of investment, and the

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*Harold Baron (1975:174) argued that the upsurge of the black liberation movement during the 1960s shifted the initiative from the old black middle class to the black working class, especially the marginal sectors. While that is true of groups such as the Black Panthers, black militance was also evident among students (SNCC) and the new black middle strata. In fact, one consequence of the civil rights and black liberation movements was an expansion of the new black middle strata. Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Robert Allen, both active nationalists during the 1960s and early 1970s, not only acknowledged the new class divisions within the black "nation," but argued that nationalism was essentially transformed into a platform for upwardly mobile blacks (see, e.g., Allen, 1976); accordingly, both moved away from nationalism toward Marxism. The point here is simply that the black movement embodied its own antagonisms between the "working class" and the new middle strata.

export of capital have eroded the fiscal base of the state. Facing an increasing tax burden, a decline in real wages, and, for many, lay-offs, nearly half of organized labor that voted in the 1980 elections broke away from the Democratic Party to join with the traditional constituency of the Republican Party (small shopkeepers, competitive sector capital, sections of the new middle strata) and new forms of capital and labor (particularly the high-technology industries of the Sunbelt) under an "anti-state" ideological canopy (Brenner and Brenner, 1981). The election of Reagan to the Presidency and a Republican majority to the Senate represented a shift away from a commitment to social investment and social spending toward a "supply-side" economic program, which amounts to a heavy reliance on the unfettered operation of the market. The new Repbulican coalition has thus dismantled the social base of the "class compromise" reflected in the New Deal state by essentially giving a blank check to capital, while cutting back on the social programs fought for by, among others, the organized labor movement over the past half century.

The retreat of organized labor within the realm of politics is mirrored within the immediate relations of production. The current crisis in basic manufacturing--auto, steel, rubber, etc.--underscores the weakness of even the most highly organized sectors of labor, as unions are being forced to make concessions on wages and benefits in exchange for minimum protections against loss of jobs (see, e.g., Business Week, 1981a). In essence, to the extent that class conflict was "institutionalized" in the collective bargaining process, and based upon the linkage between wage increases and productivity, the underside of that compromise has now taken precedence, as organized labor has

borne the weight of the current crisis. The weakness of the labor movement is further evidenced in its failure to organize new sectors of employment,* which has resulted in an erosion of its base. Just over 20% of the workforce is currently organized, as compared with a high of over 35% in 1945 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1970:178).

The weakening of the labor movement has exacerbated already-existing tensions between it and the oppositional political movements based in the new middle strata. For example, to the extent that workers in the basic manufacturing industries have aligned themselves with the new right's "supply-side" reindustrialization strategy, they find that they are at odds with environmentalist and anti-nuclear activists. A cornerstone of the Reagan program for reviving American industry has been an attack on environmental protection legislation and support for the development of new sources of energy; the latter has included not only granting leases for off-shore drilling and exploration for shale oil on public lands, but continued support for nuclear power. Environmentalists and anti-nuclear activists have been portrayed as being responsible for placing constraints on American industry and, therefore, the creation of new jobs. The bitter confrontation between construction workers and members of the Abalone Alliance, who were blockading the Diablo Canyon nuclear reactor in California, is but one expression of the resulting political tension.

The new right has also been successful in shaping the political

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*A major exception is public employees; for example, membership in the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) tripled between 1968 and 1978, while membership in the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which has also begun to organize in the public sector, doubled during the same period (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980:428).

discourse surrounding the "tax revolt." It has translated opposition to taxes into a more general "anti-state" mood, pitting workers in the private sector against state workers and those dependent upon state services.

Beyond the "economic" crisis, however, the new right has captured the momentum with respect to the "social" crisis. It has mobilized sentiment against the feminist and gay movements as the source of the decline in family and community life. Opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment, reproductive rights, and gay rights have been central to the agendy of the new right, led by Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority and Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum.

The remainder of the present chapter attempts to provide a framework for understanding the new political alignments by drawing upon themes developed earlier. That involves, first, an examination of divisions within the "working class," particularly with respect to the fiscal crisis of the state; and, second, an analysis of divisions between the "working class" and the new middle strata, and their relation to the politics surrounding the "social" crisis. In both cases, the new political alignments are seen as indeterminate; i.e., whether or not they evolve into a more explicit form of "class" politics is a matter of concrete political action, and not of any immanent trajectory of history.

The New Right and the Fiscal Crisis of the State

James O'Connor's (1973) analysis of the fiscal crisis of the state was not only compelling; it was prophetic. The "tax revolt," symbolized by the passage of Proposition 13 in California, was an opening wedge in

the breakup of the New Deal coalition and the formation of a new right political alliance. O'Connor's analysis of the divisions within the "working class," and their implications with respect to the fiscal crisis of the state, provides a valuable framework for understanding the tax revole. Accordingly, it is useful to begin with a brief review of O'Connor's argument.

In what he called an "anatomy of American state capitalism," O'Connor argued that economic activities in the United States can be divided into two broad groups: those organized by private capital and those organized by the state; moreover, the former is further divided into monopolistic industries (large-scale capital) and competitive industries (small business). The divisions within the American labor force correspond roughly to those three sectors, with each having its own particular characteristics and depending upon one another in various ways.

The monopoly sector is characterized by a high ratio of physical capital-to-labor (organic composition of capital) and a resulting high level of productivity per worker. The concentration and centralization of capital within the monopoly firms creates a relatively stable industrial structure, insofar as capital requirements present a barrier to the entry of new capital, and a relatively stable market structure, insofar as market power is translated into administered prices. Labor in the monopoly sector tends to be highly organized, and wages are comparatively high as a result of two factors: The agreement within the collective bargaining process tying wages to productivity encouraged the introduction of new technology, which increased productivity and, therefore, wages; and, the market power of the monopoly firms enables

them to pass on wage increases in the form of higher prices.

In the competitive sector, on the other hand, the physical capital-to-labor ratio, and thus productivity, are low. Workers are generally poorly organized, due both to the nature of the firms and of the composition of the labor force. Since there are several enterprises within a market, none has the power to set prices; i.e., prices are generally subject to fluctuations in the market, which means that wage increases cannot be easily passed on in the form of higher prices. Accordingly, the collective bargaining power of competitive sector workers is weak, and they are unable to keep pace with the increase in the cost of living established by wage settlements in the monopoly sector. Due to low wages and part-time or seasonal employment, many workers in the competitive sector are among the "working poor," and they are forced to rely increasingly upon the state for such services as health insurance, unemployment benefits, and welfare.

In the state sector, productivity cannot match that of the monopoly sector; moreover, wages are dependent upon taxes rather than money realized in the exchange of commodities. During the past two decades, however, state sector workers have become highly unionized, and they have tended to negotiate wage increases patterned after those in the monopoly sector. The net effect has been to place an increasing strain on the state budget, which can only be alleviated through higher taxes.

In essence, the relationship between the three sectors results in greater demands being placed on the state. The technological displacement of labor within the monopoly sector and the inability of competitive sector workers to keep pace with the cost of living increase demands on the state for services from a growing population of the working poor and

the unemployed; the requirements of private capital increases demands for social capital outlays (education, research and development, public infrastructure, etc.); and, the "pattern bargaining" (linkage to wages in the monopoly sector) among state sector workers creates demands for higher wages. The inflationary demands on the state, and the resulting increase in the tax burden, provide the framework for the tax revolt and the rise of the new right.

The structural divisions within the "working class" described by O'Connor were held together politically in the New Deal coalition, insofar as monopoly, competitive, and state sector workers and the unemployed generally supported expenditures for state services. More recently, however, the decline in the American economy has exacerbated the tensions between the different sectors of labor, splitting off, in particular, large numbers of monopoly sector workers. At a time when demands on the state were increasing, but real wages were declining and the threat of lay-offs was becoming a fact of life, the tax burden became a central political issue. THe articulation of that issue, moreover, was dominated by the right.

The passage of the Jarvis-Gann initiative (Proposition 13) in California provides an insight into the political realignment forged in the tax revolt. Proposition 13, which dramatically reduced property taxes, was born in the competitive sector,* specifically real estate (Howard Jarvis, a co-sponsor of the initiative, is a realtor). Its main theme--tax relief for homeowners and businesses--was portrayed as a

*Big capital was ambivalent about Proposition 13, fearing that it could lead to social disruptions; for example, the day after Proposition 13 was passed, Crocker National Bank, a large California bank, took out a full-page ad in the San Francisco Chronicle, urging moderation in reduction of social services.

popular opposition to big government. Although Proposition 13 reflected the traditional antipathy of small capital toward the state, that base was insufficient to carry out its political agenda. Its success rested in its ability to capture a broad base of homeowners, which included better-paid sections of the "working class" (especially monopoly sector workers). In general, Proposition 13 used reductions in the property tax to attack "waste and inefficiency" in government, a traditional theme of right-wing populism.* More specifically, it sought to reduce state expenditures for social services, particularly those programs least affecting homeowners (welfare, health insurance for the poor). In effect, Proposition 13 drove a wedge into the New Deal coalition by pitting monopoly sector workers against state workers and those dependent upon state services. It translated the tax revolt into a more general anti-state sentiment as the basis for its political unity.

Two years after the passage of Proposition 13, the Republican Party built upon the growing anti-state mood to capture the presidency and a majority of the Senate in the 1980 elections. The Republican Party, which has traditionally embodied the anti-state political perspective of small capital, faced the real prospect that it would become marginal to American politics after the defeat of Goldwater in 1964. Although it held the presidency between 1968 and 1976, both Nixon and Ford had to contend with Democratic majorities in the House and Senate, which effectively stymied the full adoption of a Republican economic and social program. Nixon, for example, was forced to describe himself as a "reluctant Keynesian," as he put wage and price controls into effect.

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*In his 1968 presidential campaign, for example, George Wallace vowed to "throw the bureaucrats' briefcases into the Potomac River."

The Republican victory in the 1980 elections, however, included not only the presidency, but a majority in the Senate and a significant erosion of Democratic control of the House; in the House, moreover, the defection of conservative Southern Democrats ("boll weevils") solidified support for a Republican program. With its new base of power, the Republican Party aggressively set out to cut taxes, to undermine certain regulatory legislation (especially environmental standards and occupational safety requirements), and to dramatically reduce expenditures for social programs. The Republican economic program was guided by the new right's "supply side" strategy, which abandoned the Keynesian policies devoted to regulating effective demand through government expenditures in favor of a reliance on the free operation of the market. Investment tax credits, accelerated depreciation allowances, relaxed regulatory standards, and tax cuts were designed to give capital a free hand, with the assumption that the resulting economic revival would create new jobs and thus reduce demands on the state for social expenditures.

The success of the Republican Party resulted from its ability to win over two new bases of support to its traditional constituency. One reflected the "power shift" from the declining manufacturing industries of the Northeast and Midwest to the high-technology industries of the Sunbelt (petroleum, electronics, information processing, etc.). With the exception of petroleum, those industries tend to be relatively new and largely competitive; moreover, their workforces generally consist of unorganized technicians and assembly workers. Accordingly, the political compromises established between capital, labor, and the state in the traditional manufacturing industries are relatively absent in the new industries of the Sunbelt. The social relations within these new

industries--unorganized workers employed by competitive capital--thus provide rich soil for an anti-state politics: On the one hand, unorganized workers lack a tradition of collective action and a large base of power to represent their political interests, isolating them from the state; on the other hand, new forms of capital which have yet to consolidate their market power generally prefer policies which encourage free investment and unrestricted accumulation of capital to regulatory constraints imposed by the state. A second, and perhaps key, component in the new Republican coalition came from the ranks of organized labor. The Republican Party not only captured the momentum of the tax revolt, but successfully portrayed the decline of manufacturing industries as being the result of government regulation. To the extent that organized labor was weakened politically, both in terms of its ability to promote its programs through the state and to protect members' jobs from plant closures and lay-offs, many workers began to see the revival of capital as the only hope for their future prospects. The Republican Party promised relief from the tax burden by cutting social programs and a renaissance of American industry by reducing government regulation, a program which managed to win over a large section of monopoly sector workers.

Whether or not the Reagan administration can sustain the coalition that comprises its social base is contingent upon the success of its programs and the nature of the opposition that forms--a matter which is taken up in the final section.

The New Right and Ressentiment

While the political response to the economic crisis played upon divisions within the "working class," the politics of the social crisis

derived more from the antagonisms between the "working class" and the new middle strata. The new right was able to appeal to a deeply-felt resentment against the erosion of an idealized way of life based on tradition, and to translate that resentment into a political antagonism toward the new middle strata and the way of life they represent; i.e., just as the early craft unions fought to protect their autonomy from encroachment by an ascendant industrial capitalism, the new right defended tradition in the face of social Taylorism.

In order to understand the relationship between class and the new right, it is useful to take a brief excursion into one of the shortcomings of Marx's argument about the formation of class consciousness, and to supplement it with an important insight of Nietzsche. As James Miller (1978) has argued, a substantial part of the ultimate predictability of human history for Marx was based on the premise that classes act on behalf of their own interests.

> Nietzsche, by contrast, portrays human beings as creatures driven, for the most part, by fear: of reasoning, of freedom, of truth, of novelty, of individuation, of the tensions created by a multi-faceted personality. Interest, one of the key faculties Marx believed operative in social action, Nietzsche dismissed as relatively unimportant: "man is an indifferent egoist; even the cleverest thinks his habits more important than his advantage . . . ." Most individuals, left to their own devices, crave security, order, certainty, the familiar, tried-and-true routine that seems to provide a steady foundation for life (Miller, 1978:32).

While Nietzsche's pessimism may overstate the "other side" of human propensities, it is a useful corrective to any marxist discourse on class. Nietzsche's discussion of ressentiment, for example, goes much further toward providing a basis for understanding the new right than any putative notion of class interest.

Briefly, in his work, On the Genealogy of Morals, Nietzsche began

by inquiring into the origins of the terms "good" and "evil." He dismissed the English utilitarians' claim that good is whatever brings pleasure and evil is whatever causes pain as historically inaccurate and psychologically absurd. Instead, Nietzsche argued that good and evil are essentially social in their nature. In his etymological analysis of the word "good," for example, Nietzsche noted that it was consistently associated with traits characteristic of the aristocracy or nobility. What is most interesting for present purposes, however, is Nietzsche's insight into how the morality of the nobility produces its opposite--a slave morality with its unique psychological transmogrifications.

> The slave revolt in morality begins when ressentiment itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the ressentiment of natures that are denied the true reaction, that of deeds, and compensate themselves with an imaginary revenge. While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is "outside," what is "different," what is "not itself"; and this No is its creative deed (Nietzsche, 1969:36).

In essence, ressentiment is hostility contained. To the extent that slaves are unable to confront the nobility directly, they accomplish their revenge in imagination. They cling tenaciously to an inner sense of the inherent virtue of their own way of life, over and against the dominant morality of the nobility.

It is in this sense that ressentiment provides a key to understanding the new right and what is, from a marxist perspective, the anomaly that the "working class" can appear to act contrary to its own "interests." The American "working class" has not only suffered a loss of its economic and political power, but an erosion of its way of life as well. Traditional forms of family and community life have been

subjected to forces over which people feel they have little control, threatening the last refuge of the familiar and secure. The new right has captured the momentum of the social crisis by glorifying tradition over and against those alien and hostile "outside" forces. Moreover, it has identified those forces with sections of the new middle strata, who, as the Ehrenreichs argued, "exist by virtue of the expropriation of skills and culture once indigenous to the working class." Tradition has been subordinated to professional expertise, local autonomy has been supplanted by social management, and the "inherent virtue" of working class life is being threatened by new cultural forms.

Although the themes of the new right have been varied (racism, patriarchy, homophobia), they have been expressed through the common form of opposition to "outside" interference. Racism, for example, has traditionally been a mobilizing issue for the right, but even that has taken on a new character. Overt racism, such as Klan violence, still exists, but the new right's racism is more subtle, concentrating on the liberal state's intervention into local autonomy--school busing, affirmative action, open housing, etc.

The schools have also become a battleground, with the new right defending family and community against the state. The new right has succeeded in framing the issue as one of who is responsible for instilling moral values in children. Sex education, school textbooks, and curricula have been specifically targeted.

As Gordon and Hunter (1977-78) have argued, however, the key issues which have animated the new right have been related to sexuality and family. The feminist and gay movements, in particular, have been singled out for undermining the moral basis of the family. Anita

Bryant's anti-gay rights crusade, Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, and Phyllis Schlafly's anti-ERA campaign have been a driving force within the new right (see, e.g., Crawford, 1980). They have played upon fears of diversity and the unfamiliar, lionizing the virtues of heterosexuality contained within patriarchal family relations.

Phyllis Schlafly, for example, has emphasized the risks inherent in the Equal Rights Amendment, arguing that it would remove the legal protections which have historically safeguarded women's "privilege"; if, Schlafly argues, women's first and most noble duty is that of wife and mother, they cannot be cast about unprotected into competition with men (KPFA, 1982). Similarly, Anita Bryant's "Save Our Children" campaign

> . . . activated hundreds of New Right women (and men) who view the rise of homosexuality, like the Equal Rights Amendment, as a threat to the family and the way of life that the family represents. The maintenance of traditional sex roles, they believe, is essential to the survival of the traditional family. Because they demand traditional role models for young children in the schools, they especially oppose the employment of homosexual teachers (Crawford, 1980:152).

To oppose homosexuality on the grounds of protecting children, of course, is an act of bad faith. It goes much deeper than that, raising questions about the very nature of sexuality. Not only homosexuality, but the increasing sexual assertiveness of women, challenges repressed forms of sexuality. A similar current runs through the anti-abortion movement --it is more a ". . . fear of women's independence . . . than concern for the unborn" (Gordon and Hunter, 1977-78:10).

The political vulnerability of the feminist and gay movements is very much a reflection of the restructuring of class relations in the United States. To the extent that those movements arose outside of the

"working class," they became subject to characterization by the new right as alien and hostile forces.* The women's movement, for example, emerged from the college campuses and university-educated women. In spite of its substantial cultural impact, it has been largely unsuccessful in winning over "working class" women, remaining relatively isolated in its base in the new middle strata. The gay movement grew out of a similar social milieux, although its vulnerability has been compounded by its unique political history. The first "political act" of gays was "coming out," which led to mass migrations to urban centers such as San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles. While that concentration in urban "ghettoes" was an act of self-protection, it has also been a liability to the extent that it has kept them isolated and vulnerable to political caricature.

Ressentiment has provided an underpinning for the new right, then, to the extent that challenges to traditional ways of life have been identified with the new middle strata, whose relative privileges and social power in relation to the "working class" have turned them into a new cultural nobility--as managers, professionals, bureaucrats, and as political activists. The new right has translated resentment over powerlessness at work and in daily life into the sentiments of a slave morality.

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*Although unrelated to family and sexuality, the same social separation characterizes the environmentalist and anti-nuclear movements. To recall a theme of the "new working class" argument, those movements represent a critique of the wider reproduction of capitalist culture, in contrast to the economism of the trade union movement. That very contrast, however, has resulted in a political separation which has often led to antagonism.

Class and the Prospects for the Future

While the new right represents a significant realignment of American political forces, it is an unholy alliance whose continued stability is anything but certain. Moreover, the nature of the groupings that coalesce to oppose the new right will have much to do with the prospects for a more explicit class politics to emerge.

The new right coalition is replete with contradictions. If it is to maintain the allegiance of monopoly sector workers, for example, it must make good on its promise to revitalize American industry. There is little reason to believe that giving a free hand to capital will accomplish that goal. United States Steel's recent acquisition of Marathon Oil is a case in point. In an industry that has dramatically lost ground to Japanese and German competitors, that has failed to modernize its production technologies in order to compete effectively, and that has closed plants, laying off thousands of workers and destroying entire communities, the largest American manufacturer sought, before anything else, to insure its own survival by investing in a high-profit industry. Without some leverage to channel investment, the "supply side" reindustrialization strategy offers few guarantees for success.

The new right also faces legitimation problems. Tax cuts and reduced state expenditures were supposed to bring about economic recovery by unleashing the forces of the free market; however, once the dust had settled after the initial frenzy, the greatest tax breaks accrued to those with the highest incomes, while the poor bore the brunt of cuts in social programs. The candid admission of David Stockman, Reagan's Director of the Office of Management and Budget,

that supply-side economics amounted to little more than an ideological cover for the old trickle-down theory (Grieder, 1981) has become increasingly obvious. In addition to the Reagan administrations' economic policies, the new right's disposition toward social issues--opposition to affirmative action, reproductive rights, ERA, etc.--exacerbates the tensions surrounding race and gender and further undermines the basis for social harmony.

Ultimately, the tensions within the new right coalition may come down to a conflict between the anti-state ideologues and what Resnick (1981) has called the "modernizing right." While the anti-state shock troops had the upper hand during the early period of the Reagan administration, the pragmatists may prevail to the extent that they have to manage competing political demands on the state. In a recent issue of Business Week, for example, the editors attacked Reagan's economic policies for undermining the state's capacity to provide a public infrastructure necessary for maintaining a suitable investment climate. Not only have the older manufacturing industries of the Northeast and Midwest suffered, but the newer industries of the Sunbelt have faced obstacles to the extent that water, sewage, roads, public transportation, etc. have not kept pace with economic growth due to lack of funding (Business Week, 1981b). In addition, opposition to cuts in social programs may force the administration to make concessions in order to maintain a minimum of social harmony. That latter concern may also require the moderates to marginalize the new right extremists, thereby cutting off one of its bases of support.

One possible alternative to the continuation of the new right is a revival of the New Deal coalition, although on different terms. The

recreation of a class compromise based on continued economic growth and an expanding state is hardly a real prospect under current economic conditions. Instead, if the New Deal coalition is to be reassembled, it is likely to happen along the lines put forward by Felix Rohatyn, New York investment banker and head of New York's Municipal Assistance Corporation (Big MAC). Rohatyn, who may become a "domestic Kissinger" under any future Democratic administration, has argued that the American economy cannot rely on services and the new industries of the Sunbelt, while allowing the older manufacturing industries to decline; rather, the United States needs a "second Industrial Revolution," involving ". . . an active partnership between business, labor, and government" (Rohatyn, 1981:20). Specifically, he proposes a Reconstruction Finance Corporation to redevelop faltering industries. Unlike the government bail-out of the Chrysler Corporation, which Rohatyn calls "lemon socialism," the Reconstruction Finance Corporation would provide equity capital to industry in exchange for ". . . the right to insist on management changes and changes in the board of directors if it deems them appropriate" (Rohatyn, 1981:18). In effect, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation would gain control over investment decisions and, as part of a broader development plan, correct regional disparities in the economy. Organized labor would be drawn into the partnership in exchange for concessions on wages and work rules that limit productivity.

In Western European terms, Rohatyn's proposal approximates a limited form of social democracy, with increased government regulation of the market economy:

> Free markets are clearly desirable, but we do not in fact live in a free market economy and never will; we live in a mixed economy in which prices and capital are, and will be, subject to government influence (Rohatyn, 1981:18).

In addition to the state's expanded role in the economy, Rohatyn argued that the state must attempt to maintain a broader legitimacy. For example, in his critique of Reagan's New Federalism, which would shift responsibility for financing and administering certain social programs to the state and local governments, Rohatyn argued that the federal government must assume responsibility for all poverty programs in order to standardize eligibility and services (Rohatyn, 1982).

With respect to the nature of the political coalition a Rohatyn-type plan would assemble, it would vastly expand the planning apparatus of the state, increasing the ranks of managers, professionals, bureaucrats, and the like. It would, in effect, increase the social currency of the new middle strata, which could aggravate the antagonisms between the "working class" and the new middle strata. However, that antagonsim could also be mitigated to the extent that the overall strategy is successful in reviving American industry, moderating social inequities, and giving organized labor a forum for expressing its political interests; i.e., to the extent that <u>ressentiment</u> is the last refuge of the powerless, a modest amelioration of conditions may reduce its political significance. In effect, a reconstructed class compromise could conceivably reassemble the New Deal coalition and contain political conflict within the framework of political legitimacy, taking the form of interest group rather than class politics.

Another possible alternative to the new right rests more on political movements that are outside of the major political parties.

Theycontain the seeds of an anti-capitalist politics, although they are spread out over various separate interest groups. Whether or not they can coalesce tactically, let alone ideologically, in opposition to the new right is unclear. Environmentalists, anti-nuclear activists, feminists, gays, minorities, the poor, and the labor movement have been increasingly marginalized by the Reagan administration. The repeal of environmental protection legislation, support for nuclear power, attacks on reproductive rights, the defeat of the ERA, hostility toward gays, cuts in social programs, and assaults on labor (plant closures, dismantling of OSHA, the firing of PATCO workers, etc.) may force the hitherto separate interest groups to seek alliances in order to carry forward their political agendas.

That they have been unable to overcome their differences to this point is evident in the various attempts to form third parties. Beyond the fact that the American presidential system, unlike the Western European parliamentary systems, strongly discourages the formation of third parties, the prospects for a new party are diminished by the lack of a coherent social base. The Citizens' Party provides a useful illustration. It attempted to assemble feminists, environmentalists, anti-nuclear activists, gays, and community organizers into a common party. It noticeably lacked any "working class" base, remaining largely confined to activists from the new middle strata. In short, it could not transcend the limits of its base. Conversely, recent discussions related to the formation of a Labor Party are no more likely to succeed. Feminists, environmentalists, anti-nuclear activists, etc. would, in all probability, be unwilling to subordinate their separate political interests under the canopy of "labor." The National Black

Independent Political Party, on the other hand, is a self-conscious attempt to organize a narrow social base. How, or if, it plans to form alliances with other groups is not yet clear. In short, the third party movements suggest the unlikely prospect that a coherent anti-capitalist political coalition will emerge in the near future.

The basis for such a coalition, however, exists. If it is to grow, it will most likely take the form of issue-specific alliances and building bridges between hitherto separate interests. The prospects for a class-based politics, uniting organized labor, minorities, and political movements based in the new middle strata, are contingent upon overcoming their historic antagonisms.

Whatever the outcome, it cannot be theoretically derived from an analysis of "objective" class structure or from an immanent trajectory of history. History, as Merleau-Ponty (1962) has said, is ambiguous.

Summary: Class Theory and American Politics

The analysis of the new right, although partial, was nevertheless intended to reflect on the larger question of class in American politics. In effect, the emergence of the new right suggests the basis for some critical reflections on themes developed earlier in the discussions of class and class theory.

The persistent tension between the formal-theoretical and concrete-historical aspects of Marx's writings on class, for example, begs some resolution in the face of the new right. In particular, it is insufficient to argue, as Marx did in his historical writings, that the apparent backward movement of history at any given time is but a "moment" in a larger trajectory toward the ultimate victory of the working class. On the contrary, the new right emerged at a time when the profound

restructuring of class relations was in the process of undermining the "objective" capacity of the working class to represent its interests as the interests of the whole of society; moreover, there is little reason to believe that the American working class was on a revolutionary political trajectory, insofar as class antagonisms were by and large contained within the framework of a class compromise, both at the point of production and in relation to the state. In essence, the theoretical issues raised by the new right refer to the conceptual core of Marx's argument, as well as to historical changes in the configuration of class relations.

With respect to the structure of Marx's argument, the new right dramatically questions the validity of the theoretical distinction between a class in itself and a class for itself, especially to the extent that such a distinction suggests that a political class can be summarily derived from some objectively-formed class. The ultimate predictability of human history for Marx, expressed as the inevitable political ascendance of the working class, rested on the assumption that classes act on behalf of their own interests. As Nietzsche's reflections on the nature of ressentiment forcefully pointed out, however, political action can also be motivated by much less triumphant sentiments. The new right, to the extent that it mobilized those ignoble human tendencies, underscores the inherent ambiguity of history, in direct contradiction to Marx's theoretical certitude.

With respect to the historical changes in the configuration of class relations, the analysis of the new right suggests the ascendance to political centrality of at least two factors either unanticipated or at least poorly understood by Marx: the emergence of new middle strata, corresponding to the separation of mental from manual labor in production and in the society as a whole; and, the expanded functions of the state.

In fact, the "managed" society has led to new forms of political conflict, not immediately reducible to Marx's conception of class struggle. Not only has the state become the employer of a large sector of the labor force, creating divisions within the working class (the "fiscal crisis"), but opposition to social management has engendered antagonisms between the working class and the new middle strata. In short, the class antagonisms have become anything but simple.

Finally, with respect to recent class theory, the rise of the new right underlines the limitations of approaching the reconceptualization of class as a matter of mere definition; notwithstanding its assigned role as the only revolutionary class, the working class has been partially seduced by the jaded world-view of the new right, while sections of the new middle strata present a potentially significant, if undeveloped, challenge to the logic of capital. As a damper on the more sanguine accounts of the revolutionary potential of the new middle strata, on the other hand, the new right highlights the inability, thus far, of the political movements based in the new middle strata to either develop a coherent anti-capitalist politics or to overcome their separation from the working class. It is in the latter, especially, that the prospects for the emergence of an explicit class politics in the United States resides.

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