

The Professional-Managerial Class

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To generations of radicals, the working class has been the bearer of socialism, the agent of both progressive social reform and revolution. But in the United States in the last two decades, the left has been concentrated most heavily among people who feel themselves to be "middle class," while the working class has appeared relatively quiescent. This "middle-class" left, unlike its equivalent in early twentieth-century Europe or in the Third World today, is not a minority within a mass working class (or peasant) movement; it is, to a very large extent, the left itself. It has its own history of mass struggle, not as an ally or appendage of the industrial working class, but as a mass constituency in and of itself. At the same time, most of the U.S. left continues to believe (correctly, we think) that without a mass working-class left, only the most marginal of social reforms is possible.

None of these historical anomalies about the U.S. left is explained by the theories to which most of the left now adheres. Orthodox Marxism describes capitalist society as being polarized

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between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; it has nothing to say about a "middle class," or, of course, about middle-class radicalism. Thus, the left today may sense the impasse created by the narrowness of its class composition, but it lacks even the terms with which to describe the situation, much less a strategy for overcoming it.

Theoretical confusion about class is endemic among all parts of the left. Some leftists (mainly associated with the "new communist movement") describe students, professionals, and other educated workers as "petty bourgeois," though more as a put-down than as a defensible analysis. Other contemporary leftists describe all salary and wage workers who do not own the means of production as "working class." The working class so conceived is a near-universal class, embracing all but the actual capitalists and the classical petty bourgeoisie (i.e., small tradesmen, independent farmers, etc.). But this group, too, finds its definition practically untenable. In practice, and conversationally, these leftists use the terms "working class" and "middle class" with their colloquial connotations, knowing that the distinction is still somehow a useful one. Yet this distinction cannot be pursued in theory: the prevailing theoretical framework insists that all wage earners are working class and that the notion that some workers are "middle class" is a capitalist-inspired delusion.

When analysis stops, the problem does not necessarily go away. Rather, it is at that point that the door opens to all kinds of irrational and subjectivist approaches. In the years since the New Left in the U.S. matured from a radical to a socialist outlook, the left has dashed itself repeatedly against the contradictions between its "middle-class" origins and its working-class allegiance. Some pursue the search for a "pure" proletarian line to an ever more rarefied sectarianism. Others seem to find comfort in the ambiguities of contemporary class analysis, fearing that any attempt to draw more careful distinctions will leave them in an undesirable category ("petty bourgeois," etc.). At this point the very emotion surrounding the subject of class provides a further impediment to analysis. Yet if the left is to grow, it must begin to come to an objective understanding of its own class origins and to comprehend objectively the barriers that have isolated it from the working class.

I. Classes in Monopoly Capitalist Society

The classical Marxian analysis of capitalist society centers on two classes and two alone — the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The other numerically large class of mature capitalist society — the petty bourgeoisie — lies outside of this central polarity, and is in a sense anachronistic: a class left over from an earlier social order, which undergoes a continual process of "proletarianization"

(i.e., its members are progressively forced down into the proletariat).^{*} Meanwhile, the working class not only expands to embrace the vast majority of the working population, but also becomes more and more homogeneous and unified.

As early as the turn of the century it was becoming evident that the class structures of the advanced capitalist countries were not evolving along quite so straight a path. The middle classes were simply not withering away; new, educated and salaried middle-class strata had appeared and were growing rapidly. Most Marxists, however, either ignored the new strata or insisted that they, like the old middle class of independent artisans and entrepreneurs, would become proletarianized. It was left to radical social theorists outside the Marxian mainstream (such as Emil Lederer and Jacob Marschak in Germany and C. Wright Mills in the United States) to analyze the "new middle classes". In these analyses, the salaried white-collar workers were not seen as a single class, but rather as a disparate group, ranging from clerical workers to engineers and college professors, connected to each other (and to the old middle classes) by little more than a common desire not to fall into the proletariat.

By early in the sixties, the explosive growth and continued social distinctiveness of the stratum of educated wage earners had become impossible for Marxists to ignore. But Marxian theorists were not yet ready to give up the attempt at forcing engineers, teachers, government workers and accountants into the proletarian mold. Pierre Belleville, Andre Gorz, and Serge Mallet were the first Marxists to chronicle and analyze the emergence of what they called, in opposition to Mills, et al., the "new working class." The new working class, wrote Gorz in 1964, like the old working class, was defined by its antagonistic relation to capital.

Technicians, engineers, students, researchers discover that they are wage earners like the others, paid for a piece of work which is "good" only to the degree it is profitable in the short run. They discover that long-range research, creative work on original problems, and the love of workmanship are incompatible with the criteria of capitalist profitability . . . (1)

Despite their immediate consciousness as "middle class," the growing body of educated workers are, according to this analysis, a *stratum of the working class*. (2)

A decade later, after the rise and decline of a New Left based heavily among students and educated workers, it had become ap-

^{*} "Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses . . . this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — bourgeoisie and proletariat." (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO)

parent that the gulf between the "old" and "new" working classes was deeper than the earlier analyses had suggested. Nicos Poulantzas suggested making a distinction between labor necessary for production of commodities and labor necessary for the reproduction of capitalist social relationships. Thus, according to Poulantzas, workers in the state and other "ideological apparatuses" — schools, government agencies, welfare agencies, mass media, etc. — must be considered as being in a different class from production workers. (3)

In the early '70's Andre Gorz, too, broke with his own earlier analysis, arguing that it was not only workers in the ideological apparatuses who served reproductive roles, but also the engineers, scientists, managers, etc. in productive enterprises. The capitalist division of labor has been determined by the need to control the workers and the work process in the context of class antagonism, and not only by technological imperatives. (4) Thus, proposed Gorz, even at the point of production, a distinction must be made between productive and reproductive labor.

We shall not succeed in locating technical and scientific labor within the class structure of advanced capitalist society unless we start by analyzing what functions technical and scientific labor perform in the process of capital accumulation and in the process of reproducing social relations. The question as to whether technicians, engineers, research workers and the like belong to the middle class or to the working class must be made to depend upon the following questions: (1) (a) Is their function required by the process of material production as such or (b) by capital's concern for ruling and controlling the productive process and the work process from above? (2) (a) Is their function required by concern for the greatest possible efficiency in production technology? or (b) does the concern for efficient production technology come second only to the concern for "social technology," i.e., for keeping the labor force disciplined, hierarchically regimented and divided? (3) (a) Is the present definition of technical skill and knowledge primarily required by the technical division of labor and thereby based upon scientific and ideologically neutral data? or (b) is the definition of technical skill and knowledge primarily social and ideological, as an outgrowth of the social division of labor? (5)

Both Gorz and Poulantzas conclude that there is an "unbridgeable objective class distinction," as Gorz puts it, between professional, technical and managerial workers and production workers. The problem, then, is where to place these mental workers in the class structure of capitalist society. But Gorz, so far as we know, has not extended his analysis of the class position of "tech-

nical workers" any further. Poulantzas refuses to break with Marx's two-class model, taking refuge in the dogmatic assertion that to "maintain that capitalism itself produces a new class in the course of its development" is "unthinkable for Marxist theory" (emphasis ours). He ends by lumping the educated workers along with all other non-productive workers — wage earners (educated or not) in banks, commerce, service industries, government, etc. — in a stratum of the petty bourgeoisie which he calls the "new petty bourgeoisie." (6)

We will argue that the "middle class" category of workers which has concerned Marxist analysts for the last two decades — the technical workers, managerial workers, "culture" producers, etc. — must be understood as comprising a distinct class in monopoly capitalist society. The Professional-Managerial Class ("PMC")*, as we will define it, cannot be considered a stratum of a broader "class" of "workers" because it exists in an objectively antagonistic relationship to another class of wage earners (whom we shall simply call the "working class"). Nor can it be considered to be a "residual" class like the petty bourgeoisie; it is a formation specific to the monopoly stage of capitalism. It is only in the light of this analysis, we believe, that it is possible to understand the role of technical, professional and managerial workers in advanced capitalist society and in the radical movements.

Let us begin by clarifying what we mean by a "class." With E. P. Thompson, we see class as having meaning only as a relationship:

... The notion of class entails the notion of historical relationship. Like any other relationship, it is a fluency which evades analysis if we attempt to stop it dead at any given moment and anatomize its structure. The finest meshed sociological analysis cannot give us a pure specimen of class, any more than it can give us one of deference or love. The relationship must always be embodied in real people and in a real context. Moreover, we cannot have two distinct classes, each with an independent being, and then bring them into relationships with each other. We cannot have love without lovers, nor deference without squires and labourers. (7)

It follows that any class which is not residual — i.e., merely "leftover" from another era, like the European aristocracy in the nineteenth century — can be properly defined only in the context of

* "PMC" is, perhaps, an awkward term. But the more obvious "new middle class" has been used with a variety of definitions (e.g., by C. Wright Mills and Richard Hofstadter, who include sales and clerical workers in it), which could only lead to confusion. Moreover, "new middle class" obscures the fact that the class we are identifying is not part of some broader middle class, which includes both "old" and "new" strata, but rather is a distinct class, separate from the old middle class.

(1) the totality of class relationships and (2) the historical development of these relationships. Thus, if we were going to fully and properly define a Professional-Managerial Class, we would not be able to restrict ourselves to a picture of this group as a sociological entity; we would have to deal, at all stages, with the complementary and mutually interacting developments in the bourgeoisie and the working class. The story of the rise and development of the PMC is simultaneously the story of the rise of the modern bourgeoisie and the modern proletariat as they have taken form in monopoly capitalist society. Here, of course, we can give only a fragment of this story. We will focus on the PMC itself, skimming lightly over the complementary developments in other classes.

From our point of view, a class (as opposed to a stratum or other social grouping) is defined by two major characteristics:

1. At all times in its historical development, a class is characterized by a common relation to the economic foundations of society — the means of production and the socially organized patterns of distribution and consumption. By a common "relation" we do not mean a purely juridical relationship; e.g., legal ownership or non-ownership of the means of production. (8) Class is defined by actual relations between groups of people, not formal relations between people and objects. The former may or may not coincide, at any given moment in history, with the legal relationships evolved over previous years. The relations which define class arise from the place occupied by groups in the broad social division of labor, and from the basic patterns of control over access to the means of production and of appropriation of the social surplus.

2. However, the relation to the economic foundations of society is not sufficient to specify a class as a real social entity. At any moment in its historical development after its earliest, formative period, a class is characterized by a coherent social and cultural existence; members of a class share a common life style, educational background, kinship networks, consumption patterns, work habits, beliefs. These cultural and social patterns cannot be derived in any simple fashion from the concurrently existing relationship to the means of production of the members of the class. For one thing, culture has a memory: social patterns formed in earlier periods, when a different relation to the means of production (or even another mode of production) prevailed, may long survive their "owners'" separation from the earlier relationships. (For example, the culture of an industrial working class newly recruited from a semi-feudal peasantry is quite different from that of habitually urbanized workers.) In addition, the social existence of a group of people is determined not only by its experience at the point of production, but by its experience in private life (mediated especially by kinship relations, which, in turn, are at most only distantly related to evolving relations of production). The relationship between class as abstract economic relationship and class as real social existence has been all-but-unexplored; for our



purposes we shall have to limit ourselves to insisting that a class has both characteristics.

Having stated these two general characteristics, we should strongly emphasize that class is an analytic abstraction, a way of putting some order into an otherwise bewildering array of individual and group characteristics and interrelationships. It describes a phenomenon existing most clearly at the level of society as a whole. When, however, the notion of class is called on to explain or predict infallibly the actions, ideas and relationships of every individual, it ceases to be very useful.

Our description of the historical experience of the PMC will be abbreviated and episodic, leaving out many key developments in the history of the class (most importantly, any elaboration on the expansion of the state in the twentieth century) and restricting ourselves to the United States. We will begin with a schematic definition of the PMC, then describe the emergence of its distinctive class outlook and its consolidation as a class in the early part of the twentieth century, and finally return to the situation of the contemporary left.

II. A Definition

We define the Professional-Managerial Class as consisting of salaried mental workers who do not own the means of production and whose major function in the social division of labor may be described broadly as the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class relations.*

Their role in the process of reproduction may be more or less explicit, as with workers who are directly concerned with social control or with the production and propagation of ideology (e.g., teachers, social workers, psychologists, entertainers, writers of

* We do not, of course, mean by "culture" merely "high" culture or the arts in general. By the culture of a social group we mean its total repertory of solutions and responses to everyday problems and situations. This is a transmittable repertory, and the means of transmission may be anything from myths and songs to scientific formulae and machinery.

advertising copy and TV scripts, etc.). Or it may be hidden within the process of production, as is the case with the middle-level administrators and managers, engineers, and other technical workers whose functions, as Gorz, Steve Marglin, Harry Braverman and others have argued, are essentially determined by the need to preserve capitalist relations of production. Thus we assert that these occupational groups — cultural workers, managers, engineers and scientists, etc. — share a common function in the broad social division of labor and a common relation to the economic foundations of society.*

The PMC, by our definition, includes people with a wide range of occupations, skills, income levels, power and prestige. The boundaries separating it from the ruling class above and the working class below are fuzzy. In describing the class standing of people near the divide separating the PMC from other classes (e.g., registered nurses, welfare case workers, engineers in routine production or inspection jobs at the lower end, middle levels of corporate and state bureaucratic managers at the upper end), we must emphasize two aspects of our definition of class: First (in Paul Sweezy's words), "it would be a mistake to think of a class as perfectly homogeneous internally and sharply marked off from other classes. Actually there is variety within the class; and one class sometimes shades off very gradually and almost imperceptibly into another." Second, occupation is not the sole determinant of class (nor even the sole determinant of the relation to the means of production).

Consider the case of the registered nurse: She may have been recruited from a working class, PMC or petty-bourgeois family. Her education may be two years in a working-class community college or four years in a private, upper-middle-class college. On the job, she may be a worker, doing the most menial varieties of bedside nursing, supervising no one, using only a small fraction of the skills and knowledge she learned at school. Or she may be part of management, supervising dozens, even hundreds of other RN's, practical nurses and nurses' aides. Moreover, over 98 per cent of RN's are women; their class standing is, in significant measure, linked to that of their husband. Some nurses do, in fact, marry doctors; far more marry lower-level professionals, while many others marry blue-collar and lower-level white-collar workers. So there is simply no way to classify registered nurses as a group. What seems to be a single occupational category is in fact socially and functionally heterogeneous.

* Throughout this essay, "manager," unless otherwise qualified, means lower- and middle-level managers. In advanced capitalism, the capitalists are the corporations, not the individual entrepreneurs of an earlier period. The people who as a group own a substantial portion of their stock, and as individuals have direct and dominant power over their functioning, can only be considered as part of the ruling class. The top officials of large non-corporate enterprises (i.e., government, large foundations, etc.) are also part of the ruling class.

Much the same kind of analysis could be made of most of the other groupings near the boundaries of the PMC. The situation of the groups near the PMC - working-class border, we should note, is especially likely to be ambiguous: It is here that the process of "de-skilling" — of rationalizing previously professional tasks into a number of completely routinized functions requiring little training — occurs. Moreover, a disproportionate number of people in these groups are women, for whom purely occupational criteria for class are especially inadequate.

Despite the lack of precise delineation of the boundaries of the PMC, by combining occupational data and statistics on property distribution we can make a very crude estimate of the class composition of U.S. society: By this estimate, about 65 to 70 per cent of the U.S. population is working class. (We accept Braverman's conception of the working class: craftsmen, operatives, laborers, sales workers, clerical workers, service workers, non-college-educated technical workers.) Eight to ten per cent is in the "old middle class" (i.e., self-employed professionals, small tradespeople, independent farmers, etc.). Twenty to twenty-five per cent is PMC; and one to two per cent is ruling class. That is, the PMC includes something like fifty million people.

The very definition of the PMC — as a class concerned with the reproduction of capitalist culture and class relationships — precludes treating it as a separable sociological entity. It is in a sense a derivative class; its existence presupposes: (1) that the social surplus has developed to a point sufficient to sustain the PMC in addition to the bourgeoisie, for the PMC is essentially nonproductive; and (2) that the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat has developed to the point that a class specializing in the reproduction of capitalist class relationships becomes a necessity to the capitalist class. That is, the maintenance of order can no longer be left to episodic police violence.

Historically, these conditions were met in the U.S. by the early twentieth century. The last half of the nineteenth century saw: (1) the development of an enormous social surplus, concentrated in monopolistic corporations and individual capitalists; and (2) intermittent, violent warfare between the industrial working class and the capitalist class. The possibility of outright insurrection was taken very seriously by both bourgeois and radical observers. At the same time, however, the new concentration and centralization of capital opened up the possibilities of long-term planning, the refinement of "management" (essentially as a substitute for force), and the capitalist rationalization of both productive and consumptive processes. In the decades immediately following the turn of the century, these possibilities began to be realized:

1. At the point of production, the concentration of capital allowed for the wholesale purchase of science and its transformation into a direct instrument of capital. Science, and its practical offshoot engineering, were set to work producing not only "progress" in the

form of new products, but new productive technologies which undercut the power of skilled labor. Labor was directly replaced by machines, or else it was "scientifically" managed in an effort to strip from the workers their knowledge and control of the productive process and reduce their labor, as much as possible, to mere motion. (10) As we have argued elsewhere, these developments drastically altered the terms and conditions of class struggle at the workplace: diminishing the workers' collective mastery over the work process and undercutting the collective experience of socialized production. (11)

2. The huge social surplus, concentrated in private foundations and in the public sector, began to be a force for regulation and management of civil society. The Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations, each worth tens of millions of dollars, appeared on the scene in the first decade of the twentieth century; local governments increased their revenues and expenditures five-fold between 1902 and 1922. (12) Public education was vastly expanded; charity was institutionalized; public-health measures gained sponsorship and the authority of law; etc. These developments were of course progressive (in both the specific historical as well as the judgmental sense of the word). But they also represented a politically motivated penetration of working-class community life: Schools imparted industrial discipline and "American" values; charity agencies and domestic scientists imposed their ideas of "right living"; public-health officials literally policed immigrant ghettos, etc. (13)

3. Beginning in the 1900's and increasing throughout the twentieth century, monopoly capitalism came to depend on the development of a national consumer-goods market. Items which had been made in the home or in the neighborhood were replaced by the uniform products of giant corporations. "Services" which had been an indigenous part of working-class culture were edged out by commodities conceived and designed outside of the class. For example, midwifery, which played an important role in the culture of European immigrant groups and rural (black and white) Americans, was outlawed and/or officially discredited in the early 1900's, to be replaced by professionally dominated care. (14) Traditional forms of recreation, from participant sports to social drinking, suffered a similar fate in the face of the new commoditized (and privatized) forms of entertainment offered by the corporation (e.g., records, radio, spectator sports, movies, etc.) The penetration of working-class life by commodities required and continues to require a massive job of education—from schools, advertisers, social workers, domestic scientists, "experts" in child rearing, etc. As the dependence of American capital on the domestic consumer-goods market increased, the management of consumption came to be as important as the management of production. (15)

To summarize the effects of these developments on working-class life: The accumulation and concentration of capital which

occurred in the last decades of the nineteenth century allowed for an extensive reorganization of working-class life — both in the community and in the workplace. This reorganization was aimed at both social control and the development of a mass consumer market. The net effect of this drive to reorganize and reshape working-class life was the social atomization of the working class: the fragmentation of work (and workers) in the productive process, a withdrawal of aspirations from the workplace into private goals, the disruption of indigenous networks of support and mutual aid, the destruction of autonomous working-class culture and its replacement by "mass culture" defined by the privatized consumption of commodities (health care, recreation, etc.).*

It is simultaneously with these developments in working-class life (more precisely, in the relation between the working class and the capitalist class) that the professional and managerial workers emerge as a new class in society. The three key developments listed above — the reorganization of the productive process, the emergence of mass institutions of social control, the commodity penetration of working-class life — do not simply "develop"; they require the effort of more or less conscious agents. The expropriation of productive skills requires the intervention of scientific management experts; there must be engineers to inherit the productive lore, managers to supervise the increasingly degraded work process, etc. Similarly, the destruction of autonomous working-class culture requires (and calls forth) the emergence of new culture-producers — from physicians to journalists, teachers, ad-men and so on. These new operatives, the vanguard of the emerging PMC, are not simply an old intelligentsia expanding to meet the needs of a "complex" society. Their emergence in force near the turn of the century is parallel and complementary to the transformation of the working class which marks the emergence of monopoly capital.

Thus the relationship between the PMC and the working class is objectively antagonistic. The functions and interests of the two classes are not merely different; they are mutually contradictory. True, both groups are forced to sell their labor power to the capitalist class; both are necessary to the productive process under capitalism; and they share an antagonistic relation to the capitalist class. (We will return to this point in more detail later.) But these commonalities should not distract us from the fact that the professional-managerial workers exist, as a mass grouping in monopoly capitalist society, only by virtue of the expropriation of the skills and culture once indigenous to the working class. Historically, the

* For more thorough discussion of this phase in the history of the U.S. working class, see Stanley Aronowitz, *FALSE PROMISES* (McGraw-Hill, 1973); Stuart Ewen, *CAPTAINS OF CONSCIOUSNESS* (McGraw-Hill, 1976); and Harry Braverman, *LABOR AND MONOPOLY CAPITAL* (*Monthly Review*, 1975). The political implications of these phenomena for working-class struggles are very great, though beyond the scope of this essay.

process of overt and sometimes violent expropriation was concentrated in the early twentieth century, with the forced Taylorization of major industries, the "Americanization" drive in working-class communities, etc. The fact that this process does not have to be repeated in every generation — any more than the capitalist class must continually re-enact the process of primitive accumulation — creates the impression that PMC - working-class relations represent a purely "natural" division of labor imposed by the social complexity and technological sophistication of modern society. But the objective antagonism persists and represents a contradiction which is continually nourished by the historical alternative of a society in which mental and manual work are re-united to create whole people. It is because of this objective antagonism that we are led to define the professional and managerial workers as a class distinct from the working class.

We should add, at this point, that the antagonism between the PMC and the working class does not exist only in the abstract realm of "objective" relations, of course. Real-life contacts between the two classes express directly, if sometimes benignly, the relation of control which is at the heart of the PMC - working-class relation: teacher and student (or parent), manager and worker, social worker and client, etc. The subjective dimension of these contacts is a complex mixture of hostility and deference on the part of working-class people, contempt and paternalism on the part of the PMC.

The interdependent yet antagonistic relationship between the *working class* and the PMC also leads us to insist that the PMC is a class totally distinct from the petty bourgeoisie (the "old middle class" of artisans, shopkeepers, self-employed professionals and independent farmers). The classical petty bourgeoisie lies outside the polarity of labor and capital. It is made up of people who are neither employed by capital nor themselves employers of labor to any significant extent. The PMC, by contrast, is employed by capital and it manages, controls, has authority over labor (though it does not directly employ it). The classical petty bourgeoisie is irrelevant to the process of capital accumulation and to the process of reproducing capitalist social relations. The PMC, by contrast, is essential to both.

III. The Rise of the PMC

In order to define more sharply the relation between the PMC and the other classes, we turn now to a closer examination of the initial emergence of the PMC, its ideology and its institutions. The PMC emerged with dramatic suddenness in the years between 1890 and 1920, a period roughly overlapping what historians call

the Progressive Era. (Table 1 summarizes the expansion of selected professional and managerial occupations at this time.)*

TABLE 1.
(in thousands, except for total population in millions)

	1870	1880	1900	1910	1920	1930
Engineers	5.6	7	38	77	134	217
Managers* (manufacturing)	57	—	—	126	250	313
Social, recreation & religious workers (other than clergy)	—	—	—	19	46	71
College faculty	5.6	11.6	24	—	49	82
Accountants and auditors	—	—	23	39	118	192
Government officials, administrators, inspectors	—	—	58	72	100	124
Editors and reporters	—	—	32	—	41	61
Total population	39.9	50.3	76.1	92.4	106.5	123.1

*includes managers and manufacturers for 1870, managers only all other years.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957*; U.S. Bureau of Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1975*; H.D. Anderson and P.E. Davidson, *Occupational Trends in the United States* (Stanford, 1940)

We have already sketched the conditions which prepared the way for the expansion of these occupations: a growing and increasingly centralized social surplus, and intensified struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. But it would be wrong to think of the emerging PMC as being no more than passive recruits for the occupational roles required by monopoly capital. The people entering the class-in-formation were drawn from an older middle class. They were the sons and daughters of business men, independent professionals, prosperous farmers, etc. — groups which feared their own extinction in the titanic struggle between capital and labor. The generation entering managerial and professional

* cf. Richard Hofstadter, *THE AGE OF REFORM* (Knopf, 1955), pp. 215-216:
From 1870 to 1910, while the whole population of the United States increased two and one third times, the old middle class — business entrepreneurs and independent professional men — grew somewhat more than two times; the working class, including farm labor, grew a little more than three times; the number of farmers and farm tenants doubled. But the middle class (technicians, salaried professionals, clerical workers, salespeople, public-service workers) grew almost eight times, rising from 756,000 to 5,609,000 people.... The new middle class had risen from 33% of the entire middle class in 1870 to 63% in 1910. Also cf. Robert H. Wiebe, *THE SEARCH FOR ORDER* (Hill and Wang, 1967), pp. 111 ff.

roles between 1890 and 1920 consciously grasped the roles which they had to play. They understood that their own self-interest was bound up in reforming capitalism, and they articulated their understanding far more persistently and clearly than did the capitalist class itself. The role of the emerging PMC, as they saw it, was to mediate the basic class conflict of capitalist society and create a "rational," reproducible social order. (16) As Edward A. Ross, a prominent professor and Progressive ideologue, wrote in 1907, after surveying the conflict and corruption of turn-of-the-century capitalism :

Social defense is coming to be a matter for the expert. The rearing of dikes against faithlessness and fraud calls for intelligent social engineering. If in this strait the public does not speedily become far shrewder...there is nothing for it but to turn over the defense of society to professionals. (17)

Many people, of all classes, subscribed to parts of this outlook and stood to benefit one way or another from the Progressive reforms which were associated with it. For our purposes, the striking things about Progressive ideology and reforms are (1) their direct and material contribution to the creation and expansion of professional and managerial occupational slots; (2) their intimate relation to the emergence and articulation of the PMC's characteristic ideologies; and (3) their association with the creation of characteristic PMC class institutions (such as professional organizations).

(1) The Growth of the PMC: Every effort to mediate class conflict and "rationalize" capitalism served to create new institutionalized roles for reformers — i.e., to expand the PMC. Settlement houses, domestic-science training courses, adult-education classes in literacy, English, patriotism, etc. provided jobs for social workers (who formed the National Conference of Social Workers in 1911) and home economists (who formed the American Home Economics Association in 1909), etc. Child-labor laws, compulsory-school-attendance laws, factory health and safety inspections, etc. created jobs for truant officers, teachers and inspectors of various kinds. Similarly, municipal reform meant the establishment of committees of city planners, architects, engineers, statisticians, sociologists, to plan and administer the health, recreation, welfare, housing and other functions of the metropolis. At the federal level, conservationist demands (pushed by the emerging engineering profession, among others) led to the creation of Federal agencies employing engineers to watch over and plan resource use. The Pure Food and Drug Act, the establishment of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Federal Trade Commission, etc. all, in addition to their direct impact in regulating business, gathering infor-

mation, etc., offered thousands of jobs. Public policy in general became dependent on input from specialists, experts, professors. "It is a great thing," exulted political-economy professor Richard T. Ely, another major Progressive-era ideologue, on reading the report of the U.S. Industrial Commission established by Congress in 1898, "that there are in this country a body of economic experts, and that the state of public opinion is such as to demand their employment." (18)

The rationalizing drive of the emerging PMC struck deep into the business enterprise itself. The early years of the century saw the transformation of the internal functioning of the corporation at the hands of a rapidly growing corps of managers — "scientific managers," lawyers, financial experts, engineers, personnel experts, etc. As early as 1886, Henry R. Townes had admonished the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (the source of much early management thought) that "The matter of shop management is of equal importance with that of engineering." By the early 1900's, Townes, Taylor, Gantt, the Gilbreths and other engineers were churning out papers on how to rationalize all aspects of the business enterprise. College-level schools and departments of business administration rapidly appeared to teach the new creed. (The American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business was founded in 1916.) The managers held conferences, formed associations (e.g., the Society to Promote the Science of Management in 1912, and the American Management Association, out of several already existing societies, in 1923), and published professional journals (e.g., *ENGINEERING MAGAZINE* in 1891, *FACTORY* in 1908, the *BULLETIN OF THE TAYLOR SOCIETY* in 1916).

The introduction of modern methods of management was a reform which was understood by contemporary observers to be part of the overall Progressive cause. In fact, scientific management first became known to the public as a tool for the Progressive attack on corporate greed: In the "Eastern Rates" case of 1911, the Interstate Commerce Commission turned down an increase in railroad rates after scientific-management expert H. Emerson testified that proper management would cut a million dollars a day off the cost of rail shipments. Scientific management as taught in the new business schools, exulted reformer and writer Walter Lippmann, would produce a new professional breed of managers who would help lift American business out of the "cesspool of commercialism." To the managers themselves,

...scientific management became something of a "movement." In an age of growing achievement in the physical sciences, it offered the hope of resolving industrial problems also through the use of objective principles. For young and imaginative engineers it provided an *ethos* and a mission in life. The movement soon became replete with popularizers, traditionalists and dissidents. After the ini-

tial periods of resistance, it conquered the citadels of old-fashioned industrial management in the United States, and had a tremendous effect on industrial practice. It had a major influence on the growing reform and economy movements in public administration. (19)

(2) The Development of a Class Outlook: From the beginning the nascent PMC possessed a class outlook which was distinct from, and often antagonistic to, that of the capitalist class. It is true that, with hindsight, one is struck by the ultimate concordance of interests between the two classes. Even at that time, NEW REPUBLIC editor Herbert Croley noted that Progressivism was "designed to serve as a counterpoise to the threat of working-class revolution." (20) And a wealthy philanthropist friend of Jane Addams noted appreciatively that Addams "was really an interpreter between working men and the people who lived in luxury on the other side of the city, and she also gave the people of her neighborhood quite a different idea about the men and women who were ordinarily called 'capitalists'." (21) "Class harmony" was the stated goal of many outstanding PMC spokespeople, and to many in the capitalist class as well, it was clear that "professionals" could be more effective in the long run than Pinkertons. But the PMC was not merely a class of lackeys: The capitalists fought vigorously to block or modify those PMC-supported reforms which they saw as threatening their interests. As for the PMC, the very ideals of "objectivity," "rationality," etc. which justified their role to the capitalists inevitably led them into conflict with the capitalists.

For one thing, the roles the PMC was entering and carving out for itself — as technical innovators, social mediators, culture producers, etc. — required a high degree of autonomy, if only for the sake of legitimization. Claims to "objectivity" cannot be made from an objective position of servility. The conflict over occupational autonomy was particularly visible in the universities. The enormous expansion of higher education in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century had been underwritten by men like Johns Hopkins, Leland Stanford, and above all John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie. Battles over academic freedom often brought faculty into direct confrontation with capitalist trustees, with the professors asserting their autonomy as "experts."

But the conflict between the PMC and the capitalist class went deeper than the issue of occupational autonomy. Early PMC leaders envisioned a technocratic transformation of society in which all aspects of life would be "rationalized" according to expert knowledge. For example, Frederick Winslow Taylor, the leader of the movement for scientific management, saw scientific management as much more than a set of techniques to streamline production:

The same principles can be applied with equal force to all social activities: to the management of our tradesmen, large and small; of our churches, our philanthropic institutions, our universities, and our governmental departments.... What other reforms could do as much toward promoting prosperity, toward the diminution of poverty and the alleviation of suffering? (22)

Or, as E. D. Meier, the president of the American Society of Mining Engineers, put it in 1911, "The golden rule will be put into practice through the slide rule of the engineer." (23)

Of course, "efficiency," "order" and rationality are not in themselves capitalist goals. Even scientific management met with initial resistance from many in the business community, who saw it as a potential threat to their own autonomy from outside surveillance. (Scientific management, as already mentioned, was originally popularized as a tool for the public to use to judge the fairness of corporate prices.) Engineers, perhaps because of their workaday intimacy with capitalist concerns, often saw the recalcitrance of capital most clearly. To give a trivial, but telling, example: in 1902 and again in 1906, efforts of reform-minded engineers to get the American Society of Mechanical Engineers to support the campaign for conversion to the metric system were defeated by capitalist opposition. (Most capital equipment was already calibrated in English units.) "The businessman is the master, the engineer is his good slave," complained a writer in *ENGINEERING NEWS* in 1904. (24)

Out of these continual skirmishes — over academic freedom, Progressive reforms, consumer issues, etc. — many in the PMC were led to more systematic anti-capitalist outlooks. One widely publicized variety of PMC anti-capitalism was that represented by Thorstein Veblen's "technocratic" critique. Veblen portrayed the contemporary capitalists as a parasitical class no less decadent than the European aristocracy. The captains of industry, he argued,

have always turned the technologists and their knowledge to account... only so far as would serve their own commercial profit, not to the extent of their ability; or to the limit set by the material circumstances; or by the needs of the community... To do their work as it should be done these men of the industrial general staff i.e., engineers and managers must have a free hand, unhampered by commercial considerations and reservations... It is an open secret that with a reasonably free hand the production experts would today readily increase the ordinary output of industry by several fold — variously estimated at some 300 per cent to 1200 per cent of the current out-

put. And what stands in the way of so increasing the ordinary output of goods and services is business as usual. (25)

Progress demanded that the capitalists be swept away to make room — not for the working class — but for the rising class of experts. But Veblen's vision of a technocracy — a government by the experts — smacked too overtly of PMC self-interest to gain a wide following, even within the class. In fact Edward Ross, who in 1907 had himself called for extensive "social engineering," was moved to write, somewhat defensively, in 1920:

There is of course no such thing as 'government by experts'. The malicious phrase is but a sneer flung by the scheming self-seekers who find in the relentless veracity of modestly-paid trained investigators a barrier across their path, (26)

The strongest expression of PMC anti-capitalist ideology was to be found in explicitly socialist politics — which in the early-twentieth-century United States meant the Socialist Party. "In the United States probably more than anywhere else, socialism is recruiting heavily from the better classes of society," boasted Party leader Morris Hillquit in 1907. Although the party had a large working-class membership and people we would identify as members of the PMC were clearly a minority in the party as a whole, most of the top leadership and a vastly disproportionate part of the membership were engaged in PMC (and old middle class) occupations (or had been so engaged before assuming full-time party duties). (27)*

In fact, socialism, as articulated by the pre-World War I Socialist Party, was frequently not far from the PMC's technocratic vision. Socialism meant government ownership of the means of production (which would still be administered by experts) and expansion of government social services (which would still be supplied by professionals — or "intellectual proletarians," as Hillquit called them).

Socialism in this version formed a continuum with non-socialist Progressivism. Party leader William Ghent even complained that Teddy Roosevelt's 1912 Progressive Party platform (a platform designed to attract the middle-class reform vote without fundamentally upsetting capitalist priorities) "begins its program with the brazen theft of half the working program of the Socialist Par-

* To give a few prominent examples, Victor Berger was a school teacher; Morris Hillquit was a lawyer and journalist; Robert Hunter, A. M. Simons and William Ghent were editors and journalists; and even Eugene Victor Debs spent only four years as a railroad worker, the rest of his pre-socialist life being spent as billing clerk for the largest wholesale grocer in the Midwest, as elected town clerk of Terre Haute, and as editor of a labor-union paper.

ty." On the right wing of the Party, even such traditional socialist notions as class struggle were considered too radical and were replaced by Progressive ideals of class conciliation. Class hatred, wrote writer, social worker and Party National Executive member John Spargo, was a "monstrous thing...to be abhorred by all right-thinking men and women." (28)

3. The Consolidation of the Professional-Managerial Class: In the period up to mid-century, professional-managerial occupations expanded much more rapidly than the workforce as a whole.* The people filling these occupations (and their families) came more and more to constitute a socially coherent class. Collectively the PMC consolidated its cultural hegemony over the working class, as the army of counselors, psychologists, teachers, etc. swelled from the twenties on. But the early PMC's radical dream of a technocratic society was not, of course, to be realized. To the extent that the PMC established itself as a major class in twentieth-century American society, it did so on terms set by the capitalist class.**

Individually, many PMC members scaled the highest pinnacles of power, either to bask there temporarily as consultants and advisors, or to remain as permanent members of the ruling class. Acceptance came gradually. Self-made capitalists like Andrew Carnegie initially had little use for "experts" and "college men" in their enterprises. But by the teens, "experts" — college professors, researchers, PMC civic reformers — had become indispensable and routine members of the boards of trustees of key capitalist-sponsored institutions (replacing the token clergyman of an earlier era). In 1918, when President Wilson went off to the Peace Conference in Paris, he publicly acknowledged the importance of the PMC by taking along with him a "grand conclave of expert advisors from several fields of knowledge which was known to contemporaries as *The Inquiry*." (29) Within industry, as the *size and complexity of corporations increased*, PMC occupations such as engineering, law and financial management became recruiting grounds for top management: i.e., into the ruling class itself.

* A complete account of the development of the PMC would have to dwell on (1) the tremendous expansion of the state apparatus during World War I, the New Deal, and World War II (and the accompanying triumph of what has been called — over-simplistically, we think — corporate liberal ideology); (2) the expansion of the corporate bureaucratic apparatus and its extension from control of production to control of distribution and manipulation of demand; (3) the post-World War II expansion of the universities and the mass media; etc.

** It is necessary to emphasize this point. The PMC (or the managerial portion of it) has not become a new ruling class (as Berle and Means, Burnham, Galbraith and others have suggested). Top managers are part of the ruling class (see above, p. 12, footnote and Paul Sweezy, "The Illusion of the Managerial Revolution" in *THE PRESENT AS HISTORY*, pp. 39-66; C. Wright Mills, *THE POWER ELITE* (Chapters 6 and 7, pp. 118-170), but most managers and administrators, along with virtually all non-managerial salaried professionals, are part of the PMC, a subordinate and dependent class. This does not mean, however, that the PMC is powerless vis-a-vis the ruling class.

For the great majority of the members of the PMC, however, the only guarantee of security — never mind autonomous power — lay in collective action. The characteristic form of self-organization of the PMC was the profession. The defining characteristics of professions should be seen as representing simultaneously both the aspirations of the PMC and the claims which are necessary to justify those aspirations to the other classes of capitalist society. These characteristics are, in brief: (a) the existence of a specialized body of knowledge, accessible only by lengthy training; (b) the existence of ethical standards which include a commitment to public service; and (c) a measure of autonomy from outside interference in the practice of the profession (e.g., only members of the profession can judge the value of a fellow professional's work). The claims to specialized knowledge and ethical standards serve to justify the bid for autonomy, which is most commonly directed at the (capitalist) employing class. Furthermore, the possession (or claim to possession) of specialized knowledge ensures that the PMC can control its own reproduction as a class: "Lengthy" training has barred working-class entrance to the professions and given a decided advantage to the children of the PMC itself. The claim to high ethical standards represents the PMC's persistent reassurance that its class interests are identical to the interests of society at large. Finally, all three characteristics of professions are aimed at ensuring that the relationship between the individual professional and his or her "client" (student, patient) is one of benign domination.

Between the 1880's and 1920, medicine, law, social work, engineering and teaching emerged in their modern form, complete with professional organizations and journals and legally enforced criteria for admissions (i.e., accrediting of training institutions and/or licensing of individual practitioners). At the same time, the learned professions were sorting themselves out and taking organizational form: "natural philosophy" subdivided into the modern natural sciences; psychology detached itself from philosophy; sociology, history and political science began to go their separate ways; etc.

The device of professionalism was not universally or uniformly successful. Some occupations, like nursing, are "professions" more out of courtesy than social reality. Other, more clearly PMC occupations, such as engineering, can hardly claim to have a "professional" degree of autonomy. Between 1900 and 1920, many of the U.S. engineering societies were torn by struggles between "professional-minded" engineers, who saw themselves as professionals first and employees second, and business-oriented engineers, whose first loyalty was to their employing industry. The business-oriented faction triumphed, for the most part, even going

so far as to permit untrained businessmen to join the engineers' "professional" societies. (30)*

From the perspective of the entire class, professionalism had an inherent disadvantage as a strategy for class advancement. Specialization was the PMC member's chief selling point, the quality which justified his or her claim to a unique niche in society, but it acted as a centrifugal force on the class as a whole. Consider that in 1900 a scholar such as William James could flit from teaching physiology to psychology and finally to philosophy without unduly discomfiting the Harvard administration. And in 1919, Veblen (in *ENGINEERS AND THE PRICE SYSTEM*) could still lump together engineers and all sorts of managers and administrators under the common rubric "engineer." But by mid-century the class was so minutely splintered that even terms such as "scientist" or "engineer" no longer signified groups with common workplace concerns or even a common language.

The deepest rift, over-riding the petty occupational subspecializations, was the one which developed between the managers, administrators and engineers on one hand, and those in the liberal arts and service professions on the other. The material difference between the two groups was that those in the first category are directly tied to business and industry; their jobs are, not infrequently, way stations on the road into the ruling class itself. Those in the second category are more likely to enjoy the relative shelter of the university or other sorts of non-profit agencies and to be firmly fixed within the PMC. Along with this difference in apparent sources of subsidy went a difference in general political outlook: The managerial/technical community came to pride itself on its "hard-headedness" and even on its indifference to the social consequences of its labor (i.e., its helplessness). The second group, those in the more "liberal" pursuits, became the only repository of the traditional PMC antagonism to capital. Managers and en-

* The profession of medicine, at first thought, may seem to contradict our assertion that professionalism is the characteristic form of self-organization of the PMC, since most physicians, even today, are independent entrepreneurs (i.e., classical petty bourgeoisie). Professionalism does, of course, have pre-monopoly capitalist roots in the ancient "free professions" -- medicine, law, theology. But in its modern form, medical professionalism in the U.S. was forged by a small handful of PMC doctors. The American Medical Association, in the crucial pre-World War I years when it gained hegemony over U.S. medicine, was dominated by academic physicians. And the public's belief in the expertise of doctors arose largely from the achievements and propaganda of (salaried) government public-health officials and medical-school professors. Cf. Rosemary Stevens, *AMERICAN MEDICINE AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST* (Yale University Press, 1971). Salaried physicians have made up an ever-growing and increasingly dominant fraction of the medical profession; and even the physicians still in private practice are, in real terms, completely dependent on and increasingly subject to the PMC-dominated hospitals, medical schools, and government health agencies. Cf. Health PAC, *THE AMERICAN HEALTH EMPIRE* (Random House, 1971).

gineers on the one side, liberal academics on the other, came to view each other across a gulf of distrust and contempt.

But we should not overestimate the significance of this division. The PMC at mid-century still constituted a single, coherent class. The actual employment experience and social attitudes of managers and engineers and those in the liberal professions are hardly more divergent than those of such working-class groups as, say, clerical workers and steel workers. The image of non-managerial professionals as ivory-tower-bound, somewhat impractical intellectuals has little counterpart in reality. Seventy per cent of the country's scientists and engineers are employed in business and industry; half the rest are in government. (Even leaving out the engineers, only one-fifth of the physicists and two-fifths of the life scientists are employed by universities.) Well under half of the professional and scientific workers in all fields (including the social sciences) are employed by educational and other non-profit institutions. In the business and governmental organizations which employ most professionals, the professional typically is employed in a managerial or semi-managerial role. As for the minority of professionals who are in academic and similar institutions, they are hardly aloof from what C. Wright Mills called the "managerial demiurge." They greedily accept consulting positions with industry and government. And within their institutions, they take on a variety of managerial and administrative functions, administering grants, supervising research and teaching assistants, running departments and institutes. (31)

The image of the corporate middle manager as completely divorced from the academic world is equally overdrawn. Over eighty per cent of corporate managers (at all levels) in large corporations have college training (or graduate training) — about half in the liberal arts, the rest divided equally between engineering and business. "Professional" (graduate) training in law, engineering, or business schools — which, correctly, tell their students that they are being trained in "applied social science" — more and more becomes a prerequisite for advance on the management ladder. (32)

Moreover, the various groups within the PMC are socially coherent. Paul Sweezy has argued that the basic test of whether two families belong to the same class or not is the freedom with which



they intermarry. The children of PMC members do overwhelmingly tend to marry within the class; marriage "down" to the working class or "up" to the ruling class is comparatively infrequent. In line with the frequency of intermarriage, the class exhibits a substantial degree of intergenerational stability: children of PMC families are more than twice as likely as children of working-class families to themselves enter PMC occupations. (33)

Moreover, the class is characterized by a common "culture" or lifestyle. The interior life of the class is shaped by the problem of class reproduction. Unlike ruling-class occupations, PMC occupations are never directly hereditary: The son of the Chairman of the Board may expect to become a successful businessman (or at least a wealthy one) more or less by growing up; the son of a research scientist knows he can only hope to achieve a similar position through continuous effort. Traditionally, much of this effort has come from the women of the class. Since, according to psychologists, a child's future achievement is determined by the nuances of its early upbringing, women of the class have been expected to stay home and "specialize" in childraising. Both sexes, however, are expected to perform well in school and attend good colleges, for it is at college that young men acquire the credentials for full class membership and young women acquire, in addition to their own degrees, credentialed husbands.*

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

* Betty Friedan's book *THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE* (Norton, 1963) points out the inherent contradictions in this mode of class reproduction: Women of the class are educated along with men, then required to do the unpaid, menial labor of homemaking. Friedan herself feared that the degradation of PMC women was leading to the deterioration of the children and hence the entire class. Her book is a strongly class-conscious statement, concerned more with the future of her class than with the fate of women of all classes. Nonetheless she accurately pinpointed one major factor in the rise of the late-twentieth-century women's movement: the "over-education" — or under-employment — of PMC women.

** Many of the characteristics of the PMC as a social class are shared, of course, by portions of the classical petty bourgeoisie, such as doctors in private practice. The PMC is integrated socially with these upper strata of the petty bourgeoisie (upper strata, we emphasize; not with the overwhelmingly larger lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie — the millions of proprietors of tiny shops, self-employed craftspeople, etc.). But, as we have argued earlier, this is not sufficient grounds for calling the PMC itself "petty bourgeois" (see above, p. 20).

In the second part of this essay (to be published in *RADICAL AMERICA*, May-June 1977) we will discuss the growth of the PMC and its institutions (e.g., the university) in the sixties. We will use the theoretical framework we have developed here to analyze the emergence and history of a New Left, based in the PMC (including students, the PMC-in-training). Finally, we will discuss the subjective relationships existing today between the PMC and the working class, and we will try to draw from this some strategic implications for the left.

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THE NEW LEFT:

A Case Study in Professional-Managerial Class Radicalism

Barbara and John Ehrenreich

In the first part of this essay (RADICAL AMERICA, March-April 1977) we argued that advanced capitalist society has generated a new class, not found in earlier stages of capitalist development. We defined the Professional-Managerial Class ("PMC") as consisting of salaried mental workers who do not own the means of production, and whose major function in the social division of labor may be described broadly as the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class relations. The PMC thus includes such groups as scientists, engineers, teachers, social workers, writers, accountants, lower- and middle-level managers and administrators, etc. — in all some twenty to twenty-five per cent of the U.S. population. The PMC's consciousness, we argued, is shaped by the apparently contradictory aspects of its existence: Both the PMC and the working class are forced to sell their labor power to the capitalist class, to which they share an antagonistic relationship. Members of the PMC, as the rationalizers and managers of capitalist enterprises (corporations, government agencies, universities, etc.), are thrown into direct conflict with capitalist greed, irrationality, and social irresponsibility. But the PMC is also in an objectively antagonistic relationship to the working class: Historically the PMC exists as a mass grouping only by virtue of the expropriation of the skills and culture once indigenous to the working class. And in daily life, its function is the direct or indirect management and manipulation of working-class life — at

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home, at work, at school. Thus the PMC's objective class interests lie in the overthrow of the capitalist class, but not in the triumph of the working class; and their actual attitudes often mix hostility toward the capitalist class with elitism toward the working class.

THE NEW LEFT AND THE PMC

We now attempt to use this analysis to understand some aspects of the development and current difficulties of the left in the U.S., starting with some observations on the New Left of the sixties. We will not try to give a complete and definitive account of the emergence of the New Left. Rather we will focus on the ways in which the PMC origins of the New Left shaped its growth and ideology, on how the originally PMC-based New Left ultimately began to transcend its own class, and on how it sought to deal with the resulting dilemmas.

The rebirth of PMC radicalism in the sixties came at a time when the material position of the class was advancing rapidly. Employment in PMC occupations soared, and salaries rose with them. The growth was so rapid that extensive recruitment from the working class became necessary to fill the job openings. (One early 1960s study indicated that no less than a quarter of the sons of skilled blue-collar workers and close to a fifth of the sons of semi-skilled workers were climbing into the PMC.) (1) It has become fashionable to argue that engineers, teachers, social workers and the like were becoming "proletarianized" — the fate Marx had predicted for the middle class. (2) But what was taken as a symptom of proletarianization, e.g., the expansion and bureaucratization of the university, was in many cases really a token of the rapid expansion of the class. The late fifties and early sixties were a golden age for the PMC, not a time of decreasing opportunities and compression into the proletarian mold.

With Sputnik in 1957 and Kennedy's election in 1960, the prestige and public visibility of the class reached new heights. Government and foundation funding for research, higher education and professional services began to skyrocket. Members of the class appeared in prominent public positions as presidential advisors, scientists, foreign-policy strategists, and social planners. New institutions — think tanks, consulting firms — emerged to meet the new demand for PMC skills.

The early student radicalism of the sixties had many sources — the civil-rights movement, the "Beatniks", the college experience itself, etc. For our present purposes, however, we only want to point out that this new radicalism also reflected the rising confidence of the Professional-Managerial Class. According to the sociologists' studies, the first wave of student activists typically came from secure PMC backgrounds, and were, compared to other students, especially well-imbued with the traditional PMC values

of intellectual autonomy and public service. (3) Their initial radicalism represented an attempt to reassert the autonomy which the PMC had long since ceded to the capitalist class. For example, SDS's seminal Port Huron Statement (1962) expresses both elements of traditional PMC class consciousness: scorn for the capitalist class and elitism toward the working class. Too many PMC elders, SDS argued, had capitulated to the demands of "the system":

Many social and physical scientists, neglecting the liberating heritage of higher learning, develop "human relations" or "morale-producing" techniques for the corporate economy, while others exercise their intellectual skills to accelerate the arms race. (4)

But, the statement continued, the working class could not be relied on as the source of social renewal:

Any new left in America must be, in large measure, a left with real intellectual skills, committed to deliberativeness, honesty, reflection as working tools. The university permits the political life to be an adjunct to the academic one, and action to be informed by reason. (5)

The Berkeley Free Speech Movement in 1964 articulated the problem of the class forcefully: "History has not ended... a better society is possible, and... it is worth dying for," proclaimed Mario Savio, the voice of the Free Speech Movement. Yet the university had sold out; it was not training future members of the class for their historic social and moral mission:

Many students here at the university... are wandering aimlessly about. Strangers in their own lives, there is no place for them. They are people who have not learned to compromise, who for example have come to the university to learn to question, to grow, to learn — all the standard things that sound like cliches because no one takes them seriously. And they find at one point or another that for them to become part of society, to become lawyers, ministers, businessmen, people in government, that very often they must compromise those principles which were most dear to them.... The futures and careers for which American students now prepare are for the most part intellectual and moral wastelands. (6) (emphasis ours)

The Free Speech Movement made a direct appeal to the class consciousness of the faculty:

We challenge the faculty to be courageous. A university is a community of students and scholars: be equal to the

position of dignity you should hold! How long will you submit to the doorkeepers who have usurped your power?

(7)

PMC class consciousness, with its ambiguous mixture of elitism and anti-capitalist militance, continued to be a major theme of "the movement" throughout the sixties. Expressions of it can be found in the "New Left",* the anti-war movement, the ecology movement, the women's-liberation movement — all of which defied "the system", but often with moralistic contempt for the working class. Ultimately, however, a significant part of the New Left decisively broke with this tradition and sought to transcend the imperatives of its own class base. It is to this evolution that we now turn.

As late as 1966, many New Left leaders held to Veblenesque theories of the unique importance of PMC-type occupations or of students themselves. Carl Davidson (then SDS Vice-President), for example, argued in a highly influential article that a student movement to control the university could be the base for the transformation of all of society. (8) But then — somewhere around 1967 or 1968 — there was a decisive break which made the sixties totally unlike the earlier (Progressive Era) period of PMC radicalism: Large numbers of young people pushed PMC radicalism to its limits and found themselves, ultimately, at odds with their own class.

There are reasons why this development should have occurred in the sixties rather than in earlier periods of PMC radicalism. One has to do with the evolving role of the university. The university is the historical reproductive apparatus of the PMC and a historic center for the production of new knowledge, disciplines, techniques, heresies, etc.: both functions which have acquired a semblance of autonomy from capital. In the fifties and sixties, however, the university was being called on to play a much more direct role in the functioning of the capitalist state as well as private enterprise. It had become, as University of California President Clark Kerr described it, "a prime instrument of national purpose". As in the Progressive Era (and the New Deal), public-policy makers turned to the university for expert consultation in design-

*By the "New Left" we mean the consciously anti-racist and anti-imperialist (and later, anti-capitalist) white movement, centered initially in the universities but ultimately extending well beyond them (e.g., it came to include underground newspapers; organizations of teachers, social workers, and medical workers; theater groups; community-organizing groups; etc.). Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was its most important organizational expression from 1964 to 1969. The New Left interacted with or was part of most of the other movements of the sixties, but it was not identical to them. To take two examples, the anti-war movement was far broader than the New Left; and the women's-liberation movement emerged in part in opposition to the practices of the New Left.

ing anti-poverty programs, health-care programs, etc., but on a vastly expanded scale. Beyond that, in the sixties, the state also increasingly relied on the university for military assistance, not only from engineers and natural scientists, but from anthropologists, sociologists, etc.

The university's involvement with business or even with the defense establishment was one thing; its complicity in the war in Vietnam was quite another. In the bleak Eisenhower years and in the brief glow of Kennedy's New Frontier, the university, despite its compromises, had seemed to many to be the repository of all that was good in the PMC-liberal tradition. For a while, it had been possible to ignore the conflict between the university's actual functions and its liberal ideology. But the liberal facade could not be maintained in the face of genocide. In the blinding light of the bombs raining on Vietnam, the brutality of American foreign policy was starkly revealed — as was the university's role in maintaining it. As far as the students were concerned, the self-righteous cold-war liberalism of the previous generation simply and abruptly collapsed. The moral legitimacy of the university, the older generation of the PMC, and the entire American system were thrown into question.

Student fury against the war in Vietnam inevitably turned against the government's accomplice, the university itself, and hence against one of the central institutions of the PMC. In response to the student attack on the university, liberal and even some Marxist faculty members began to dissociate themselves from the New Left. The older generation had a stake in the university: their grants, their careers, their image of themselves as being morally "above" the business world were tied to the university.

Furthermore, the older generation were more cautious — they had matured in the Depression and the cringing forties and fifties; the New Left was filled with the ebullience of the New Frontier. The gap in generational experience was just too great to be bridged by abstract class interests.

At the same time that many students of PMC origin and destiny were becoming disenchanted with their own class and its institutions, they began to find themselves challenged by the previously alien working class. For one thing, as the university struggled to keep pace with the booming growth in PMC jobs, the characteristics of students were changing. Unable to meet the demand for engineers, teachers, social workers, etc. with the sons and daughters of the existing PMC alone, the colleges were increasingly filled with the sons and daughters of the working class. As the student rebellion spread from elite PMC training grounds such as Berkeley, Columbia, and Harvard to the much less elite Kent State, Penn State, and San Francisco State, the class background of the activists shifted as well. Instead of student activists "well imbued with the traditional PMC values", there were student activists who had always viewed the PMC — their teachers, social workers and the

like — at the very least with some unease and hostility.

But the wedge that finally separated a chunk of the New Left from its own class was the Black liberation movement. White student involvement in the Southern civil-rights struggle had often been tinged with paternalism: something like the settlement-house experience for so many middle-class young people in the early twentieth century. The Northern Black movement was more challenging. Ghetto uprisings — especially the massive 1967 upheavals in Detroit and Newark — seemed to raise the possibility of an armed revolution, led by working-class Blacks, in which students would have to take sides. Black students, admitted to even the elite white colleges in response to the civil-rights movement, brought the Black rebellion to the campuses. Black students demanded that the white left support Black working-class demands (e.g., the demands for open admissions and for stopping university expansion into Black neighborhoods).

Contacts between the white student left and Black non-student groups (most notably the Black Panther Party) were characterized by arrogance on the latter side, near servility on the former. White PMC youths began to feel that their own radicalism, even their entire life experience, was a pale abstraction compared to this militance which came from "the streets". There was an acute consciousness of "privilege" — a static and fragmentary prelude to the notion of class.

Even more important to the student radicals' break with the PMC was the content of urban Black militancy. Consider the relationship which had developed between the PMC and the Black community: Lower-stratum PMC occupations, teaching and social work, had been in a close service/social-control relation to the Black community since the northward migration of the fifties. In the sixties, the official concern about poverty, much heightened by the Watts rebellion in 1965, led to a massive federally-sponsored PMC penetration of the ghetto. Job opportunities multiplied for (largely white) planners, community organizers, psychologists, anthropologists, trainers, etc. The Black community came to play the same role with respect to the PMC of the sixties as the white immigrant community had played in the 1900s: It was a nourishing medium for expansion, a bottomless mine of "social pathology". But it was far from a passive medium. By late 1966, Black militants and Black community groups were raising the demand for "community control" of the very agencies and institutions which were providing opportunities for the white PMC.

This demand did not fit into the traditional categories of the Old Left. (In the case of the New York City school struggle, the Progressive Labor Party decided that the community-control demand was a ruling-class plot against the only "workers" in sight — the teachers!) But it was a clear declaration of class warfare: the

Black community (largely working-class) against the invading PMC. In many instances, it was Black members of the PMC who won out under the banner of community control; but the radical, class-conscious thrust of the demand was "power to the people" — replace the professional and administrative elite with ordinary citizens.

Most white student radicals identified themselves with the community-control struggle without question. For one thing, it was the direct descendent of the civil-rights struggle which had, in part, given birth to the New Left. It also seemed to be a living link between foreign Third World struggles for self-determination (e.g., Vietnam) and the struggle to change U.S. society. In identifying with the community-control movement, the young PMC radicals were taking a position which ran counter to their own objective class interests. "Let the people decide," said the front page slogan in SDS's newspaper, NEW LEFT NOTES, even if they decided they didn't want you.*

By 1967 or 1968, the New Left was approaching a crisis: It had been born when the war in Vietnam forced thousands of PMC youths to confront the conflict between their class's supposed values and American social reality. It had been bred in the institution where these contradictions appeared most sharply — in the elite universities which both taught the old PMC values and abjectly served capitalist interests. But the student rebellion had spread to universities whose students often came from working-class families. Originally committed to the university, the New Left was now locked in battle with the university. And it was increasingly committed to supporting Black working-class-based movements which, for their part, rejected the traditional PMC attitudes toward the working class. The New Left was forced to examine its own class composition and class attitudes. Could it survive as a primarily

* The conflict between ideals and self-interest felt by some in the PMC is illuminated by the 1969 community and worker takeover of the Lincoln Hospital Mental Health Services in New York City. Only a few days before the administrators were locked out of their offices by 150 demonstrators, led by Black and Puerto Rican non-professional community mental-health workers. Dr. Harris Peck, the designer and director of the center, had written in *READER'S DIGEST*: "When there's a foot planted in the seat of my trousers to kick me out of here, I'll know we've succeeded. It will mean that the people want to take over the running of their own community. And that's the way it should be." But after the takeover, Peck commented that, while he still favored the principle of community control, "It's a long-term goal. We don't think it is possible to implement it at this time." (*Health-PAC, THE AMERICAN HEALTH EMPIRE* (Random House, 1971), pp. 253-254)

PMC-based movement? How could such a movement change society? What relationship would it (or could it) develop with the traditional agent of social change, the working class (and especially with the militant Black movement)?

The problem of the New Left's relation to the PMC as a whole was partially solved by the reaction of the older generation of the PMC. Many of the latter responded to the growing militance of the students with all the venom at their command. Psychiatrists theorized publicly that America's youth was searching for a father figure (and had found one in Mao, according to Bruno Bettelheim); educators blamed the rise in "anarchy" on Dr. Spock's permissiveness, and seconded Spiro Agnew's call for a collective spanking. College administrators and sometimes faculty cooperated with the police and the FBI during the violent repression which began in 1968. On their part, students radicals often turned on the University, not in order to "free" it from complicity with imperialism, but to destroy it. In the fall of 1967, University of Wisconsin demonstrators handed out a leaflet announcing: "We pick this week to demonstrate against DOW (Chemical Corporation), against the university as a corporation and against the war because they are all one." (emphasis ours)

Criticism of the university, by a twisted kind of logic, soon led to criticism of students themselves. Carl Davidson, who only a year before had seen students as the mass base for social change, wrote:

What can students do? Organizing struggles over dormitory rules seems frivolous when compared to the ghetto rebellions.... We organize students against the draft when the Army is made up of young men who are poor, black, Spanish-American, hillbillies or working-class. Everyone except students.... Students are oppressed. Bullshit. We are being trained to be the oppressors and the underlings of oppressors. (9) (emphasis ours)

By the end of the sixties, SDS was so repulsed by its own class that it would have nothing to do with the emerging ecology movement and held back from mass anti-war activities such as the nationwide student "moratorium" and the massive student strike of May 1970. Mark Rudd went so far as to reject SDS itself (of which he was then the National Secretary) as a "weird pile of liberal shit".

It was a serious impasse: Where does a movement go when it comes to feel that the concerns which motivated it were trivial, if not illegitimate? Or that the people in it are irrelevant, if not objectively enemies? The "Weatherman" tendency in SDS took self-loathing to its logical extreme, resolving, in 1969, that white babies are "pigs" and pledging themselves to a suicidal strategy of direct

confrontation with the police. For many women, the emerging feminist movement became the last legitimate refuge from the guilt which was engulfing the New Left at this time. The newly articulated understanding that women were oppressed as a sex allowed many white PMC women to continue to assert the demands for meaningful work, self-fulfillment, etc. at a time when these demands had lost all moral legitimacy to most male leftists.

By 1969, two overall approaches to handling the class problem were emerging for the New Left: one which we will call the "radicals in the professions" strategy; the other the strategy represented by what came to be called the "new communist movement". The "radicals in the professions" approach developed quite naturally out of the student life cycle: the undergraduates of 1963 were, by 1969, teachers, social workers, journalists, lawyers, or students in graduate or professional schools. Stated very simply, the idea was to use these positions, or at least whatever skills went with them, to advance the radical cause — which was now generally understood to be the cause of poor and working-class people, oppressed minority groups, etc., and only indirectly of the professionals themselves. For example, the Student Health Organization (medical and nursing students) worked on setting up preventive health-care programs in Black ghettos; the New University Conference (college and junior-college teachers and graduate students) worked for open admissions to the colleges; the Social Welfare Workers Movement attached itself to the cause of the National Welfare Rights Organization; and so on. Other "radical professionals" set up alternative law firms, health centers, etc. or dedicated themselves to providing technical resources and support for Black and Puerto Rican community organizations.



Certain streams of the radical professionals' movement could be interpreted as being little more than attempts to salvage PMC interests in the face of the Black working-class challenge. There was a search for more acceptable professional roles, such as "advocacy planning", and even some hopes that community control would bring an expansion of PMC opportunities:

...struggle by communities for control of their own development and services prepares the basis for a decentralized and democratized civil society. It is obvious that all such developments have profound need for the services of professional, intellectual, cultural and scientific workers. (10)

But on the whole, the radicals-in-the-professions took a dramatic step beyond traditional PMC class interests. The great importance of this direction, or strategy, of New Left activism is that it embodied a critical self-consciousness of the PMC itself — a kind of negative class consciousness. The radicals-in-the-professions challenged the PMC not for its lack of autonomy (as the student movement had in the early sixties), but for its very claims to autonomy — objectivity, commitment to public service, and expertise itself. "Demystification" was the catchword. Radical doctors wanted not only to free their profession from the grip of the "medical-industrial complex", but to demystify medicine. Radical lawyers would open up the law books and make elementary legal skills available to the people. Radical psychiatrists would lead the assault on psychiatric mythology and show that any sensitive community person could easily replace them. Radical teachers would expose the capitalist functions of education. And so on. Credentialing barriers would tumble. The rule of the experts would be abolished — by the young experts.*

It was, at best, a difficult approach to sustain. Clients, patients, students, etc. often turned out to resent their radical professionals' very lack of professionalism. Black aspirants to the PMC (briefly in demand in the late sixties and early seventies) had little interest in "demystifying" the positions they were for the first time attaining. Furthermore, conditions made it less and less pos-

*It would be hard to overemphasize how sharp a break this was with the dominant traditions of the Second and Third Internationals. The latter, for instance, following the model of the USSR, believed that technology was neutral: In capitalist societies it served the interests of the capitalists; in socialist societies it would be directed toward popular ends. The New Left, influenced by the Cultural Revolution in China, came to believe that the technology itself embodied bourgeois social relations. The contrast between Old and New Left attitudes toward professionalism and the privileges accompanying it are equally sharp. The New Left position, of course, was in no small measure the descendent of the militantly egalitarian SDS and SNCC tradition of "participatory democracy".

sible to give the radicals-in-the-professions approach a fair test. Repression destroyed the radical elements of the Black movement which had held the radical professionals in some sense accountable. Government grants and money for community programs dried up. Finally, the economic downturn of the seventies placed stiff penalties on radical activity among professionals or anyone else: Teachers who defied the administration by giving out all A's, social workers who attempted to organize their clients against the welfare department, etc., found themselves in case after case out of a job. The Student Health Organization, Social Welfare Workers Movement, New University Conference, Medical Committee for Human Rights, all collapsed in the early seventies, and radical caucuses in professional associations became at best centers of radical scholarship, at worst little more than job-placement networks for the hordes of ex-student-radical professionals.

The "New Communist Movement" arose out of the shambles of SDS in 1969 and picked up recruits with the collapse of the radicals-in-the-professions approach in the early seventies.* The New Communists explicitly dissociated themselves from the New Left and adopted a political outlook which was superficially not very different from that of the earlier generation of PMC radicals who had been Communists in the 1930s. They advocated the primacy of the working class in revolutionary struggle and the need to build a vanguard party to lead that struggle. But exactly who constituted that working class was not entirely clear. Sometimes (e.g., in describing teachers' strikes and the spread of union-like attitudes in professional organizations of engineers and nurses) the New Communists adhered to the orthodox Marxian two-class model and included all wage earners within the "working class". But most of the time, by "working class" they meant the traditional blue-collar (and in some cases, lower-level white-collar) working class.* Students and young professionals joining New Communist organizations were urged to "proletarianize" themselves in outlook, life

* By the "New Communist Movement" we mean those "Marxist-Leninist" organizations which grew out of the New Left, rather than out of prior left organizations such as the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Party, plus individuals and study groups which identify with these organizations or their ideologies. National "new communist" organizations at this time include the October League, the Revolutionary Communist Party, and the Communist Labor Party. Although not affiliated with any of these groups, the weekly GUARDIAN is the most widely read advocate of New Communist ideas.

* In common New Communist Movement parlance, most of the PMC is lumped together with self-employed professionals, shopkeepers, small businessmen, etc. as the "petty bourgeoisie" — a distinctly pejorative description. As we have argued in the first part of this paper (see RADICAL AMERICA, March-April 1977), this is a grossly incorrect class analysis.

style, and even occupation. Factories replaced universities as the key setting for political activity. Issues which had preoccupied the New Left — personal fulfillment, community, participatory democracy, etc. — were dismissed as “petty bourgeois” or even “decadent”.

In positing the existence of a Professional/Managerial Class, we do not mean to suggest that society has entered some new, “post-capitalist” phase of development. The central dynamic in our society still lies in the contradiction between the socialized nature of the production process and the private appropriation of the fruits of production. The interests of the capitalist class remain fundamentally antagonistic to the interests of wage earners of all kinds, including those we have defined as members of the PMC. In fact, as we have argued, within the U.S., this antagonism has turned the PMC into an enduring reservoir of radicalism (from Progressivism and the Socialist Party to the New Left).

**IF STUDENTS STRIKE...
THERE IS NO SCHOOL.
IF WORKERS STRIKE...
THERE IS NO WAR.**

But as we have said, not only is there an objective antagonism between the working class and the PMC on the one hand and the capitalist class on the other; there is, in addition, an objective antagonism between the working class and the PMC. This latter antagonism has severely undercut the revolutionary chances of the working class (or of a combination of elements of both the PMC and the working class).

In the first place, as we have seen, PMC radicalism emerges out of PMC class interests, which include the PMC's interest in extending its cultural and technological hegemony 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 expres-

sion in the PMC radicals' recurring vision of technocratic socialism, a society in which the bourgeoisie has been replaced by bureaucrats, planners, and experts of various sorts. Nor is this vision restricted to the right-wing socialists and social democrats who come forth from the PMC; it has been advanced with great militancy by many who style their views as the "proletarian line". In fact, in any left ideology which fails to comprehend the PMC and its class interests, there is always a good possibility that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" will turn out to be the dictatorship of the PMC.*

Turning now to the effects of the PMC/working-class polarization on working-class consciousness, we should recall first that the very existence of the PMC is predicated on the atomization of working-class life and culture and the appropriation of skills once vested in the working class.* The activities which the PMC performs within the capitalist division of labor in themselves serve to undermine positive class consciousness among the working class. The kind of consciousness which remains, the commonly held attitudes of the working class, are as likely to be anti-PMC as they are to be anti-capitalist — if only because people are more likely, in a day-to-day sense, to experience humiliation, harassment, frustration, etc. at the hands of the PMC than from members of the actual capitalist class.

* At risk of considerable over-simplification, we would suggest that this is in a sense just what happened in the USSR: a "new class" of technocrats — government and party bureaucrats, industrial managers, professional ideologues, etc. — has come to preside over a society in which more or less capitalist relations of production persist, despite the absence of a capitalist class. In this context, Lenin's well-known interest in adopting the methods of Taylorism (see Harry Braverman, *LABOR AND MONOPOLY CAPITAL*, Monthly Review, 1975, p. 12) and, conversely, the Chinese concern with restricting the privileges of managers and reducing the gap between mental and manual workers in order to avoid the Soviet mistakes (see John Ehrenreich, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat in China," MONTHLY REVIEW, October 1975) are worth recalling. Similarly, "Arab socialism", "African socialism", and "military socialism" (e.g., pre-1975 Peru) can also best be understood not as "petty bourgeois socialism" but as "PMC socialism", based on the rising class of civilian and military government mental workers.

* We do not mean to suggest, of course, that the PMC alone holds the working class in check, or that restraining the development of working-class consciousness is always, or even usually, a conscious goal of the PMC. On the former point, other sources of control over the working class certainly include the direct use or threat of state and private employer power; pre-capitalist authoritarian mechanisms of control such as the Catholic Church; and the many forces leading to the segmentation of the labor market along lines of race, ethnicity, sex, and to the physical dispersion of the working class.

Now, add to the fact of working-class hostility to the PMC two observations we have made already: (1) the historic association, in the U.S., of socialist radicalism with the PMC; and (2) the PMC's proclivity for a technocratic vision of socialism in which the PMC would be the dominant class. The result is that there emerges in the working class another seemingly contradictory ideology, which we might call class-conscious anti-communism. This working-class anti-communism receives continual encouragement from right-wing demagogues who emphasize exactly these points: the role of PMC members ("pinko intellectuals", "effete snobs", etc.) in radical movements and social-control activities, and the supposedly totalitarian nature of socialism. But working-class anti-communism is not created by right-wing demagoguery (or bad leadership, or ignorance, though all these help); it grows out of the objective antagonism between the working class and the PMC. Often enough it comes mixed with a wholesale rejection of any thing or thought associated with the PMC — liberalism, intellectualism, etc.

We hardly need to emphasize the dangerous, potentially tragic, nature of this situation. It is reflected with painful clarity in the condition of the U.S. left today: isolated and fragmented, still based largely in the PMC, more a subculture than a "movement."

Is there a way out? Is there anything in the experience of either PMC or working class which could lead them to transcend their antagonism, to join together in some sort of mass radical alliance for social change? If so, how can such an alliance be built?

To answer these questions it seems to us we have to draw on the experience of the New Left. In a sense, the New Left represents a historic breakthrough: a first conscious effort to recognize and confront the conflict between the PMC and the working class. Learning in part from the Cultural Revolution in China, with its emphasis on the gap between mental and manual labor and its populist approach to technology, and in part from their uneasy alliance with (mainly Third World) working-class community movements, the radicals of the sixties began to develop a critique of their own class. The feminist movement extended that critique, exposing the ideological content of even the most apparently "neutral" science and the ideological functions of even the most superficially "rational" experts.

But the New Left was not able to complete its incipient critique of the PMC and its role. With the collapse of the New Left as a mass movement in the seventies, the very effort ceased: Guilt replaced self-confidence; sterile efforts at remolding the consciousness of individual members of the PMC along "proletarian" lines replaced the more fruitful search for ways in which the PMC-based left could help stimulate and unite with a working-class movement.

But the possibility of developing the emergent insights of the sixties and applying them to the development of a truly broad-

based anti-capitalist movement is perhaps more alive now than ever. Unlike in the early sixties, there are thousands of PMC leftists who remain aware, in however unsystematic a way, of the tensions at the PMC-working class interface. And, also unlike the early sixties, there is a growing number of young radical working-class intellectuals — people who were given a brief exposure to higher education (and to the New Left) in the period of university expansion in the sixties, and were then thrown back into working-class occupations by the economic crisis of the seventies. Thus, if only in terms of personnel, the opportunity exists for developing a politics which can address and overcome the class stalemate of the contemporary left.

What direction might such a politics go? We can only suggest a few beginning directions:

(a) The way out does not lie in falling back on romantic visions of the historical mission of the working class, manifested in efforts to expunge “petty bourgeois” — i.e., PMC — ideology from the left so as to uncover the “pure proletarian line.” The relationship between the PMC and the working class is complementary; neither class has a “pure” ideology, uninfluenced by the other, or by the capitalist class. It is in the nature of this relationship that “culture” (in the loose sense of knowledge, ideas, history), including the systematic critique of capitalism itself, is dominated by the PMC. In a sense, Lenin’s perception in *WHAT IS TO BE DONE* remains true: the possibility of building a mass movement which seeks to alter society in its totality depends on the coming together of working-class insight and militancy with the tradition of socialist thinking kept alive by “middle-class” intellectuals.

(b) The antagonism between the PMC and the working class cannot be wished away in the name of anti-capitalist unity — any more, for example, than the antagonism between men and women, or between black and white can be. The left, which is now predominantly drawn from the PMC, must address itself to the subjective and cultural aspects of class oppression as well as to material inequalities; it must commit itself to uprooting its own ingrained and often subtle attitudes of condescension and elitism. The tensions between PMC leftists and the working class can only be dealt with by starting with a clear analytical perception of their origins and nature. Guilty self-effacement on the part of PMC radicals and/or simplistic glorification of the working class simply perpetuate the class roles forged in capitalist society.

(c) Moreover, in order to forge an alliance between elements of the PMC and the working class, the left must address itself not only to “bread and butter” issues but to all the issues it has too readily shelved as “cultural”: the division of labor, the nature (and ideological content) of science and technology, art, psychology, sexuality, education, etc. For it is on these issues that the historic antagonism between the PMC and the working class rests. Both

classes confront the capitalist class over the issue of ownership and control of the means of production. They confront each other over the issues of knowledge, skills, culture.

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ERRATUM

In our last issue we left out two photo credits. Our cover, "Amnesty and Liberty", was based on a Madrid wall mural, photographed by Jose Delgado-Guitart. The picture of Cesar Chavez on page 75 was by Tom Uribes.