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**The New Middle Class
and Socialist Politics**

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A FUNDAMENTAL feature of Marxism is an understanding of politics in the light of the class struggle. Marx and Engels wrote in 1879:

For almost forty years we have stressed the class struggle as the immediate driving power of history, and in particular the class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat as the great lever of the modern social revolution. [1]

As is well known, the concluding chapter of **Capital** volume 3 on classes is unfinished. However, the general drift of Marx's theory of class is clear enough. His starting point is 'the specific economic form, in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of the direct producers'. [2] In other words, classes are defined in terms of the exploitative relations of production which constitute the society in question.

These relations of production depend, according to Marx, on the distribution of the means of production. Thus, underlying the relationship between capital and wage-labour is 'distribution; not distribution in the ordinary meaning of distribution of articles of consumption, but the distribution of the elements of production itself, the material factors of which are concentrated on one side, and labour-power, isolated on the other.' [3] This latter distribution, of the means of production, 'determines the entire character and the entire movement of production'. [4] On it depends the particular form in which surplus-labour is extracted from the direct producers.

It follows that the class position of an individual depends on his or her relationship to the means of production. The capitalist owns the means of production, the worker does not; these facts determine their respective class position. Class thus conceived is objective: it is formed within the relations of production, and does not arise from individuals' consciousness; indeed it may clash with that consciousness. Furthermore, class for Marx is a social relationship. It is concerned less with what individuals do – what sociologists call 'occupation' – than with how what they do fits into the antagonistic relationship through which one group exploits another within the process of production. Finally, Marx's model is a 'dichotomous' one. Two classes confront

each other in every mode of production, exploiter and exploited – master and slave, lord and peasant, capitalist and worker. [5]

Class is thus, for Marx, ‘the way in which exploitation is reflected in a social structure.’ [6] An obvious problem for such a model is the existence of social layers which apparently do not fit into the dichotomous relation of exploitation.

The classical petty bourgeoisie, the owners of small-scale capital, arguably do not pose much of a difficulty, since they can be seen as economically parasitic on big capital, as well as socially and politically polarised between bourgeoisie and proletariat. [7] A much more serious challenge, however, is posed by the enormous expansion in this century of the proportion of the workforce made up of white-collar employees. As [Table I](#) shows, manual workers (if foremen are excluded) now make up less than half of all full-time employees in Britain. Similar figures can be produced for other advanced capitalist countries (see [Table II](#)).

Table I

**Percentages of full-time employees in occupational classes,
New Earnings Survey, 1979**

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. Professions	15.7	20.2	17.1
2b. Managers & Administrators	16.4	4.5	12.7
Sales, unclass.		0.6	0.2
3. Clerks	5.9	38.7	16.0
4. Foremen	6.9	3.8	5.9
5. Skilled Manual	19.2	4.2	14.7
6. Semi-skilled Manual	19.1	16.3	18.2
7. Unskilled Manual	4.7	1.8	3.8
Manual, unclassified	12.1	9.9	11.4

Source: G. Routh, **Occupation and Pay in Great Britain** (London, 1980) p. 4.

Table II

Percentage distribution of labour force in six groups,

various countries, circa 1970

		<i>Professional, technical and related</i>	<i>Admin and managerial</i>	<i>Clerical and related</i>	<i>Sales</i>	<i>Farmers etc.</i>	<i>Others</i>
Czechoslovakia	1970	19.4	2.4	7.4	7.0	12.0	51.8
Sweden	1970	19.2	2.3	17.1	9.0	8.0	44.4
New Zealand	1976	14.4	3.4	16.2	10.0	10.2	45.8
United States	1970	13.8	7.8	16.8	6.6	2.9	52.1
Canada	1971	12.4	4.2	15.6	9.3	6.9	51.6
France	1968	11.4	2.7	11.7	7.6	15.3	51.3
United Kingdom	1971	11.1	3.7	17.9	9.0	3.0	55.3
USSR	1970	10.4	11.8		7.0	25.6	45.2
Australia	1971	10.1	6.5	15.6	7.9	7.6	52.3
German F.R.	1970	9.8	2.2	17.5	8.9	7.6	54.0
Argentina	1970	7.5	1.5	11.4	11.9	14.4	53.3
Japan	1970	6.6	3.9	13.8	11.8	18.9	45.0
Brazil	1970	4.8	1.7	5.3	7.4	44.0	36.8
Egypt	1966	4.4	1.6	5.0	5.8	45.6	37.6
India	1971	2.7	0.7	3.0	4.2	72.0	17.4

Source: Ibid., p. 10.

It is hardly surprising that many bourgeois commentators have seized on such evidence to claim that the working class, and indeed the class struggle itself are dying, if not dead. For example, the **Financial Times** political columnist welcomed the emergence of the Social Democratic Party as ‘a sociological development, an example of the political system beginning to catch up with societal change ... There is a new class which outnumbers either the stereotypes of working class or the capitalists.’ [8]

It is only a little less surprising that some Marxists have been almost as quick to write off the working class – figures as diverse as Andre Gorz, Rudolph

Bahro, and Eric Hobsbawm have all done so. [9]

Such analyses are based on a very superficial approach to the question of class. Lumped together under the general heading of ‘white-collar employees’ is an extraordinarily heterogeneous collection of jobs – company executives, senior civil servants, schoolteachers, nurses, shorthand typists. What, if anything, do these groups have in common?

Analysis of the category of white-collar employees reveals two main groups. The first are the managerial, professional and administrative employees who make up, according to Table I, almost thirty percent of the workforce.

The sociologist John Goldthorpe stresses both the size and the rapid expansion of this group of employees: ‘While in the early twentieth century, professional, administrative and managerial employees accounted for only 5–10 per cent of the active population in even the most economically advanced nations, by the present time they quite generally account in Western societies for 20–25 per cent.’ [10] Indeed, in Britain at any rate, this expansion has been largely concentrated in the post-war era (Table III).

Table III

Distribution by occupational class (percentages)

	1911	1921	1931	1951	1961	1971
1. Professional	4.05	4.53	4.60	6.63	9.00	11.07
2. Employers and Managers	10.14	10.46	10.36	10.50	10.10	12.43
3. Clerical	4.84	6.72	6.97	10.68	12.70	13.90
4–7. Foremen and Manual	80.97	78.29	78.07	72.19	68.10	62.60

Source: Routh, op. cit., p. 5.

The second main group is that of clerical workers, some 16 per cent of the workforce in 1979 (Table I). Once again, as Table III shows, this category of employees has grown very considerably in the course of the present century, from less than 5 per cent of the workforce before the First World War.

These are two very different categories of employees. As Table IV shows, professional, managerial and administrative employees have consistently enjoyed well-above average earnings. On the other hand, of the 3,457,000 clerical workers in Britain in 1971, 70 per cent were women. [11] Female clerical workers have always earned less even than unskilled male manual workers. Moreover, while many professional, managerial and administrative employees are highly qualified, often possessing degrees, the son of work

	Skilled	54	56	53	60	56	49	57	1.1
6.	Semi-skilled	62	63	62	51	48	47	59	1.0
7.	Unskilled	35	47	45	43	40	44	57	1.6
	Women's average % mean deviation	62 31	66 37	64 38	60 67	59 67	59 59	68 43	1.1

Source: Routh, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

It is absurd to lump these groups into the same general category. In reality, white-collar employment embraces three distinctive class positions. At the extremes there are, on the one hand, those senior managers and administrators who are effectively salaried members of the capitalist class, and, on the other, there are those white-collar employees who are actually members of the behalf of capital in the process of production, form what I shall call the ‘new middle class’. [\[12\]](#)

The working class: broad or narrow definition?

How one views white-collar employees will be closely connected with how one draws the boundaries around the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. One tempting way of defining the working class is to restrict it to those performing productive labour.

Marx defines productive labour as follows: ‘Productive labour, in its meaning for capitalist production, is wage-labour which, exchanged against the variable part of capital ... reproduces not only this part of capital (or the value of its own labour-power), but in addition produces surplus-value for the capitalist.’ [\[13\]](#) Productive labour is thus labour productive of surplus-value. Unproductive labour, on the other hand, ‘is labour which is not exchanged with capital, but directly with revenue, that is, with wages or profit.’ [\[14\]](#)

The distinction between productive and unproductive labour is, therefore, one between labour which contributes to the self-expansion of capital and labour which does not. Marx’s main example of the latter is that of domestic servants, the largest single category of workers in Victorian Britain, employed out of the revenue of the middle and upper classes.

The precise implications of Marx’s theory of productive and unproductive labour are not wholly clear. However, the interpretation most consistent with the version of the theory expounded in **Capital** volumes 2 and 3 suggests that only those wage-labourers involved in the production of commodities (including their

transportation to the point of final consumption) are seen by Marx as productive labourers. [15]

Marx argues, for example, that time devoted to the circulation of commodities – buying and selling, book-keeping and so on – is a pure cost to capital, creating no surplus-value. A commercial capitalist who invests in these activities merely creates a claim to the surplus value created elsewhere, and thus reduces the general rate of profit. [16] If the capitalist employs wage-labourers ‘this advance of capital creates neither product nor value. It reduces *pro tanto* the dimensions in which the advanced capital functions productively.’ [17] However, wage-labour employed to transport goods does create surplus-value, since ‘the use-value of things is only materialised in their consumption, and their consumption may necessitate a change of location of these things, hence may require an additional process of production in the transport industry.’ [18]

If we accept productive labour thus conceived as defining the working class, then only wage-labourers in extractive, manufacturing, and freight industries would form the proletariat. On such a view, the working class would apparently be narrowed down to its nineteenth-century stereotype of male manual workers.

That, at any rate, is the conclusion drawn by the late Nicos Poulantzas, who argued that all white-collar employees, and all non-productive manual workers (for example dustmen and hospital porters) are part, not of the working class, but of the ‘new petty bourgeoisie’. [19] On such a view, the proletariat in the United States forms less than 20 per cent of the workforce, the ‘new petty bourgeoisie’ some 70 per cent! [20]

This approach contradicts that pursued by Marx in **Capital**. Marx himself insisted that many white-collar workers were themselves productive labourers. This was a result of the increasing socialisation of production, which meant that:

the real lever of the overall labour-process is increasingly not the individual worker. Instead, labour-power socially combined and the various competing labour-powers which together form the entire production machine participate in very different ways in the immediate process of making commodities ... Some work better with their hands, others with their heads, one as a manager, engineer, technologist, etc., the other as overseer, the third as manual labourer or even drudge. An ever-increasing number of types of labour are included in the immediate concept of productive labour, and those who perform it are classed as productive workers, workers directly exploited by capital and subordinated to its process of production and expansion. [21]

Thus, all those who form part of what Marx called ‘the collective worker’, the complex division of labour involved in producing commodities, are productive workers, even if they do not work with their hands. Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest that Marx regarded only productive workers as forming the proletariat. On the contrary, his analysis of commercial employees, whom we have already seen he did not believe produced surplus-value, suggests the opposite. Marx writes:

In one respect a commercial employee is a wage-worker. In the first place, his labour-power is bought with the variable capital of the merchant, not with money expended as revenue, and consequently it is not bought for private service, but for the purpose of expanding the capital advanced for it. In the second place, the value of the labour-power, and thus his wages, are determined as those of other wage-workers, i.e., by the cost of production and reproduction of his specific labour-power, not by the product of his labour-power. [22]

Moreover, the amount of surplus-value produced elsewhere that the commercial capitalist can obtain through his role in the circulation of commodities depends on the exploitation of his employees, that is, on their working longer than is necessary to replace their wages:

The mass of the individual merchant's profits depends on the mass of capital that he can apply in this process, and he can apply so much more of it in buying and selling, the more the unpaid labour of his clerks. The very function, by virtue of which the merchant's money becomes capital, is largely done through his employees. The unpaid labour of these clerks, while it does not create surplus-value, enables him to appropriate surplus-value, which, in effect, amounts to the same thing with respect to his capital. It is, therefore, a source of profit to him. [23]

As the American Marxist Erik Olin Wright puts it:

both productive and unproductive workers are exploited; both have unpaid labour extorted from them. The only difference is that in the case of productive labour, unpaid labour-time is appropriated as surplus-value; whereas in the case of unproductive labour, unpaid labour merely reduces the costs to the capitalist of appropriating part of the surplus-value produced elsewhere. In both cases, the capitalist will try to keep the wage-bill as low as possible; in both cases the capitalist will try to increase productivity by getting workers to work harder; in both cases, workers will be dispossessed of control over their labour-process. In both cases, socialism is a prerequisite for ending exploitation. It is hard to see where a fundamental divergence of economic interests emerges from the position of unproductive and productive labour in capitalist relations of production. [24]

If we accept this reasoning, then we must reject the 'narrow' definition of the proletariat as comprised only of productive workers. Ernest Mandel offers the following broad definition: 'The defining structural characteristic of the proletariat in Marx's analysis of capitalism is the socio-economic compulsion to sell one's labour-power. Included in the proletariat, then, are not only manual industrial workers, but all unproductive wage-labourers who are subject to the same fundamental constraints: non-ownership of means of production; lack of direct access to the means of livelihood (the land is by no means freely accessible!); insufficient money to purchase the means of livelihood without more or less continuous sale of labour-power'. [25]

Mandel claims that 'this definition of the proletariat, which includes the mass of unproductive wage-earners (not only commercial clerks and lower government employees, but domestic servants as well)', was 'undoubtedly the one advanced by Marx and Engels and their most "orthodox" followers: the mature (not the senile) Kautsky, Plekhanov, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg *et al.*'

[26] In addition to orthodoxy, it has the virtue of accounting well for the position of the most important categories of white-collar employees, namely clerical workers.

Bourgeois sociologists have described the transformation of clerical work in this century. A hundred years ago clerks in Britain were predominantly male, and worked in small units – perhaps four to an office. The sort of work they did – book-keeping, correspondence and such like – placed them in close and continuous contact with their employers. ‘The relations between the clerk and his employer,’ wrote Charles Booth in 1896, ‘or between him and the work he undertakes, are usually close and personal.’ [27] The educational qualifications for this sort of work – ‘a little instruction in Latin, and probably a very little in Greek, a little in Geography, a little in Science, a little in arithmetic and book-keeping, a little in French’ [28] – set clerks apart from manual workers, even after the introduction of compulsory primary education in 1870. The elite of clerical workers, employed in banking and insurance, earned an income which enabled them ‘to reside in a fairly genteel neighbourhood, wear good clothes, mix in respectable society, go sometimes to the opera, shrink from letting their wives do household work’. [29] Even those low-paid clerks whose income was comparable to that of a skilled manual worker aspired to a lifestyle which aped that of the ‘gentlemen’ of the bourgeoisie and the professional middle class.

Table V

Clerical workers 1851–1951

	<i>Clerks as percentage of total labour force</i>	<i>Female clerks as percentage of total clerks</i>
1851	0.8	0.1
1901	4.0	13.4
1951	10.5	59.6

Source: D. Lockwood, **The Blackcoated Worker** (London 1958)

Table V shows the enormous changes clerical work underwent in the first half of this century. As David Lockwood puts it, ‘by the mid-twentieth century ... we should no longer speak of the “black-coated”, but rather of the “white-bloused” worker’. He continues:

The average size of the office increased concomitantly with the increase in the ratio of non-manual to manual workers in industry, and with the proliferation of ‘non-productive’ functions in commerce, finance, distribution and government. Scientific management brought in its train an obsession with the elaborate accounting of production-costs and market demand. Scientific management initiated office

mechanization; and office mechanization in its turn promoted further the recording of new types of data. Industrial concentration and amalgamation, born of joint stock enterprise, led to the concentration and rationalization of office-work and staffs. And the vastly enhanced functions of government in an industrial milieu called for increasingly more efficient administration. The field from which clerical workers were recruited was also widely extended by the institution of compulsory elementary education in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Every literate person became a potential clerk, thus breaking the hitherto monopolistic position of the blackcoated worker. [30]

One index of the transformation of the clerical workforce is the inferior wages which, as we have seen, female clerks earn compared even to unskilled male manual workers. Moreover, even male clerical workers earn less than their semi-skilled male counterparts (see [Table IV](#)). More fundamental, however, from the standpoint of a Marxist theory of class is what the American Marxist Harry Braverman has called the ‘industrialization of office work’ – in other words, the way in which most clerical work has come to consist of semi-skilled, repetitive, manual operations. [31] At the extreme this process has led to the emergence of vast ‘clerical factories’ (one such factory was already depicted by King Vidor in his silent film *The Crowd*). The French sociologist Michel Crozier analysed such an establishment in the 1950s, a civil-service office employing 4,500 workers, mostly women, who operated accounting machines in workrooms of fifty linked together by a pneumatic communication system. [32]

There is no earthly reason why clerical workers should not be regarded as part of the proletariat. What has happened in this century is a transformation of the structure of the working class. The proportion of productive workers in the workforce has declined (although by much less than the proponents of the death of the working class would have us believe – manufacturing and extractive industries made up 40.9 per cent of the occupied population in Britain in 1911, 38.5 in 1971, a considerable increase in absolute numbers since the working population had increased by nearly six million in 1911–71). [33] This is a consequence of the enormous increase in the productivity of labour. As Marx pointed out, ‘the country is the richer the smaller the productive population in relation to the unproductive, the quantity of products remaining the same. For the relative smallness of the productive population would only be another way of expressing the relative degree of the productivity of labour.’ [34] In other words, the relative decline of productive labourers is merely one expression of the general tendency of capitalist accumulation, which involves simultaneously growing productivity of labour, rising organic composition of capital, and a falling rate of profit.

The decline in the proportion of productive workers has been accompanied by the expansion of other forms of employment. Effectively, women in particular have been transferred from manual jobs (especially in the textile and clothing industries) to white-collar clerical jobs, and to public-sector manual work. [35] That does not mean they have ceased to be part of the working class. In terms of

their relation to the means of production, they are still compelled regularly to sell their labour-power. At work, they have little or no control over the work they do. They are very low-paid. In all these respects, the shorthand typist, or checkout girl, or school cleaner is as much part of the proletariat as the horny-handed male engineer or miner.

The nature of the new middle class

The implication of the previous section is that the proletariat should broadly be identified with the mass of wage-labourers. It follows that the present century has seen a considerable expansion, rather than a decline in the size of the working class (see Table VI).

Table VI

**Wage-earners (incl. unemployed) as percentage
of total active population**

	<i>1930s</i>	<i>1974</i>
Belgium	65.2 (1930)	83.7
Canada	66.7 (1941)	89.2
France	57.2 (1936)	81.3
Germany	69.7 (1939)	84.5 (W. Germany)
Italy	51.6 (1936)	72.6
Japan	41.0 (1936)	69.1
Sweden	70.1 (1940)	91.0
UK	88.1 (1931)	92.3
USA	78.2 (1939)	91.5

Source: E. Mandel, *Introduction to K. Marx, Capital II* (Harmondsworth, 1978), p. 51.

Can we simply conclude that all white-collar employees are members of the working class? Unfortunately not. The fundamental reason for this is that, as I have already stressed, white-collar employees are a very heterogeneous category. One indication of this is the difference in their earnings. As [Table IV](#) shows, in 1978 male higher professionals, managers and administrators earned over twice

the average for all occupational categories, women clerks less than 70 per cent of the average. The sexual distribution of white-collar work is also suggestive. [Table VII](#) shows that in Britain women are concentrated in the lower civil-service grades, and that, in general, the higher up you are in the civil-service hierarchy, the more likely you are to be a man.

Table VII

Percentage of women in selected Civil Service grades, 1975

<i>Grade, class:</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Assistant secretary	4.8
Senior principal	3.0
Principal	7.7
Senior executive officer	8.2
Higher executive officer (A)	27.7
Higher executive officer	14.4
Administration trainee	31.3
Executive officer	31.7
Clerical officer	61.0
Clerical assistant	79.8
Higher scientific officer	7.5
Scientific officer	17.8
Assistant scientific officer	31.3
ALL GRADES AND CLASSES	42.2

Source: M.P. Kelly, **White-Collar Proletariat** (London 1980), p. 71.

It is facts of this sort that have led some Marxists to argue that higher-level white-collar employees occupy a class position distinct from that of the working class. The two most important attempts to justify such a claim have been made by American Marxists. Barbara and John Ehrenreich's analysis of the 'Professional-Managerial Class' provoked a major debate in the pages of the

journal **Radical America** in the 1970s. [36] Erik Olin Wright's critique of Poulantzas and the accompanying theory of 'contradictory class locations' are, as we shall see, of even greater significance. [37]

The Ehrenreichs posited the existence of a Professional-Managerial Class (PMC) 'consisting of salaried mental workers who do not own the means of production and whose major function in the social division of labour may be described broadly as the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class relations.' [38] They estimated that the PMC makes up some 20–25 per cent of the American workforce. [39]

They argued that the PMC came into existence as part of the process diagnosed by Harry Braverman – the deskilling of manual work, the introduction of scientific management, the attainment of economic dominance by monopoly capital. The resulting 'transformation of the working class' in the US between 1890 and 1920, involved 'the reorganization of the productive process, the emergence of mass institutions, the commodity penetration of working-class life.' [40] These changes made 'a class specializing in the reproduction of capitalist class-relationships ... a necessity to the capitalist class.' [41] 'The PMC ... is employed by capital and it manages) controls, has authority over labour (though it does not directly employ it).' [42]

While in some respects this analysis was on the right track (especially, as we shall see, the last sentence quoted), it was vitiated by the Ehrenreich's overall conception of the PMC. The fundamental flaw in their account is that it defined the PMC in terms of its function – namely, that of 'the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class-relationships'. As Al Szymanski observed: 'If it is valid to define a class in terms of whether or not their function is to reproduce class-relationships, then it is but a minor step to define bank or insurance workers out of the working class because their labour is unproductive, or workers in munitions factories out of this class, because their labour allows the capitalists to maintain a world-empire, ie, because their economic function is to reproduce capitalist class relations.' [43] Indeed, one could press the point further, and say that every wage-labourer is functional in some respect to capital, or else they wouldn't have been employed in the first place.

What makes the Ehrenreichs' analysis superficially attractive is that they tended to focus on the PMC's supposed function of social control. The power which members of the PMC have over workers may not exist within the workplace, as managers, but in their relation to workers as consumers, say, of social services. Thus the Ehrenreichs wrote that 'professional-client contacts ... are important in shaping the relationship between working class and PMC.' [44] What springs to mind, for example, is the relation between a social worker and his or her clients, in which the former certainly exercises considerable power, having, for example, the right to take children away from 'unsuitable' parents.

We should reject the Ehrenreichs' invitation to make 'professional-client contacts' definitive of a person's class position. The relationship between social

worker and clients is an example of the much more general case of workers whose job tends to bring them into conflict with other workers. Social workers are an unpopular group, but think of bus-drivers. [45] Under the pressure of schedules they are constantly in conflict with their passengers, the latter often justifiably angry at having to wait for hours in the cold and rain. Bus-drivers, like social workers, are often physically attacked by consumers of their services. But no socialist could, as a result, conclude that bus-drivers are therefore not part of the working class. They would put the blame fairly and squarely where it belongs, with a management which forces drivers to work tighter and tighter schedules.

The point is an important one, because the general trend in advanced capitalist societies is towards a reduction in the proportion of productive labourers in the workforce, and a concomitant rise in the share of workers providing services, chiefly to other workers. Service workers are likely to be in face-to-face contact with customers in a way that productive workers are not, since the latter produce material goods. Because these services are produced in a capitalist context, whether the employer is the state or a private firm, there are likely to be endless occasions of conflict between workers and consumers. A good example is workers for the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) in Britain, at the sharp end of government policies designed to increase mass unemployment and cut social services, and therefore constantly in conflict with the recipients of social security. Yet DHSS employees have to suffer extremely unpleasant, high-pressure working conditions, and are one of the most militant groups of white-collar workers.

There is a general theoretical point behind this argument. Marx's definition of class is based on people's position within the relations of production. It is this, their relationship to the means of production, which determines their place in the class structure. This means that our analysis must focus on the social relations in which people find themselves at work. Factors such as income, relations with consumers, 'function' are at best imperfect indices of class position.

We saw earlier that Marx argues that each specific form of class exploitation depends on the distribution of the means of production. The ruling class is defined by its ownership of the means of production. It is important to stress here that 'ownership' does not here mean 'legal title' but rather 'effective possession'. In other words, the ruling class need not legally own the means of production, provided that they actually control them. [46] The point is important to grasp if one is to understand the 'managerial revolution' – the fact that many big firms today are controlled by salaried managers – and the class nature of the state-capitalist countries. Further, effective possession is not an end in itself; its point is that it confers power over the labour of others. The capitalists' effective possession of the means of production, and the workers' effective exclusion from them, forces workers to perform surplus-labour for the capitalists.

One implication of these (rather commonplace) remarks is that earning one's living by selling one's labour-power is not enough to make one a worker. (Wage-labour is a necessary, but not sufficient condition of membership of the proletariat.) Sir Ian McGregor did not own the Coal Board during the great miners' strike. He earned a (gigantic) salary. But surely he must be regarded as part of the capitalist, rather than the working class?

Erik Olin Wright suggested that 'workers cannot be defined simply as wage-labourers, but as wage-labourers who also do not control the labour of others within production and do not control the use of their own labour within the labour-process.' [47] Wright argued that once we begin to analyse what is involved in the effective possession of the means of production by capital, then we must see 'some positions as occupying objectively contradictory locations within class relations'. [48] Occupiers of these locations share some of the properties of different classes, and are therefore pulled in different directions.

Wright isolated 'three central processes underlying the basic capital-labour relationship: control over the physical means of production; control over labour-power; control over investments and resource-allocation ... The three processes ... do not always perfectly coincide. This non-coincidence of the dimensions of class-relations defines the contradictory relations within class-relations.' [49]

The two most important 'contradictory class locations' identified by Wright are the following:

1. managers and supervisors occupy a contradictory location between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat
2. certain categories of semi-autonomous employees who retain relatively high levels of control over their immediate labour-process occupy a contradictory location between the working class and the petty bourgeoisie. [50]

The first group, managers and supervisors, have varying degrees of control over investments and resource-allocation, the physical means of production, and labour-power. This ranges from top managers, who exercise partial control over investment and resource-allocation, and complete control over labour-power and the physical means of production, and must be counted as effectively part of the bourgeoisie, to foremen and line-supervisors who have a limited amount of control over labour-power.

Semi-autonomous employees, on the other hand, have little or no control over either investment and resource-allocation, or the physical means of production. However:

even though such employees work for the self-expansion of capital and even though they have lost the legal status of being self-employed, they can still be viewed as occupying residual islands of petty-bourgeois relations of production within the capitalist mode of production. In their immediate work environment, they maintain the work-process of the independent artisan while still being employed by capital as wage-labourers. They control how they do the work, and have at least some control

over what they produce. A good example of this is a researcher in a laboratory or a professor in an elite university. [51]

Wright emphasised that those in contradictory class locations are a comparatively small group:

It seems almost certain that the large majority of white-collar employees, especially clerical, and secretarial, have – at most – trivial autonomy on the job and thus should be placed within the working class itself. [52]

Wright's approach is much the most fruitful to the class structure of contemporary capitalism, since it both recognises the complexity of that structure, and at the same time roots its analysis in agents' relation to the means of production. However, the theory of contradictory class locations suffers from certain weaknesses.

In the first place, Wright's analysis focused on the relation between labour and private capital. He did try to extend his analysis to the state apparatus; but he did so by seeking to derive state employees' class position from the class interests which they serve:

The class location of various positions in the social structure which are not directly determined by production-relations ... is determined by their relationship to the fundamental interests of classes defined within the social relations of production. [53]

This approach was very close to the Ehrenreichs', which sought to define the PMC's class position in terms of its supposed social function to capital. Both accounts moved away from an analysis of the power-relations which exist at work, which Marx held to be definitive of social class. The truth is that bureaucratic organisations in contemporary capitalism, whether they are state or privately controlled, possess a common structure, with top administrators and managers making policy, middle managers and administrators executing those policies, and a mass of routine workers, whether manual or white-collar, subject to the first two groups' control. It is this structure which gives rise to contradictory class locations. Wright's discussion of state employees reflected the negative approach to the state, which is seen as being the opposite to capital, even if serving the latter's interests, so common among contemporary Marxists. [54]

This weakness is connected to another characteristic of Wright's analysis, which is that it is primarily formal and static, concerned to plot out a 'class map' of contemporary capitalism, without raising the question of the historical transformations which created, and sustain this class-structure. In comparison, the Ehrenreichs, who linked the emergence of the PMC to the development of monopoly capital and the rise of scientific management, were much more historically concrete.

To clarify these issues, it is necessary to look more closely at the question of the control of the means of production in which those in contradictory class locations participate. An objection sometimes raised to the theory of

contradictory class locations is that it is a characteristic of many groups of workers that they exercise a degree of control over the process of production. What Carter Goodrich called ‘the frontier of control’ between labour and capital is continually shifting within the workplace. In certain situations, workers can wrest a large portion of control over their immediate labour-process. Such, for example, was true of the skilled engineers towards the end of the last century, who were so powerful that they would draw a circle of chalk around themselves within which no manager or foreman could step. It also seems to have been true of many car factories during the boom of the 1950s and 1960s, when stewards acquired a considerable degree of informal control over production. Are we then to describe such workers as occupying ‘contradictory class locations’?

It would obviously be absurd if we did. It was the skilled engineers, the labour aristocrats of the late nineteenth century, who formed the vanguard of the European revolutionary movement at the end of the First World War. To see why this example isn’t a decisive objection to the notion of contradictory class locations we must examine the notion of control.

What distinguishes the capitalist mode of production from the two main previous forms of class society, slavery and feudalism, is that, first, workers are free, they are not the legal property of the ruling class, second, they do not own the means of production and are therefore compelled to sell their labour-power regularly to capital, and, third, the labour they perform for capital is subject to the continuous supervision and control of capital. The feudal peasant typically controlled his own labour-process, while the lord intervened only to demand a share of whatever was produced. By contrast, it is only by virtue of his control of the labour-process that the capitalist is able to extract surplus-labour from the worker.

Capital thus plays an essential role in the process of production, performing within it, as Carchedi puts it, ‘a function which corresponds to the maintenance of economic exploitation and oppression, a function we call work of control and surveillance’. [55] The decisive importance of the fact that labour is performed under the continuous supervision and control of capital can be seen in the history of capitalism.

Thus the putting-out system employed in the early phases of capitalist development left workers in substantial control of the labour-process, since it took place at home, with the capitalist intervening only to lend money, supply raw materials, and purchase the finished product: ‘The agglomeration of workers into factories was a natural outgrowth of the putting-out system ... whose success had little or nothing to do with the technological superiority of large-scale machinery. The key to the success of the factory, as well as its inspiration, was the substitution of capitalists’ for workers’ control of the production-process; discipline and supervision could and did reduce costs without being technologically superior’. [56]

Now as long as the scale of production and the size of capitals were comparatively small, it was possible for capitalists to perform the work of surveillance and control themselves, with some assistance from the comparatively small numbers of clerks and foremen they employed. With the enormous increase in the concentration and centralisation of capital it is no longer possible for the capitalists to do so. They are forced to delegate much of the task of surveillance and control to their own employees.

The core of the capitalist class today is tiny. The author of a recent sociological study of the British upper class writes: 'If the outer limits of the monopoly sector in the 1980s are taken to include the one thousand largest companies and their associates, then the number of directors, top executives and principal shareholders would, together with their immediate families, number between 25,000 and 50,000 people. This is, of course, only a rough estimate, but it is clear that the core of the business class consists of less than 0.1 per cent of the population'. [57] The employed labour force in Britain in September 1982 was 22,384,000. [58] The disparity is obvious. The capitalist class in Britain and other advanced capitalist countries can only survive by creating a bureaucratic hierarchy of control.

It is within this hierarchy that contradictory class locations occur. Middle-level managers and administrators 'perform the function of capital' in the sense that they 'carry out the work of control and surveillance'. [59] It is no Marxist, but the sociologist John Goldthorpe who has shed the most light on this issue. Goldthorpe argues that members of what I am calling the new middle class have a relationship with their employers which 'necessarily involves an important measure of trust':

These employees, in being typically engaged in the exercise of delegated authority or in the application of specialized knowledge and expertise, operate in their work tasks and roles with a distinctive degree of autonomy and discretion; and, in direct consequence of the element of trust that is thus necessarily in their relationship with their employing organization, they are accorded conditions of employment which are also distinctive in the level and kind of rewards that are involved. [60]

The element of trust arises in the case of managers and administrators from the fact that they are performing the function of capital. The ruling class, forced to delegate part of their role to their employees, needs to be able to rely on these delegates to exercise the discretion involved in a manner conducive to their own interests, and therefore offers those in contradictory class locations considerable financial rewards.

Those in contradictory class locations are clearly distinguished from the ruling class itself in two respects. First, there is the nature of the control involved. Some writers have distinguished between two forms of effective possession of the means of production. On the one hand, there is 'allocative' or 'strategic' control, 'the power to employ resources or to withdraw them, in line with one's

own interests and preferences'; on the other hand, there is 'operational control', 'control over the day-to-day use of resources already allocated'. [61]

Strategic control corresponds to Wright's category of control over investment and resource-allocation. It is the prerogative of the capitalist class, irrespective of whether the capitalists are shareholders or employees (or, as often, both). The new middle class is involved in operational control, making decisions within a framework laid down by those with strategic control.

Secondly, there is the question of how one gains access to the bourgeoisie and the new middle class respectively. Capitalists 'owe their positions not to processes of bureaucratic appointment and advancement but rather to their own power'. [62] Inherited wealth continues to play a crucial role in the formation of the bourgeoisie, both in giving them a direct share of their strategic control through their shareholdings, and in gaining for them privileged access to top managerial positions through, in Britain, the public-school/Oxbridge system. [63] The new middle class, by contrast, have a measure of operational control delegated to them from above, thanks to their success as individuals in climbing up a bureaucratic career-structure.

This sets them apart from the proletariat as well as the bourgeoisie. The degree of control which some groups of workers may achieve over the process of production reflects their collective organisation and strength. Mutuality – the veto shop stewards had over changes in working conditions in the car factories during the boom of the 1950s and 1960s – reflected the strength of workplace organisation. Such conquests are always highly vulnerable to changes in economic conditions, and to employers' attacks. Mutuality was one of Michael Edwards's main targets at BL. The 'affluent workers' of the 1960s have become the Cowley 'slaves' of the 1980s.

So far I have concentrated mainly on managers and supervisors who perform the 'function of capital'. But the same broad analysis can be brought to bear on the other category discussed by Erik Olin Wright, that of 'semi-autonomous employees'. Let us take a case close to my own heart, that of university lecturers. Here is a group of wage-labourers who depend on the continuous sale of their labour-power. However, they are not subject to continuous surveillance and control at work. How they teach their courses, and, to a somewhat lesser extent, what they teach, is a matter for them to decide. Moreover, long vacations and short teaching hours (as low as three hours a week in some British universities) gives them plenty of time to pursue their own research.

Obviously lecturers are not free of all constraints – pressures arise from the need to obtain tenure, and from subsequent efforts to climb the career hierarchy, not to speak of the cuts in higher education. However, compared to the mass of wage-labourers lecturers enjoy an enormous degree of freedom at work. They can even, if they wish, find the time to write Marxist analyses of their own class position. Semi-autonomous employees do not perform the 'function of capital', but equally they are relatively free from capitalist surveillance and control.

The extent to which those in contradictory class locations derive their position from the discretion conceded to them by capital is reflected in the large gap between their earnings and those of routine white collar and manual workers. We have seen that, according to Marx, non-productive workers are exploited by capital. In other words, surplus-labour is extracted from them even though, because they are not involved in producing commodities, this surplus-labour does not take the form of surplus-value. This analysis does not apply to the new middle class. By virtue of their performance of the ‘function of capital’, their earnings are likely to be set at levels which reflect the fact that surplus-labour is not extracted from them. Indeed, they may participate in the proceeds of the exploitation of workers. This is obviously likely to consolidate their allegiance to capital. [64]

The specific position of the new middle class is reflected, not only in their being highly paid, but in the life-cycle of their earnings. [65] [Table VIII](#) compares the earnings at different ages of male manual, routine white-collar, and professional, managerial and technical employees.

Table VIII

**Variations in median gross earnings by age,
for full-time men in selected occupations**

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>SM</i>	<i>SSM</i>	<i>UM</i>
18–20	–	56	–	52	60	70	66	63	72	85
21–24	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
25–29	128	132	130	145	122	123	124	110	110	108
30–39	166	157	179	175	140	138	139	114	114	113
40–49	180	171	199	188	144	137	135	113	112	110
50–59	180	165	193	194	136	125	127	105	105	101
60–64	162	155	192	171	130	114	114	98	97	92
All Ages	166	146	176	155	123	119	119	104	104	101

OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS:

<i>M</i>	=	managers	<i>T</i>	=	technicians
<i>E</i>	=	professional engineers, scientists and technologists	<i>O</i>	=	office and communications work
<i>A</i>	=	academic staff and teachers	<i>S</i>	=	sales workers
<i>P</i>	=	other professional and technical	<i>SM</i>	=	skilled manual

SSM = semi-skilled manual
UM = unskilled manual

Source: T. Bilton *et al.*, **Introductory Sociology** (London 1981), p. 83.

As we can see, upper white-collar workers' earnings rise steeply until their late forties, and, even after this peak remain well above what they earned in their early twenties. Manual workers' earnings peak in their mid-thirties, are then only about 15 per cent above their earnings in their early twenties, and then fall back below that level. The earnings cycle of routine clerical workers is closer to that of manual workers, and the gap between these groups would have been even narrower had women employees been included.

These different life-cycles reflect different positions in the relations of production. Manual workers depend for a significant portion of their earnings on overtime, and their ability to work overtime peaks in their thirties. Upper white-collar workers are part of a career structure, such that they can expect their standard of living to rise continuously thanks to regular pay increments and promotions. They can, in other words, expect to improve their economic and social position as individuals, by rising up a pre-existing hierarchy. Workers, on the other hand, can hope significantly to improve their standard of living through collective organisation and action.

Moreover, workers' strength varies depending on the fluctuations in the capitalist economy – during periods of high unemployment such as at present employers can take back what they conceded in times of boom. So workers' position is fundamentally insecure – any gain they make can be lost with a change in economic conjuncture. This is by no means necessarily true of the upper layers of white-collar employees. For example, in 1973–9, during the first major economic crisis since the end of the Second World War in 1945, the number of manual workers in Britain fell by 9.6 per cent, clerks just managed to rise in number by 1 per cent, managers and administrators grew by 22.1 per cent, and professionals by 17.9 per cent. [66] Employment figures are obviously only an imperfect indicator, but they do suggest that hard economic times are not necessarily bad for those in contradictory class locations.

The arguments and evidence I have produced in this section imply that not all employees are workers, but that the managers, supervisors, and semi-autonomous employees in contradictory class locations form a distinct social layer from the proletariat, what I have called 'new middle class' (NMC). This is not a very happy name, although it is the best that there is.

One reason why it is not a good name is that the NMC are not a class in the sense that the bourgeoisie or the proletariat are a class. Workers and capitalists have each a distinct and coherent set of interests deriving from their position in the relations of production. This is not true of the NMC precisely because they occupy contradictory class locations that pull them in two directions – in the case of managers and supervisors away from or towards the bourgeoisie and the

proletariat, in the case of semi-autonomous employees away from or towards the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat. As Stanley Aronowitz rather inelegantly put it when discussing the Ehrenreichs' concept of the 'Professional-Managerial Class', 'The PMC is a Strata'. [67] In other words, it is a collection of heterogeneous social layers who have in common an ambiguous and intermediate position with respect to the fundamental contradiction between capital and wage-labour.

This point has important implications. It means that the NMC is not hermetically sealed off from other classes. At the top it shades off into the higher echelons of management and administration, which are effectively part of the ruling class. At the lower end it merges into the working class. The boundaries separating contradictory class locations from the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are blurred. This is true in a number of respects. For example, groups of employees may move in and out of the NMC. Thus it seems plausible to say that most clerical workers occupied contradictory class locations in the early part of the century. At that stage they participated intimately in the functions of capital. The 'close and personal' relation between clerk and employer described by Charles Booth in the 1890s was precisely a relation of trust, in which the employee was confided with a significant amount of secret information, and permitted a wide area of discretion. The course of this century has, however, as we noted earlier, seen both the enormous expansion of the number of clerical workers, and their simultaneous exclusion from any significant degree of participation in the function of capital.

This poses the question of the size of the new middle class. According to [Table I](#) just under 30 per cent of the British workforce were professional, managerial and administrative employees in 1979. However, Table I uses occupational categories, not Marxist concepts. These employees do not all occupy contradictory class locations. The most obvious case is that of lower professionals. In 1971 this group made up over 70 per cent of all professionals. More than half of the lower professionals were women, and 58 per cent of them were nurses and teachers. [68] Table IV shows that female lower professionals earn less than the average earnings for all occupational 'classes'.

These facts are only indicative. But it is probable that most lower professionals – teachers, nurses, draughtsmen, lab technicians, social welfare officers – are part of the working class (indeed, many draughtsmen are, in all likelihood, productive workers, participating in the collective labour of producing commodities). This leaves us with higher professionals, perhaps 5 per cent of the workforce (the 1979 figures do not separate them from lower professionals) and managers and administrators, 12.7 per cent. Foremen make up another 5.9 per cent, giving us a total of 23.6 per cent of the workforce. This is almost certainly an over-estimate of the size of the NMC. Higher professionals include such categories as scientists, accountants, journalists, lawyers, doctors, dentists, and engineers. What proportion of these exercise a significant degree of

control over their own labour or that of others is a matter for empirical investigation, but it is certain that many do not. The same is probably true in the case of some managers and administrators. The extent to which, for example, executive officers in the civil service perform a managerial role seems to vary from ministry to ministry.

The evidence at my disposal is simply inadequate to determine the size of the NMC. At a guess it is more than 10 percent of the workforce, but less than 20 percent – between 2.5 and 4.5 million employees. On the other hand, the working class, productive workers, non-productive manual workers, routine clerical workers, lower professionals, make up at least 75 percent of all employees. Including the unemployed there are nearly 21 million workers in Britain. It is a little early to say farewell to them.

Ideological and political consequences

It remains to consider the implications of the emergence of the NMC. John Westergaard and Henrietta Resler write:

The existence of an intermediate cluster of people between wage-earners and directors, managers, high officials, and members of the established professions is, and for long has been, of crucial significance. For they form a social and political buffer group; and their position provides a goal on which the individual aspirations of people further down the scale may focus. [69]

This last point, about the way in which NMC positions provide a goal for those lower down the scale, is especially important. Consider the case of teachers. As I have already pointed out, the overwhelming majority of teachers are in all likelihood workers. Only a minority will reach managerial roles as heads and such like. However, the fact that all teachers undergo much the same sort of training and are part of the same career and salary structure means that even those teachers who have no hope of rising into a managerial position will tend to perceive themselves as 'superior' to manual and routine clerical workers. This is a point about status, about consciousness not objective class position, but it can have important consequences for the political attitudes of teachers, who may thus be led to regard themselves as 'middle-class', regarding themselves as having different interests from their fellow workers. The organisation of many types of white-collar work into 'professions' is likely to have a similar effect – consider, for example, the way in which some nurses regard themselves as 'caring' professionals, and not workers who might go on strike.

The ramifications are even wider. Many white collar-unions organise both managers and workers. A classic case is that of the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO). The obvious danger is that these unions will be dominated by NMC activists, and not the mass of low-paid routine white-collar workers. That is why the proposed merger of the two main civil service

unions, the SCPS (executive officers) and the CPSA (clerical officers), should be regarded with suspicion.

The manner in which the new middle class blurs into bourgeoisie and proletariat is important in other respects. There is, for example, the question of how people are recruited to contradictory class locations. Important evidence is provided here by the Nuffield Social Mobility Group, who interviewed a representative sample of men born between 1913 and 1952.

One of the study's most important results was that it demonstrated how tight a grip what the Nuffield group called the 'service class' (professional, managerial and administrative employees) had on educational qualifications:

School inequalities of opportunity have been remarkably stable in the forty years which our study covers. Throughout the service class has had roughly three times the chance of the (manual) working class of getting some kind of selective secondary schooling ... An extra 2 per cent of working-class children found their way into the universities compared with an extra 19 per cent of the service class. [70]

However, the Nuffield study also revealed that the new middle class includes a large number of recruits of proletarian origin. Only 25.3 per cent belonging to higher and intermediate levels of the 'service class' (roughly corresponding to the new middle class) had fathers from the same background, while 28.5 per cent had manual working-class fathers. [71] Moreover, a significant proportion of those from working-class backgrounds (especially managers and administrators) had little or no formal educational qualifications, and had started off their working life on the shopfloor. [72] A similar picture is to be found in other advanced capitalist countries. [73]

The Nuffield group showed that a person born into the new middle class has four times the chance of staying in that class than someone from the manual working class has of rising into it, and that the situation has, if anything, deteriorated since the 1930s. [74] Their explanation of the influx of people of working-class backgrounds into professional, managerial and administrative positions is 'the recent growth of the service class in British society, at a rate which could not be met other than by some considerable recruitment from below.' [75] The demand for upper-echelon white-collar jobs grew so rapidly in the years after 1945 (see [Table III](#)) that it could not be met by the offspring of the new middle class alone.

Nevertheless, although Britain has not become a significantly more 'open' society, the opportunities that have existed for a small number of children of the working class to rise socially helps to explain the distinctive culture of the new middle class. The historian Raphael Samuel has painted a vivid, and only too evocative portrait of the NMC. It

distinguishes itself more by its spending than its saving. The Sunday colour supplements give it both a fantasy life and a set of cultural cues. Much of its claim to culture rests on the conspicuous display of good taste, whether in the form of

kitchenware, 'continental' food, or weekend sailing and cottages. New forms of sociability, like parties and 'affairs', have broken down the sexual apartheid which kept men and women in rigidly separate spheres ...

The new middle class are outward looking rather than inward looking. They have opened up their homes to visitors, and exposed them to the public gaze. They have removed the net curtains from their windows, and taken down the shutters from their shops. They work in open-plan offices and establishments, with plate-glass windows and see-through partitions and doors. In their houses they make a fetish of light and space, replacing rooms with open-access living areas and exposing the dark corners to view ...

The new middle class do not aspire upwards, aping the speech of their betters, imitating their furnishings, or reproducing their manners. They dress down rather than up for parties, in tight trousers rather than dinner jackets, pinafores rather than gowns. They go hatless to work and spend long and expensive hours at die hairdresser's to cultivate a windswept look. They make a show of peasant pots in their kitchens. Their homes are imitation farmhouses rather than miniature stately homes ...

The new middle class are not, in the conventional English sense, snobs, because they don't feel anyone can threaten them ... They believe that they owe their privileges not to the advantages of birth or wealth, but rather to personal excellence. And since they gain their livelihood, in most cases, by salaries or fees ... they believe that, however inflated their incomes may appear to outsiders, they earn every penny they get. Quantitatively they may be better off than wage-earners; but qualitatively they feel the same and indeed in some ways – because of the taxes they pay – rather harder done by.

Class hardly enters into the new middle class conception of themselves. Many of them work in an institutional world of fine gradations but no clear lines of antagonism ...

The new middle class have a different emotional economy [*sic*] than that of their pre-war predecessors. They go in for instant rather than deferred gratification, making a positive virtue of their expenditure, and treating the self-indulgent as an ostentatious display of good taste. Sensual pleasures, so far from being outlawed, are the very field on which social claims are established and sexual identities confirmed. Food, in particular, a post-war bourgeois passion ... has emerged as a crucial marker of class. [76]

The world Samuel portrays is instantly recognisable as that depicted with such wit and precision by Posy Simmonds in the **Guardian** (although that portrait is an affectionate one, in part a celebration of the new middle class in its very own paper). It is a world of Volvos, aerobics, consciousness-raising groups, Habitat furniture, jogging, novels by Ian McEwan. Simply the existence of this culture, and of the class positions with which it is connected, is of great importance. The NMC is, as I have already pointed out, not a closed group. There has been a considerable influx into the 'service class' from below. Many workers not themselves in the NMC are linked to it by a shared education and career

structure. The culture of the new middle class has thus permeated some sections of the working class, shaping their aspirations and perspectives on society.

The more directly political impact of the NMC has received some discussion. John Goldthorpe claims that the 'service class ... as it consolidates, will constitute an essentially conservative element within modern society.' Its members 'will seek to use the superior resources they possess in order to preserve their position of relative power and advantage, for themselves and for their children.' [77] He does add, however, that: 'no reason emerges for supposing that the service class will have any particular commitment to capitalism *per se* ... The interests of bureaucratic employees have after all no intrinsic connection with the institutions of private property in production or the free-market system.' [78]

He suggests that 'service-class disaffection is in fact most likely to be produced by crude neo-liberal policies' of the Thatcher type. But even in this case the 'service class' would be unlikely to support 'distinctively left-wing measures – with their quite unwelcome egalitarian implications', but rather would move towards corporatism – 'a more comprehensively "managed" capitalism, in which 'distributional processes, and pay determination especially, become subject to greater political control'. [79] In other words, the 'service class's' vision of society is that of the Social Contract concluded by the 1974–9 Labour government with the Trades Union Congress writ large.

This analysis seems to me essentially correct as applied to the NMC, but it fails to grasp a possibility envisaged by the Ehrenreichs in their analysis of the 'Professional-Managerial Class'. They discuss 'PMC radicalism', which seeks 'a technocratic transformation of society in which all aspects of life would be "rationalized" according to expert knowledge'. [80]

'PMC radicalism', the Ehrenreichs argue:

emerges out of PMC class interests, which include the PMC's interest in extending its technological and cultural superiority over the working class. Thus the possibility exists in the PMC for the emergence of what may at first sight seem to be a contradiction in terms: anti-working class radicalism. This possibility finds its fullest expression in the PMC radicals' recurring vision of a technocratic socialism, a socialism in which the bourgeoisie has been replaced by bureaucrats, planners, and experts of various sorts. [81]

One case of such 'anti-working class radicalism' would be the Social Democratic Party in Britain. Raphael Samuel sees the SDP as the party of a section of the new middle class,

essentially hostile to the working class, wanting both to disperse it as a cultural presence (in the name, it must be said, of 'equality') and to de-constitute it as a political force. As modernisers, heralding the advent of a 'post-industrial' society, they see its very existence as in some sort anachronistic ...

The very existence of a self-conscious working class is an affront to their self-esteem. It is also the chief obstacle to the open society of their

particular dreams – a gigantic empty space filled with socially mobile outward-looking people. [82]

A survey of SDP members conducted by Opinion Research Limited in November 1981 revealed that 57 per cent were professionals, compared with 10 per cent clerical/office/sales workers and only 7 per cent manual workers. 67 per cent were in favour of outlawing the closed shop, 63 per cent supported a wealth tax, 57 per cent wanted private schools to lose their tax advantages, and 60 per cent favoured a reflationary economic policy. This set of attitudes could be summed up as meritocratic, anti-working-class statism, those of a group detached from private capital, but also hostile to the organised labour movement. The political editor of the **New Statesman**, Peter Kellner, discussing the survey, wrote of the SDP that ‘for a party that preaches classless politics it is in fact a peculiarly cohesive class party ... in terms of the specific class interests of the professional salaried middle class.’ [83]

Both Samuel and Kellner are supporters of the Labour Party. The paradox of their arguments is that they could be equally well applied to the most dynamic force within their own party, the left-wing grouping that formed around Tony Benn inside the Labour Party in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Evidence for this can be found at a number of levels. Electoral trends over the past twenty years have seen both a decline in manual working-class support for Labour, counter-balanced by a rise in white-collar support. [84]

Ivor Crewe of the Essex University British Election Study comments:

It is fairly clear that the growth of the Labour middle class has occurred not amongst the petit bourgeoisie, clerical workers, or traditional occupations, but amongst the ‘new’ middle classes in other words, those who are (1) professionally qualified, and usually graduates, (2) employees rather than self-employed, (3) employed in large bureaucratic organisations, especially in the public sector, for example local and central government, nationalised industries, quangos, universities, hospitals etcetera, (4) slightly younger than average, (5) the children of skilled working-class and lower middle-class parents, in other words, those who have entered the middle class through the higher education system rather than through the possession of capital and ‘contacts’. [85]

This profile describes very accurately the cadre of the Labour left around Tony Benn. Gareth Stedman-Jones writes that ‘historically, Labour as a majority party has depended upon a social alliance between the organised working class and the broad professional middle class.’ [86] Certainly this is valid as a description of the social composition of the party’s activists, exemplified by the 1945–51 governments, embracing as it did such diverse scions of the organised working class as Ernest Bevin, Herbert Morrison, and Aneurin Bevan, and middle-class intellectuals such as Clement Attlee, Stafford Cripps and Hugh Gaitskell. As Stedman-Jones put it, for the professional and middle classes class consciousness ‘was an ethic of service, intelligence and expertise in pursuit of humanitarian ends and a civilising mission both at home and abroad.’ [87] Even right-wing Labour intellectuals were organically integrated into the labour

movement, often through adult and extra-mural education (two such very different Labour intellectuals as Hugh Gaitskell and Richard Crossman were both lecturers for the Workers' Educational Association in the 1930s).

In the post-war era this situation was transformed. Working-class participation in local Labour Parties drastically fell as workers came to see shop stewards' organisation as a more effective means of achieving reforms than contesting elections. The constituency and ward Labour Parties fell under the control of ageing, right-wing, predominantly working-class rumps, usually heavily involved in often corrupt town-hall politics. [88] This gerontocracy was highly vulnerable to challenge by the left, since attendance at ward meetings was usually so low. This is what began to happen increasingly in the Constituency Labour Parties during the course of the 1970s. In inner-city constituencies especially, young graduates in well-paid public sector jobs, often simultaneously participating in the gentrification of run-down working-class areas, began to take on the dominant right-wing Labour Party establishment. Some at least had been revolutionaries in their salad days at university, some still thought they were, as the Bennite boom sucked much of the orthodox Trotskyist left into the Labour Party.

The issues stressed by the left around Benn reflected the influence of the new middle class. Whereas the older Labour left, for example the group that supported Aneurin Bevan in the 1950s, had focused on nationalisation, their successors were less interested in changing the structure of economic power within industry than in using state power to control private capital. The 'alternative economic strategy' being pushed by Tony Benn and his supporters was essentially a recipe for reviving British national capital by means of a shift in the balance of power from private to state capital. [89] Similarly, Labour left talk of 'democratisation' was not concerned with such Marxist old hat as destroying the state, but with making some bits of the state 'more accountable'. Thus, the left does not wish to disband the repressive forces of the state, rather to place them under the control of the elected bodies. At the same time, the old 'ethic of service' has died: Labour's new middle-class recruits, because of their objective distance from the ruling class, and sometimes their own social origins, feel themselves to be part of the working class.

One less tangible aspect of the new left fits very closely into what has already been said about the NMC. Raphael Samuel has written, in the article cited at length above, of the narcissistic self-absorption of the NMC, its obsession with its own problems, appearance, personal relationships. This connects directly with the 'lifestyle politics' of one section of the Labour left, namely its feminist wing. What Marx called 'human emancipation' has become narrowed down to the pursuit of 'liberated' lifestyles by small groups of people with the money and leisure to experiment. The vogue for a debased version of Utopian socialism in the early 1980s was related to this phenomenon. London Labour Briefing admirably sums up the preoccupations of this social milieu, with its weird

mixture of pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric, parish-pump municipal politics, and feverish sexual experimentation.

The Ehrenreichs' phrase 'anti-working-class radicalism' is too strong in this context, but the social composition of the Bennite left helps to explain its detachment from working-class life. The famous victories won inside the Labour Party in 1979–81 took place when the organised working class was suffering its worst hammering since the time of the General Strike and the Great Depression. The Labour left were able to avoid this simple fact partly because the sort of jobs they tend to do insulated them from the full force of the recession, partly because constituency and ward parties don't have much to do with working-class people these days, and partly because the working class in any case figured in the Bennites' minds as an abstraction rather than a living reality.

Again when the Labour left took up the issue of social inequality they did so in terms which relate most directly to their own class situation. John Goldthorpe writes that 'the legitimatory ideology to which the service class will primarily resort in the context of distributional conflict is that of a "meritocracy".'^[90] Thus sexual and racial oppression was raised in terms of 'positive discrimination' – in other words, more positions at the top of the career structure (and of the Labour and trade-union bureaucracies) should be reserved for women and blacks. The structure itself and the inequalities it necessarily involves were placed in the background. Such a strategy advances the interests of a small and privileged group among the oppressed. It has nothing to do with genuine liberation for women and blacks.

Table IX lends support to this analysis. It shows how the elite of labour activists, MPs and candidates, come from NMC backgrounds. Peter Riddell, political editor of the **Financial Times**, pointed out that the trend is most pronounced among new candidates: 'nearly three-fifths of new Labour candidates are lecturers, teachers, lawyers, journalists, trade-union officials, full-time councillors or political organisers, and researchers.'

Table IX

The background of MPs and candidates 1982, in percentages ^[91]

	<i>CONSERVATIVE</i>			<i>LABOUR</i>			<i>SDP/LIB</i>	
	<i>MPs in 1979</i>	<i>New candes</i>	<i>Cands for seats</i>	<i>MPs in 1979</i>	<i>New candes</i>	<i>Cands for Lab seats</i>	<i>Cands</i>	<i>Cands</i>
Lawyers	20.6	21.6	23.1	9.3	5.9	6.0	11.3	15.1
Lecturers	2.1	2.7	–	7.4	13.0	12.0	22.6	15.0
Teachers	3.2	5.4	7.7	13.3	15.8	12.0	11.3	5.0

Directors	4.3	15.3	15.2	–	0.6	2.0	9.4	10.3
Managerial	26.2	24.3	30.8	8.1	9.6	6.0	14.1	23.4
Politicians	2.2	5.4	7.7	4.7	3.3	8.0	–	3.4
Manual	1.0	–	–	35.3	12.9	22.0	0.9	3.4
Others	40.4	27.1	75.5	21.9	38.9	32.0	30.4	24.4

Source: *Financial Times*, 15 December 1982.

[Table X](#) shows how the same pattern was found in the municipal strongholds of the Labour left in London in the early 1980s. Not only were a high proportion of London Labour councillors employed in local government, but a majority was employed in the public sector, while many of those listed in the table as ‘economically inactive’ were full-time councillors living on allowances.

Table X

Occupations of London Labour councillors, 1982

	<i>Trade union officials</i>	<i>Economically inactive</i>	<i>Local govt and related</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Camden	6	4	14	33
Lambeth	3	4	8	27
Islington	2	9	17	43
Lewisham	1	3	17	33
Southwark	0	9	14	48
GLC	8	13	20	47

Source: *Times*, 23 August 1982.

The detachment of the ‘new urban left’ from working-class life is probably aided by what John Gyford described as:

the practice whereby activists appoint one another to a range of official or political posts with their gift. Jobs working with community groups, with enterprise boards, with economic policy units, or as researchers or personal assistants to committee chairmen, go to committed supporters, who may also be elected councillors in another locality. (This has been very characteristic of Livingstone’s GLC). This may also strengthen support for important policies in key places and Mrs Thatcher

has used similar tactics in and around Whitehall. But does it not also carry with it a danger of incestuousness and introversion, cutting the activists off from the rest of the world? [92]

The recipients of such patronage often find themselves in highly paid positions. Judith Hunt, for example, the former TASS official now earning £21,000 a year as the GLC's equality advisor is unlikely to have much sense of the problems of women on three or four thousand a year whose lot she is supposed to be improving. Another prominent figure in the 'new urban left', Hilary Wainwright, recently compared the GLC to the Paris Commune – a comparison which would be more convincing if the GLC (to whom she is an economic advisor) were to follow the Commune's example by paying its socialist experts average workers' wages.

It is important to be aware of the limitations of this analysis. Some commentators believe that the new middle class is on the way to establishing its economic and political dominance over both capital and labour. For example, Arthur Gould argues that what he calls 'the salaried middle class (SMC)' has been the chief beneficiary of post-war welfare policies, and that, moreover, 'welfare bureaucracies are run by as well as for the SMC.' [93] Both labour and capital have suffered the burden of higher taxation to finance the expanding of the welfare state to the SMC's benefit. The likely outcome is 'corporatism', where 'the balance of power shifts from capital to the SMC'. Gould proffers Nazism as an example of such an arrangement! [94]

This analysis is completely mistaken. It underestimates the heterogeneity of the new middle class. Support for Labour came primarily from those in the public sector. However, many of those in 'contradictory class locations' are employed by private firms. It is likely that a majority of these support the Tory party, identifying their interests with private capital. [Table IX](#), which shows that over a quarter of Tory MPs and candidates in 1982 held managerial positions, supports this analysis. One Tory backbencher, Julian Critchley, has noted the rise of the new middle class within his own party: 'the businessmen with flat provincial accents who a decade ago, at Brighton or Blackpool, pressed for stronger competition, small-town surveyors and estate agents, the politically active middle class, which began by taking over the constituency parties, are now taking over Parliament itself.' [95]

The idea that even the statist wing of the new middle class is in any sense anti-capitalist rests on the mistaken assumption that state and capital are opposed to one another. Once we see that state as capital, the whole perspective shifts. I have already noted the state-capitalist aspects of the Bennite programme. However, state capitalism could not be installed in Britain by peaceful means. The most well-entrenched sections of British manufacturing, commercial and financial capital are privately owned, internationally oriented, and unusually hostile to state intervention. [96] They would not submit meekly to expropriation in the national interest. This leads to a paradox: state capitalism could only be

achieved by mobilising the working class against the bourgeoisie, but once mobilised, workers would be unlikely to be content to install one wing of the NMC in the place of private capital. [97]

One final qualification is necessary. Although I have stressed the importance of an analysis of contradictory class locations for understanding the Labour left, it does not follow that the new middle class, or one wing of it, has become the social base of the Labour Party. On the contrary, Labour is still what Lenin called a ‘bourgeois workers’ party’, organically linked to the working-class movement through the trade-union bureaucracy, with all the contradictions that entails. The concept of the NMC is important in understanding the party’s activists. Even so, I do not claim that all Constituency Labour Party members occupy contradictory class locations. In fact, many activists seem to come rather from groups such as teachers, who, although not in the main themselves members of the NMC, are linked to it, as I noted earlier, by a common training, shared career structures, and a lifestyle and set of aspirations which overlaps with its members. [98]

Conclusion

The most important consequence of this analysis concerns the attitude that revolutionary socialists should take towards the new middle class. It would be foolish to argue that this class should be excluded from trade unions or socialist organisations. In the first place, because those in contradictory class-locations are wage-labourers, members of the NMC do have interests which set them at odds with the ruling class, and unite them with the working class. This is one reason why there has been an explosion of white-collar unionism in the post-war era. Furthermore, members of any class, including the bourgeoisie, can in principle play a role in a revolutionary socialist party.

Nevertheless, those members of the exploiting classes who become revolutionary socialists do so by breaking with their background. They become traitors to their class, and, in the nature of things, will only be a small minority of that class. The situation is more complex in the case of the NMC because they do have interests in common with workers, as I have already pointed out. But they also occupy positions of power over workers which align them with capital. This means that a revolutionary party cannot orient itself on the new middle class in the way in which it does on the working class.

This brings us to the question of class alliances. A number of authors have argued for a class alliance between proletariat and new middle class. [99] What they usually mean is a Popular Front of the sort pursued by the Communist Parties in the 1930s and 1940s, in which the working class sacrifices its own distinct interests, objectives, and methods of struggle in order to achieve ‘unity’ with a class whose interests are antagonistic to those of the proletariat. Such a

strategy would obviously be appealing to the right wing of the Communist Party who advocate unity with the SDP and Tory ‘wets’ against Thatcherism. The historical experience of this strategy has been disastrous. [100]

A much more valid model is provided by the relationship between the proletariat and the peasantry in the Russian revolution of 1917. In that instance, the working class won the peasants to its side just by pursuing its own objectives and showing in practice how the interests of the two classes coincided – only soviet power could guarantee the peasants peace and land.

Support for this approach is provided by the fact that the occasions of growth of militant white-collar unionism have been those when manual workers have been on the offensive – at the end of the First World War and in the early 1970s. 1919, when the British ruling class were at their most insecure, the year of police strikes, army mutinies, revolt on the Clyde and in Belfast, was also the year of the first major white-collar strike, by railway clerks. Similarly, 1973, the year one Tory cabinet minister told his family that they might be spending their last Christmas together, saw the first official civil service strike.

It is, therefore, by pursuing the methods of class struggle, and not those of class conciliation, that the working class will win sections of the new middle class to its side. This springs from the very nature of contradictory class-locations. Those in such positions are of necessity pulled two ways. By maximising the pressure from below, through its own militant actions, the proletariat can drag NMC elements towards it. The effect of heightened class struggle will be to split the NMC. Those in higher positions, more directly involved in exercising the function of capital, closer to the layers of strategic control, are likely to move towards the bourgeoisie. But those below them would in all probability go the other way.

To sum up, belief that changes in class structure have removed the basis of socialist politics by dissolving the proletariat is itself without foundation. The expansion of white-collar work has involved, in the main, a shift in the structure of the working class, not its disappearance. The significance of the emergence of the new middle class for socialists is primarily negative. The experience of the Labour left shows how the influence of this class can completely distort socialist politics. Revolutionaries must continue to orient on rank-and-file workers, whether they work in factory or office, shop or mine.

Notes

I am grateful to Pete Goodwin and Chris Harman for their comments on and criticisms of my first draft of this article. The discussion which followed a talk I gave on the new middle class at the Socialist Workers Party rally at Skegness at Eastern 1983 was also very helpful.

1. K. Marx and F. Engels, **Selected Correspondence** (Moscow 1965), p. 327.

2. K. Marx, **Capital, volume 3** (Moscow 1971), p. 791.

3. K. Marx, [Capital, volume 2](#) (Moscow 1956), p. 33.
 4. Marx, **Capital**, volume 3, p. 879.
 5. See G.A. Cohen, **Karl Marx's Theory of History** (Oxford 1978), pp. 73–7, and G.E.M. de Ste Croix, **The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World** (London 1981), pp. 43, 57–69, 85–96.
 6. Ste Croix, **op. cit.**, p. 51.
 7. See R. Scase, *The Petty Bourgeoisie and Modern Capitalism*, in A. Giddens and G. Mackenzie (editors), **Social Class and the Division of Labour** (Cambridge 1982).
 8. **Financial Times**, 28 November 1981.
 9. See for example R. Bahro, **Socialism and Survival** (London 1982) and A. Gorz, **Farewell to the Working Class** (London 1982).
 10. Goldthorpe, *On the Service Class, its Formation and Future*, in Giddens and Mackenzie, page 172.
 11. G. Routh, **Occupation and Pay in Great Britain 1906–79** (London 1980), p. 6.
 12. **Socialist Worker**, 12 February, 26 February, 12 March and 14 May 1983.
 13. K. Marx, [Theories of Surplus Value](#), volume 1 (Moscow 1963), p. 152.
 14. **Ibid.**, p. 157.
 15. See I.I. Rubin, [Essays on Marx's Theory of Value](#) (Detroit 1972) and E. Mandel's introduction to Marx, **Capital**, volume 2 (Harmondsworth 1978), pp. 38–46.
 16. Marx, **Capital**, volume 3, chapter 16.
 17. Marx, **Capital**, volume 2, pages 135–6. See also pp. 136–8.
 18. **Ibid.**, p. 153.
 19. N. Poulantzas, **Classes in Contemporary Capitalism** (London 1975). Poulantzas' justification of this claim rests on the idea that white-collar employees, because they perform intellectual rather than manual labour, are polarised ideologically and politically in the direction of the bourgeoisie. This is true even of those white-collar employees (technicians and others) who are part of the 'collective worker' and therefore perform productive labour.
- As Erik Olin Wright points out, 'In the end, the procedure Poulantzas adopts makes ideology itself the decisive criterion of class' (**Class, Crisis and the State**, London 1978, p. 59). Class is thus detached from its anchorage in the relations of production.
- What is striking is the similarity between Poulantzas' concept of class and that employed by bourgeois sociologists. David Lockwood, for example, uses Max Weber's concept of 'status', the position in the social hierarchy which individuals are perceived to occupy, in his study of clerks, **The Blackcoated Worker** (London 1958). He argues that clerical workers cannot be regarded as part of the proletariat because of their residually middle-class 'status situation'.
- Anthony Giddens, doyen of younger British sociologists, uses another Weberian concept, market-capacity, to distinguish white-collar employees from the working class. White-collar employees' market capacity – the possession of educational qualifications – distinguishes their class position from both the bourgeoisie, who own the means of production, and workers, who own manual labour power. Cf. A. Giddens, **The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies** (second edition, London 1981), *passim*. But this

analysis does not fit the situation of clerical workers, and, as we shall see, many upper-level white-collar employees do not owe their position to educational qualifications. It is interesting to note that Giddens endorses Poulantzas' 'convincing critique' of the view that 'classes can be regarded as economically formed prior to their entry into "ideological and political relations".' (*Ibid.*, p. 303.)

[20.](#) Wright, **Class, Crisis and the State**, p. 55.

[21.](#) K. Marx, *Results of the Immediate Process of Production*, appendix to **Capital**, volume 1 (Harmondsworth 1976), pp. 1039–40.

[22.](#) Marx, **Capital**, volume 3, p. 292.

[23.](#) Marx, **Capital**, volume 3, pp. 293–4.

[24.](#) Wright, **Class, Crisis and the State**, pp. 49–50.

[25.](#) Mandel, introduction to **Capital**, p. 47.

[26.](#) Mandel, introduction to **Capital**, pp. 47–8; see p. 48n and p. 59 for supporting quotations.

[27.](#) Quoted in Lockwood, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

[28.](#) Quoted in Lockwood, *op. cit.*, p. 20, from a handbook published in 1878.

[29.](#) B.G. Orchard, writing in 1871, quoted in Lockwood, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

[30.](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 36–37.

[31.](#) H. Braverman, **Labour and Monopoly Capital** (London and New York 1974).

[32.](#) M. Crozier, **The Bureaucratic Phenomenon** (London 1964), part 1.

[33.](#) Routh, *op. cit.*, page 42. Of course, there has been a marked fall in the number of manufacturing workers since 1971, especially as a result of the present recession.

[34.](#) Marx, **Theories of Surplus Value**, volume 1, p. 227.

[35.](#) See A. Heath, **Social Mobility** (London 1981).

[36.](#) B. and J. Ehrenreich, *The Professional-Managerial Class*, and the articles written in response, collected in P. Walker (*editor*), **Between Labour and Capital** (Hassocks 1979).

[37.](#) Wright, **Class, Crisis and the State**, chapter 2.

[38.](#) Ehrenreich, *Professional-Managerial Class*, p. 12.

[39.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[40.](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 16–18.

[41.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[42.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[43.](#) A. Szymanski, *A Critique and Extension of the Professional-Managerial Class*, in Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 50–1.

[44.](#) B. and J. Ehrenreich, *Rejoinder*, in Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 331–2 n13.

[45.](#) I am grateful to Chris Harman for this example.

[46.](#) See Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp. 217–25, and J. Scott, **Corporations, Classes and Capitalism** (London 1979).

[47.](#) O. Wright, *Intellectuals and the Class Structure of Capitalist Society*, in Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

- [48.](#) Wright, **Class**, p. 61.
- [49.](#) **Ibid.**, pp. 73–4.
- [50.](#) **Ibid.**, p. 63.
- [51.](#) **Ibid.**, pp. 80–1. See also Wright, *Intellectuals*, *passim*.
- [52.](#) Wright, **Class**, p. 81.
- [53.](#) **Ibid.**, p. 91.
- [54.](#) See C. Barker, *The State as Capital*, in **IS 2 : 1** (1978).
- [55.](#) G. Carchedi, *On the Economic Identification of the New Middle Class*, in **Economy and Society 4 : 1** (1975), p. 24.
- [56.](#) S.A. Marglin, *What do Bosses do?*, in A. Gorz (editor), **The Division of Labour** (Hassocks 1976), p. 29.
- [57.](#) J. Scott, **The Upper Classes** (London 1982), p. 124.
- [58.](#) **Department of Employment Gazette**, March 1983.
- [59.](#) Carchedi, **op. cit.**, p. 24.
- [60.](#) Goldthorpe, *On the Service Class, its Formation and Future*, in Giddens and Mackenzie, **Social Class and the Division of Labour**, pp. 168–9.
- [61.](#) R.E. Pahl and J.T. Winkler, *The Economic Elite*, in A. Giddens and P. Stanworth (editors), **Elites and Power in British Society** (Cambridge 1974), p. 114. See also Scott, *Corporations*, *passim*.
- [62.](#) Goldthorpe, *On the Service Class*, p. 170.
- [63.](#) See Scott, **Upper Classes**, chapters 6 and 7, and Giddens and Stanworth, *passim*.
- [64.](#) I am grateful to Chris Harman for pressing this point on me.
- [65.](#) J. Westergaard and H. Resler, **Class in a Capitalist Society** (Harmondsworth 1976), pp. 72–96.
- [66.](#) Routh, p. 46.
- [67.](#) S. Aronowitz, *The Professional-Managerial Class or Middle Strata*, in Walker, **op. cit.**, p. 218.
- [68.](#) Routh, **op. cit.**, pp. 9, 16.
- [69.](#) Westergaard and Resler, **op. cit.**, p. 95.
- [70.](#) A.H. Halsey and others, **Origins and Destinations** (Oxford 1980), pp. 205–6.
- [71.](#) J. Goldthorpe and others, **Social Mobility and Class Structure in Modern Britain** (Oxford 1980), pp. 42–6.
- [72.](#) **Ibid.**, pp. 54–7.
- [73.](#) Goldthorpe, *On the Service Class*, pp. 172–4.
- [74.](#) Goldthorpe and others, **Social Mobility**, pp. 76ff.
- [75.](#) **Ibid.**, p. 59.
- [76.](#) R. Samuel, *The SDP and the New Political Class*, in **New Society**, 22 April 1982.
- [77.](#) Goldthorpe, *On the Service Class*, p. 80.
- [78.](#) **Ibid.**, p. 183.
- [79.](#) **Ibid.**, p. 184.

- [80.](#) Ehrenreich, *Professional-Managerial Class*, p. 22.
- [81.](#) **Ibid.**, p. 42.
- [82.](#) Ralph Samuel, *The SDP and the Working Class*, **New Society**, 29 April 1982.
- [83.](#) **New Statesman**, 4 December 1981.
- [84.](#) S.E. Finer, **The Changing British Party System** (Washington 1980), pp. 40–55.
- [85.](#) Quoted, **ibid.**, p. 53.
- [86.](#) G. Stedman-Jones, *Marching into History?*, in **New Socialist**, January/February 1982.
- [87.](#) **Ibid.**
- [88.](#) The best study of this process is still B. Hindess, **The Decline of Working-Class Politics** (London 1971).
- [89.](#) See J. Bearman, *An Anatomy of the Bennite Left*, in **IS 2 : 6** (1979), S. Cockerill, *Reply to Left Reformism*, in **IS 2 : 8** (1980), and P. Green, *“Alternative” and “Socialist” Economic Strategies*, in **IS 2 : 13** (1981).
- [90.](#) Goldthorpe, *On the Service Class*, pp. 180–1.
- [91.](#) **Financial Times**, 15 December 1982.
- [92.](#) J. Gyford, *The New Urban Left*, in **New Society**, 21 April 1983.
- [93.](#) A. Gould, *The Salaried Middle Class in the Corporatist Welfare State*, in **Policy and Politics 9 : 4** (1981), p. 407.
- [94.](#) **Ibid.**, p. 415.
- [95.](#) **Financial Times**, 15 December 1982.
- [96.](#) See A. Gamble, **Britain in Decline** (London 1981) and B. Rowthorne, *The Past Strikes Back*, in **Marxism Today**, January 1982.
- [97.](#) C. Sparks, *The Reformist Challenge*, in **IS 1 : 97** (1977).
- [98.](#) I am grateful to Sue Cockerill and Pete Goodwin for this point.
- [99.](#) See Szymanski, pages 60–5, and Aronowitz, pages 233–42.
- [100.](#) See F. Claudin, **The Communist Movement** (Harmondsworth 1975) for an account whose force derives partly from the author’s sympathy for a Popular Front strategy.

