

Social Classes in the United States

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Introduction

"Classes," wrote Lenin, "are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated by law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labor, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labor of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy."¹

The population of the United States today is divided into the same basic social classes that characterize all capitalist societies – the bourgeoisie, the proletariat and the petty-bourgeoisie. These classes came into being with the dawn of capitalist production relations and will remain, each in its fixed relation to the means of production, until the capitalist system is overthrown. The **basic** conditions and characteristics of these classes are determined by these production relations and, consequently, appear consistently in every capitalist society, regardless of cultural and national particularities or the level of economic development. The **particular** conditions and characteristics of these classes, however, change as society develops, and they vary from country to country. The U.S. today is a highly developed monopoly capitalist society and the classes within it have evolved accordingly. It is also one of the two premier imperialist powers in the world today. The tremendous superprofits which the U.S. bourgeoisie drains from the countries under its domination have affected, to a certain extent, the conditions encountered by the proletariat and petty bourgeoisie at home. Within the borders of the U.S., various nations exist (Anglo-American, Afro-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, and the nations and nationalities among the Native Peoples) and the classes within these nations each have particular characteristics which result from the system of national oppression perpetrated by the Anglo-American bourgeoisie. All of these conditions must be considered in analyzing the present situation of the classes in the U.S.

Such an analysis is critical to the development of revolutionary strategy and tactics, i.e. to an understanding of which strata are bound to support the proletarian revolution, which can be rendered neutral in this struggle and which are the enemies of the revolution. The following article represents an effort by our organization to gather together the most important information about the various classes and strata within the U.S. It is, of course, only an outline. Many of the particular questions dealt with in this article have received more detailed attention in our previous publications. All of the questions demand greater study and elaboration. It is hoped, however, that this article will be able to convey the overall picture of the class situation in the United States today.

Note on Bourgeois Statistics

Virtually all the statistical information in the article comes from U.S. government sources and, before we proceed further, it is necessary to explain some of the problems and limitations of these statistics.

1. By design, U.S. government statistics cover up rather than reveal class distinctions. Many of the occupational classifications used by the government combine within one classification capitalists, small proprietors, petty bourgeois employees and proletarians. It was necessary to break down the government classifications into their true class components as much as possible

using the information provided. In most cases, we were able to do this, but in several instances detailed information was not provided about each of these components and therefore, in order to present consistent data, we had to use government classifications which are not precise in class terms.

2. The government insists on perpetuating its myth of **racial** categories to characterize the various nationalities in the U.S. It uses the following classifications: "White", "Black", "American Indian, Eskimo and Aleut", "Asian and Pacific Islander" and "Other Races." This anti-scientific method completely confuses the question of nationalities and national oppression with racial categories. Within the "Black" category are placed not only Afro-Americans, but Puerto Ricans, Jamaicans, etc. The Puerto Rican nation disappears into the categories of "Black", "White" and "Other", and the Chicano Nation is likewise divided among the "White", "American Indian" and "Other" categories. In addition to its racial categories, the government has created another category – "Spanish origin" – which overlaps these racial categories and includes all people with Spanish surnames regardless of whether their nationality is Spanish, Argentinean, Mexican, Chicano, etc. Because data is only available using these government classifications, we have been forced to use them to convey information about the conditions of the classes among the various nationalities.

3. Bourgeois statistics are more complete today than those that Marx or Lenin had to use, but they are still far from complete or accurate. U.S. government statistics consistently undercount the number of immigrant workers (especially those without legal documents), national minorities, migrant and seasonal workers and the very poor. After much protest, for instance, the Census Bureau was forced to admit that it undercounted the number of "Blacks" by 7.7% in 1970 and by 4.5 to 5.5.% in 1980 (by its own estimation). Between 1970 and 1980, according to Census Bureau statistics, the number of people of "Spanish origin" grew by 38%, the number of people classified as "Other Races" grew by 92% and the number of "American Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts" grew by 72%.² This phenomenal "growth" cannot be explained by natural population growth or immigration, but rather by the idiocy of the racial classification method, the severe undercounting of oppressed nationalities in the 1970 census and the pressure applied by the national movements to include the oppressed nationalities in the 1980 census. These severe fluctuations should caution anyone who would attempt to treat Census Bureau statistics as anything more than rough and somewhat distorted data.

The fact that government statistics are purposely distorted, confused and incomplete does not mean they are useless. Indeed, they are very useful and, despite the government's attempts to cover up class distinctions, these distinctions and the characteristics of the various classes are discernible by carefully examining the data that the government provides.

The Total Population and the Labor Force

The total population of the United States in December, 1982 was estimated to be 232,840,000. All of these people belong to one social class or another. When examining statistics, however, it is only possible to determine the social class of those people who are in the labor force, and therefore we have concentrated our study on the "active labor force." In December, 1982, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that the total labor force numbered 113,035,000 or somewhat less than half the total population.³

Included within the labor force are all those who are employed or actively looking for work who are 16 years old or older. This category, therefore, excludes most housewives, children, students,

prisoners, the disabled and the retired, as well as workers below the age of 16, unemployed seasonal workers and other workers who have, at least temporarily, given up looking for work. The BLS divides the labor force into two components, civilian (which numbered 110,855,000 in December, 1982) and military (which numbered 2,108,000 in December, 1982). Throughout this article, except where otherwise noted, when we refer to the size of various classes we are referring only to the members of the class who are part of the BLS "civilian labor force" (who make up somewhat less than half the total membership of their class).⁴

Notes

1. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works* V. 29, p. 421.
2. *U.S. Department of Commerce News*, Department of Commerce, Feb. 23, 1981.
3. *Employment and Earnings*. Jan. 1983, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) p. 11.
4. Ibid.

I. The Bourgeoisie

The bourgeoisie, according to Engels, is "...the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labour."¹ The capitalist does not participate directly in the process of production. Instead, his function is only "...the appropriation and therefore control of the labour of others and... the selling of the products of this labour."² This is what differentiates the **bourgeoisie** from the **petty bourgeoisie**. The petty bourgeois proprietor may also own means of production, and he may also employ labor, and therefore he is also **nominally** a capitalist. However, writes Engels: "capitalist production requires an individual capital big enough to employ a fairly large number of workers at a time; only when he himself is wholly released from labour does the employer of labour become a full-blooded capitalist."³ The petty proprietor lives **by his own labor** (as well as, in the case of the upper petty businessman, the labor of others) while the capitalist lives **exclusively by the labor of others**.

The number of capitalists in the United States does not amount to more than 2,000,000, accounting for less than 1.8% of the "economically active" population. However, this small fraction of the population controls the businesses which account for 94% of all business sales, a reflection of the concentration of the means of production in their hands. The concentration of economic power is shown in Table A-1.

Table A-1

Concentration of Business Sales (1978)⁴

Social Class	Employment Size	Number of Companies	Percent of Companies	Sales (Millions \$)	Percent of Sales
Petty Bourgeoisie	Under 5	2,136,656	57.20	292,255	5.7
Small Capitalist	5-49	1,442,600	38.60	1,049,505	20.5
Middle Capitalist	50-499	143,522	3.80	848,287	16.6
Large Capitalist	500-4,999	12,223	.30	845,880	16.6
Monopoly Capitalist	5,000 & over	1,450	.04	2,072,151	40.5
Total *		3,736,451	100.00	5,108,078	100.0

*Independent rounding of figures may result in totals varying from the sum of the individual units

These figures show clearly that the petty bourgeoisie has been relegated to the economic sidelines and that virtually all economic activity in the U.S. is in the hands of the capitalist class. But even the majority of the capitalists play a relatively insignificant role. The small and middle capitalist enterprises (those with less than 500 employees) make up more than 99% of capitalist enterprises but account for less than 37% of all business sales. The monopoly capitalist enterprises (those with more than 5,000 employees), numbering only 1,450, were responsible for more than 40% of all sales. These monopoly capitalist enterprises are concentrated in the decisive sectors of the economy and they control an even greater portion of these sectors. For example, in mining, 26 monopoly capitalist companies pull in 87.9% of total sales.⁵ A similar study, measuring assets rather than sales, concluded that:

- the largest 200 manufacturing companies owned 66.8% of all manufacturing assets.
- the largest 50 banks owned 35.5% of all bank assets.
- the largest 50 transportation companies own 61.6% of all transportation assets.
- the largest 40 gas and electric utilities own 59.8% of all gas and electric utility assets.⁶

The strength of the monopoly sector is still greater if measured by net income. One study, using 1977 IRS statistics, showed that the largest 1,300 corporations appropriated 82.2% of all corporate net income after taxes. **The largest 100 corporations alone accounted for 45.8% of corporate net income after taxes.**⁷

The real power of the monopoly bourgeoisie is even greater than an accounting of assets, net income or sales alone tells. The lesser capitalist and petty bourgeois businesses are nominally independent but they are actually completely dependent on the monopoly capitalists. They are financed by the monopoly capitalist banks and their businesses usually revolve around the monopoly capitalists – they sell or transport the goods produced by the monopolies, produce goods for sale to the monopolies, etc.

Those Who Own Stock and Those Who Control Corporations

Stock ownership, as a rule, is limited to a small part of the population: the capitalists, the upper petty bourgeoisie and a small number of the middle petty bourgeoisie and the labor aristocracy. Over 85% of the country's population owns no stock whatsoever.⁸ One study showed that in 1975 711,000 families, making up only 1% of all families, owned 66% of all personally-held corporate stock. Within this select group, 194,000 families (those with a net worth of over \$1,000,000), making up only 0.3% of all families, owned 35% of all personally-held stock.⁹ Once again, however, real economic power is held in far fewer hands than these.

Stockholding in the large monopoly corporations has been extended to include large numbers of the lesser capitalists, the upper petty bourgeoisie and the labor aristocracy simply in order to place more capital at the disposal of the monopoly capitalists. For the petty bourgeois professional, the purchase of stocks is simply a form of savings. For the capitalist who controls the corporation, however, these savings of the petty bourgeoisie are transformed into **his** capital.

Who Are The Monopoly Bourgeoisie?

The monopoly bourgeoisie is the sector of the bourgeoisie that controls the monopoly corporations. The core of this stratum, as we have said, is made up of several hundred families. A large number of these families, along with the main companies they are associated with, are listed in Table A-2. Several of these families stand out as the personification of monopoly bourgeois wealth and power. The Rockefellers, Mellons, and DuPonts each own billions of dollars worth of corporate stock and control not one, but numerous, gigantic industrial firms and financial institutions. The Rockefellers control the Standard Oil group (Exxon, Mobil, Standard Oil of California, Standard Oil of Indiana, Arco) as well as the Chase Manhattan Bank, Equitable Life Assurance and numerous other companies. The Mellons control the Mellon Bank as well as Gulf Oil, Alcoa, Koppers, Consolidation Coal and numerous other firms. Among the DuPont interests are the DuPont Corporation, General Motors, Uniroyal and Phillips Petroleum.¹⁰

The present-day monopoly bourgeoisie is composed primarily of families that accumulated their wealth during the rise of monopoly: capitalism (more or less from the Civil War to World War

I). There are, of course, a few new monopoly bourgeois families, but this does not affect the overall character of the class.

Closely associated with the monopoly bourgeoisie, and indistinguishable from it politically, is a corps of highly-paid agents. These include the top management of the monopoly corporations, the top academic elite, the top government officials and the top military officers. Members of the monopoly bourgeois families many times serve in these capacities themselves, but they bolster their ranks with numerous deputies. These top officials are so highly rewarded through salaries, stock options and "business deals" that they become capitalists themselves.

Table A-2

A Partial List of Monopoly Bourgeois Families

Anderson	Arco Petroleum
Annenberg	Triangle Publications
Babot	Cabot
Bass	oil
Bechtel	Bechtel Construction
Bronfman	Seagram
Brown	Brown and Root
Busch	Anheuser-Busch
Cargill	Cargill
Cheatham	Georgia-Pacific
Clark	Singer
Coors	Coors
Cowles	publishing
Cox	Cox Communications
Crown	General Dynamics
Danforth	Ralston-Purina
Davis	Winn-Dixie
DeVos	Amway
Dillon	Dillon, Read
Dorrance	Campbell Soup
Doubleday	Doubleday
Dow	Dow
Duke	Duke
DuPont	DuPont
Eaton	Eaton
Engelhard	Engelhard
Fairchild	Fairchild
Field	publishing

Firestone	Firestone
Ford	Ford
Fribourg	Continental Grain
Gallo	Gallo
Galvin	Motorola
Gates	Gates Rubber
Gerber	Gerber
Getty	Getty Oil
Grace	W.R. Grace
Haas	Levi-Strauss
Hammer	Occidental Petroleum
Hanna	Hanna Mining
Harriman	Union Pacific Railroad
Hearst	publishing
Heinz	Heinz
Hershey	Hershey
Hess	Amerada-Hess Oil
Hewlett	Hewlett-Packard
Hilton	Hilton Hotels
Houghton	Corning Glass
Hunt	Hunt Energy
Johnson	Howard Johnson
Johnson	Johnson's Wax
Kaiser	Kaiser Industries
Keck	Superior Oil
Kellogg	Kellogg
Knight	Nike
Knight	Knight-Ridder Newspapers
Kroc	McDonald's
Lilly	Eli Lilly
Ludwig	shipping
Lykes	shipping
Marriott	Marriott
Mars	Mars Candy
Mayer	Oscar-Mayer
McDonnell	McDonnell-Douglas

McGee	Kerr-McGee
McGraw	McGraw-Hill
McLean	McLean Trucking
Mellon	Gulf Oil
Milliken	Milliken Textiles
Moore	Intel
Murdock	Cannon Mills
Newhouse	Random House
Olin	Olin Chemical
Packard	Hewlett-Packard
Paley	CBS
Paulsen	Gulfstream Aerospace
Pew	Sunoco
Phipps	International Paper
Pitcairn	PPG Industries
Pulitzer	Pulitzer Publishing
Robins	A.H. Robbins
Rockefeller	Standard Oil, etc.
Rockwell	Rockwell International
Rosenwald	Sears, Roebuck
Scripps	Scripps-Howard Publishing
Searle	G.D. Searle
Simon	Norton Simon
Singleton	Teledyne
Stokely	Stokeley-Van Camp
Stuart	Carnation
Sulzberger	New York Times
Uihlein	Schlitz
Upjohn	Upjohn
Van Andel	Amway
Wallace	Reader's Digest
Walton	Wal-Mart
Wang	Wang
Weyerhaeuser	Weyerhaeuser
Woodruff	Coca-Cola
Zellerbach	Crown-Zellerbach

The Political Power of the Monopoly Bourgeoisie

The iron grip that the monopoly bourgeoisie has over the economy is matched by its iron grip on the state apparatus, the chief instruments of which are the military and the police. The monopoly bourgeoisie and its representatives hold undivided political power in their hands. The lesser capitalists also play their role in governing society, especially in local government. But the role of the lesser capitalists in the political, as in the economic, sphere is always subordinate to the monopoly bourgeoisie.

The "Two-Party System". Both the Democratic and Republican parties, which between them hold state power in their hands, are instruments of the monopoly bourgeoisie. In the decades that followed the Civil War, as the monopoly bourgeoisie established itself as the supreme economic power in the country, it also established its hegemony in the two major bourgeois political parties.

In the Republican Party, it beat back and disintegrated the fledgling democratic alliance of freedmen, small farmers and small capitalists ("Radical Republicans"), while in the Democratic Party it established its domination over the former slaveowners who had traditionally ruled the party.

The hegemony of the monopoly bourgeoisie in these two parties has never been overturned. The struggle between the Democratic and Republican parties, as well as the major conflicts within these parties, represent differing views **among** the monopoly bourgeoisie. The "two-party system" has been firmly implanted as a pillar of monopoly bourgeois dictatorship.

State Monopoly Capitalism. State power in the U.S. is characterized by the merger of the monopoly capitalist enterprises and the state apparatus. The mammoth private corporations and banks are so intertwined with the official state organs, both in terms of their personnel and their operations, that it is many times difficult to distinguish one from the other. The state organs act as agencies to determine and carry out the **collective** interests of the monopoly capitalist class, regulating the activities of individual corporations and interest groups within this class when these conflict with the higher collective interests of the class as a whole, and marshalling the forces of the class for unified action, both domestically and internationally. Thus, the Federal Reserve Board, the Treasury Department and the commissions that regulate banking are traditionally, and almost without exception, headed by the most powerful and respected (among the capitalists) bankers from Wall Street. The huge private banks actually own most of the federal debt and are the main depositories for the great financial assets of the government.

The top military posts (Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Army, Navy, Air Force, etc.) are also exclusively reserved for top monopoly capitalists recruited directly from the top echelon of private industry. The armaments industry (IBM, General Motors, DuPont, Hewlett-Packard, Ford, Lockheed, General Dynamics, etc.) is particularly well represented among these positions. The same kind of close "partnership" and interchange of personnel between government and industry can be found in all of the various government agencies and departments.

The political apparatus of the monopoly bourgeoisie also includes numerous private "foundations", "councils" and "institutes", which formulate general state policy and act in many ways as a shadow government. Probably the most important among these is the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). The membership of the CFR (which is restricted to 1600) is carefully selected from among the most influential members of the monopoly bourgeoisie, top corporate

executives and corporate lawyers, and key military and intelligence officers, politicians, publicists and academics. Until 1970, CFR membership was restricted to Anglo-American men; since then a number of women and national minorities have been selected for token representation. The Chairman of the Board of the CFR is David Rockefeller, who is generally recognized as the premier spokesman for the monopoly bourgeoisie.

In the CFR, the monopoly bourgeoisie discuss and formulate their international strategy. **The basic policy decisions made by the CFR have invariably been carried out by the U.S. government.** This fact is not at all surprising when one considers that virtually every top government minister charged with financial, military or foreign affairs over the last thirty years (and undoubtedly much longer) has been a member of the CFR. An examination of who actually governs tears the mask off all pretensions about "democracy for the people" in the U.S. and exposes the government for what it is – a dictatorship of the monopoly bourgeoisie. Table A-3 lists the men who have held the posts of President, Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Defense, National Security Adviser and Director of the Central Intelligence Agency during the last seven administrations, from Eisenhower to Reagan, and the monopoly bourgeois institutions with which these men have been associated. Of the 43 men listed, all but five have belonged to the CFR. Many are corporate lawyers or investment bankers and although the names of their firms are not commonly known they are among the nerve centers of Wall Street.

Table A-3

**Top Government Officials and Their Connections
with the Monopoly Bourgeoisie (1953-1983)**

Position	Name	CFR Member	Main Occupation	Institutional Connections with the Monopoly Bourgeoisie
President	Dwight Eisenhower	X	Military	
Vice President	Richard Nixon	X	Corp. lawyer / Politician	
Sec. of State	John Foster Dulles	X	Corp. lawyer	Sullivan & Cromwell, Rockefeller Foundation
Sec. of Treasury	Robert Anderson	X	Corp. Exec.	Bank of NY
Sec. of Defense	Thomas Gates, Jr.	X	Corp. Exec.	Hanover Bank, Falconbridge Nickel, Ford Foundation, Drexel & Co., Scott Paper
Nat. Sec. Adviser	Gordon Gray	X	Publisher	Piedmont Publishing, Reynolds Tobacco, Champion Paper

CIA Director	Allen Dulles	X	Corp. lawyer	Sullivan & Cromwell
President	John Kennedy	X	Politician	Kennedy family
Vice President	Lyndon Johnson		Rancher/ Politician	
Sec. of State	Dean Rusk	X	Foundation Exec.	Rockefeller Foundation
Sec. of Treasury	C. Douglas Dillon	X	Investment Banker	Dillon Read Co., Chase Manhattan Bank, Rockefeller Foundation
Sec. of Defense	Robert McNamara	X	Corp. Exec.	Ford Motor
Nat. Sec. Adviser	McGeorge Bundy	X	Foundation Exec.	Ford Foundation
CIA Director	John McCone	X	Corp. Exec.	Bechtel-McCone Constr., Standard Oil of Cal.
President	Lyndon Johnson		Rancher/ Politician	
Vice President	Hubert Humphrey	X	Politician	
Sec. of State	Dean Rusk	X	Foundation Exec.	Rockefeller Foundation
Sec. of Treasury	Henry Fowler	X	Inv. Banker	Goldman Sachs
Sec. of Defense	Robert McNamara	X	Corp. Exec.	Ford Motor
Nat. Sec. Adviser	Walt W. Rostow	X	Foreign Policy Expert	

CIA Director	John McCone	X	Corp. Exec.	Bechtel-McCone Constr., Standard Oil of Cal.
President	Richard Nixon	X	Corp. Lawyer / Politician	
Vice President	Gerald Ford	X	Politician	
Sec. of State	William Rodgers	X	Corp. Lawyer	Roger & Wells, Dreyfus Fund
Sec. of Treasury	David Kennedy	X	Banker	Continental Ill. Bank, Int'l Harvester
Sec. of Defense	Elliot Richardson	X	Corp. Lawyer	Millbank, Tweed, Hadley, McCoy
Nat. Sec. Adviser	Henry Kissinger	X	Foreign Policy Expert	Rockefeller Bros. Fund, Chase Manhattan
CIA Director	Richard Helms	X	Intelligence	
President	Gerald Ford	X	Politician	
Vice President	Nelson Rockefeller	X	Politician	Rockefeller family
Sec. of State	Henry Kissinger	X	Foreign Policy Expert	Rockefeller Bros. Fund, Chase Manhattan
Sec. of Treasury	William Simon	X	Inv. Banker	Solomon Bros., Citibank
Sec. of Defense	Donald Rumsfeld	X	Corp. Exec.	
Nat. Sec. Adviser	Henry Kissinger	X	Foreign Policy Expert	Rockefeller Bros. Fund, Chase Manhattan

CIA Director	George Bush	X	Gov. & Corp. Exec	Zapata Petroleum
President	Jimmy Carter		Planter / Politician	Trilateral Comm.
Vice President	Walter Mondale	X	Politician	Trilateral Comm.
Sec. of State	Cyrus Vance	X	Corp. Lawyer	Simpson, Thatcher & Bartlett, IBM, Rockefeller Foundation
Sec. of Treasury	William Blumenthal	X	Corp. Exec.	Bendix, Rockefeller Foundation
Sec. of Defense	Harold Brown	X	Scientist, Corp. Exec.	IBM
Nat. Sec. Adviser	Zbigniew Brzezinski	X	Foreign Policy Expert	Dean Witter
CIA Director	Stansfield Turner	X	Military	
President	Ronald Reagan		Politician	
Vice President	George Bush	X	Gov. & Corp. Exec	Zapata Petroleum
Sec. of State	George Schultz	X	Corp. Exec.	Bechtel Constr., General Motors, Dillon Read
Sec. of Treasury	Donald Regan		Inv. Banker	Merrill Lynch, NY Stock Exchange
Sec. of Defense	Caspar Weinberger	X	Corp. Exec.	Bechtel Constr.
Nat. Sec. Adviser	William Clark		Rancher / Corp. Exec.	Clark, Cole & Fairfield'
CIA Director	William Casey, Jr.	X	Corp. Lawyer	Hall, Casey, Dickler& Howley

The Liberal and Fascist Wings of the Monopoly Bourgeoisie

The liberal and fascist political movements both have their headquarters in the monopoly bourgeoisie. Fascist political organizations portray themselves as independent from the monopoly bourgeoisie and opposed to it in order to win the confidence of the petty bourgeoisie and the workers. In fact, some pseudo-Marxists promote the idea that fascism is a political movement "led by the petty bourgeoisie" or, alternatively, that it represents "new wealth" opposed to the "East Coast Establishment." Nothing could be further from the truth.

The fascist movement is headed by the most reactionary and chauvinist sections of the monopoly bourgeoisie. Politically, the movement is organized through the right wings of the Republican and Democratic Parties, the Heritage Foundation, the American Security Council, the National Association of Manufacturers, etc., all of which are completely controlled by sections of the monopoly bourgeoisie. The Mellon and Pew families, who epitomize monopoly bourgeois "old wealth of the East Coast," bankroll the fascist movement along with "western" capitalists such as the Hunts and the Coors.¹³

The liberal political movement is also directed by a section of the monopoly bourgeoisie, through such agencies as the liberal wing of the Democratic Party (Kennedy, etc.), the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Common Cause, the Center for Policy Studies, the Urban League, etc.

The liberal and fascist wings of the monopoly bourgeoisie both have the same fundamental class interests. The distinction between them is simply a question of differences on the most expedient form of state power to best maintain bourgeois dictatorship. The liberal wing of the monopoly bourgeoisie is perfectly capable of adopting fascist methods when it decides the situation calls for them.

It was, after all, the liberal Democratic administrations of Kennedy and Johnson that carried out the barbarous invasion and occupation of Indo-China. The Rockefeller Foundation, which has sponsored such liberal protégés as Ralph Bunche, Whitney Young, Vernon Jordan and John Gardner, is also quite capable of sponsoring reactionary protégés such as John Foster Dulles and Henry Kissinger, who supervised the violent installation of fascist regimes in Iran, Guatemala, Indonesia, Chile and many other countries. Political representatives of the liberal wing of the monopoly bourgeoisie, such as Robert Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey, actively collaborated with the McCarthyite repression following World War II, because they decided that certain fascist methods were necessary to suppress the communist movement.



"The liberal and fascist wings of the monopoly bourgeoisie both have the same fundamental interests. They differ only on the most expedient form of state power to best maintain bourgeois dictatorship."

Capitalists of the Oppressed Nationalities

In 1977, the Census Bureau did a survey of "Minority-owned businesses" which provides us with some data on the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nationalities. There were, according to the survey, 561,395 minority-owned businesses in 1977. The great majority (93%) of these businesses were in the realm of the petty bourgeoisie, 81% employing no workers and another 12% employing less than five (see Table A-4). There were 19,560 companies which we can generally classify as capitalist (employing five or more workers). Once again, the great majority of these were small capitalist enterprises and employed less than 50 workers; only 663 companies had more than this number.

Table A-4

Businesses of the Oppressed Nationalities¹⁴

Social Class	Employment Size	Number of Companies	Percent of Companies	Gross Receipts (Thousands of Dollars)	Percent of Gross Receipts
Not classified by size	---	19,351	3.4	3,016,658	11.4
Lower Petty Bourgeoisie	0	456,251	81.3	7,386,045	28.0
Middle and Upper Petty Bourgeoisie	1-4	66,233	11.8	5,400,546	20.5
Small Capitalist	5-49	18,897	3.4	6,796,020	25.8
Middle and Large Capitalist	50 and over	663	0.1	3,782,833	14.3
Total*		561,395	100.0	23,382,102	100.0
*Independent rounding may result in totals varying from the sum of the individual units.					

Two main conclusions can be drawn from this data: first, that there are indeed capitalists among the oppressed nationalities (some varieties of revisionism deny this!); and, second, that the capitals of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations are extremely small when compared with those of the Anglo-American monopoly bourgeoisie. The gross receipts of all minority-owned businesses combined (\$26,782,833,000) add up to only one-half of one per cent of the business receipts of all U.S. businesses (\$4,699,000,000,000).¹⁵

Afro-American Capitalists. Of the 561,395 businesses owned by national minorities, the Census Bureau classifies 231,203 as owned by "Blacks," 219,355 as owned by people of "Spanish origin," and 110,837 as owned by "Asians, Indians and others."¹⁶ Detailed information on the **capitalist** sections of these businesses among each separate nationality is not available,

but *Black Enterprise* magazine provides more detailed information about the Afro-American capitalist class.

Black Enterprise annually compiles a list of the Black-owned banks, insurance companies and savings and loans, as well as the 100 largest non-financial Black-owned businesses. In 1981, these enterprises, which represented the **upper stratum** of the Afro-American capitalist class, had combined assets of just under \$5,000,000,000 and had a total of 30,884 employees.¹⁷ The oldest and most stable sector of the Black capitalist enterprises are the life insurance companies that have existed throughout the Black Belt South for decades, many since the turn of the century.

On the other hand, 33 of the 46 banks and 83 of the top 100 non-financial businesses were founded after the Harlem Rebellion in 1964. The decade that followed the Harlem Rebellion was marked by an effort on the part of the Anglo-American monopoly bourgeoisie to allow for a slight growth of the Afro-American capitalist class, which they had completely stifled until then. This new "Black Capitalism," however, was to be completely subordinate, its only purpose being to create a stronger base for reformism among the Afro-American people.

Over the last decade, many of these businesses have been wiped out under the pressure of the economic crisis. The Anglo-American bourgeoisie, and the very nature of the capitalist system, will never allow the development of a powerful, or in any way independent, Afro-American capitalist class. Of the 13,673 large capitalist enterprises in the U.S. (over 500 employees) only 10 (0.07%) are owned by Afro-Americans, and all these fall into the lower category of large capitalists. Tables A-5 and A-6, compiled from *Black Enterprise* data, show that even the top Black capitalists are overwhelmingly small and middle-sized capitalists.

Table A-5

**Top 100 Afro-American Owned Non-Financial
Businesses by Number of Employees (1981)¹⁸**

Number of Employees	Number of Businesses
Less than 50	27
50-99	37
100-499	26
500 and over	10
Total	100

Table A-6

**Afro-American Owned Financial
Businesses – By Assets (1981)¹⁹**

Amount of Assets	Number of Businesses
Less than 50	27
50-99	37
100-499	26
500 and over	10
Total	100

In comparison, the Anglo-American industrial monopolies employ tens of thousands of workers, and the assets of the monopoly banks and insurance companies are counted in tens of billions of dollars. The stifled and distorted character of the Afro-American capitalist class can be further seen by looking at the fields in which its businesses are concentrated, shown on Table A-7.

Table A-7

**Top 100 Afro-American Owned Non-Financial
Businesses by Type of Business (1981)²⁰**

Type of Business	Number of Businesses
Manufacturing	13
Publishing & Entertainment	9
Construction	13
Sale of Industrial Supplies & Services	14
Energy Distribution & Sales	9
Automobile Sales & Service	29
Sales of Other Consumer Goods (Retail & Wholesale)	14

While the vast majority of the largest Anglo-American-owned non-financial corporations are involved in manufacturing, only 13 of the top 100 Afro-American non-financial businesses are

involved in this field. Nearly half of these top Afro-American-owned businesses are involved in the sale of consumer goods, most of these being car dealers, beer distributors and gasoline marketers. These businessmen are simply compradors, distributing the goods of the Anglo-American monopolies in the Afro-American communities. The 14 companies that sell supplies and services to industry can also be classed as compradors because their businesses also depend completely on the Anglo-American monopolies.

The 35 companies involved in manufacturing, construction, publishing and entertainment are the only businesses that can be said to have any degree of "independence." These companies, however, are hardly independent. They operate within the confines of the laws and regulations of the Anglo-American state and they are dependent financially on loans arranged by the Small Business Administration and the major Anglo-American banks and financial institutions. The contractors are largely dependent on government contracts and several of the manufacturers produce directly for sale to the monopoly corporations. The Afro-American banks and insurance companies are likewise completely tied in with, and subordinate to, the monopoly banks and insurance companies.

The complete identification of the Afro-American bourgeoisie with the interests of the Anglo-American monopoly capitalists is demonstrated by the appointment of a number of the top Afro-American capitalists to the executive boards of Anglo-American monopoly corporations. For instance, George Johnson, president of Johnson Products, the largest Black-owned manufacturing company, serves on the boards of directors of Commonwealth Edison and Metropolitan Life; John Johnson, president of Johnson Publishing (*Ebony* magazine, etc.), is a director of Twentieth Century Fox and Marina City Bank; William Kennedy III, president of North Carolina Mutual Life, the largest Black-owned insurance company, has been appointed to the boards of NBC and RCA; Henry Parks, chairman of Parks Sausage Company, the fourth largest Black-owned manufacturing company, sits on the boards of directors of First Pennsylvania Bank and Magnavox.²¹

The Afro-American bourgeoisie is a comprador class. The idea that it could carry out any action independent of the Anglo-American monopoly capitalists is completely unfounded.

It is impossible to discuss the Afro-American capitalist class without discussing the Afro-American churches. Because of the severe restrictions on the development of capital by Afro-American proprietors through traditional means, the Afro-American churches played an important role in the original accumulation of money in the hands of the Afro-American bourgeoisie. The upper section of church officials have traditionally been among the most wealthy and powerful men in the Black community. Their capital came from the collection plate and was then many times multiplied through business enterprises, loans, investments and speculation. Indeed, it was church revenues that provided the initial capital on which many of the Afro-American insurance companies were built.

The Afro-American churches have been able to provide funds for the Afro-American bourgeoisie because of their relative independence from the Anglo-American church hierarchy. But the denominational independence of the Afro-American churches has been matched by their political subservience, and the Afro-American preachers' promotion of reformism and pacifism among the masses.

Leon Sullivan, pastor of the Zion Baptist Church of Philadelphia, Chairman of Zion Investment Associates, Inc., and Director of the Girard Trust Bank and the General Motors Corporation, is

the epitome of the Afro-American preacher-capitalist.²² He numbers among his "accomplishments" the writing of a new labor code for Black workers at the General Motors plants in Azania (South Africa). This was a farce designed to give a better face to GM's propping up of the fascist apartheid regime and its super-exploitation of the Azanian workers. Such activities are typical of the hypocritical Afro-American bourgeois-reformists.

One further note on the Afro-American capitalist class. Roughly half of all Afro-American businesses are located in the South.²³ Of the 244 top Afro-American businesses listed in *Black Enterprise*, 94 (42%) are located in the Black Belt South or the cities along its borders (Atlanta, Houston, Birmingham, etc.). This number includes 30 of the 38 insurance companies and 16 of the 36 non-financial businesses with over 100 employees.²⁴ Atlanta, Durham and Richmond, the traditional centers of the Black bourgeoisie, remain central although New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and other cities outside the Black Belt region have become increasingly important.

Political Role of the Bourgeoisie of the Oppressed Nations

The story of dependence and subservience that characterizes the Afro-American bourgeoisie is repeated in the case of the Chicano bourgeoisie, the Diné (Navajo) bourgeoisie, the Puerto Rican bourgeoisie and the capitalists of the other oppressed nations and nationalities in the United States. While the capitalists of the oppressed nations and nationalities are **economically** insignificant, politically they are a very significant force. They are the front line of the capitalists' efforts to demobilize and pacify the revolutionary national movements; they are the heart and backbone of the national reformist political movement.

Flowing from the fact that the capitalists of the oppressed nationalities are economically subordinate to the Anglo-American monopoly bourgeoisie, the national reformist organizations are also completely politically subservient. They have gone so far as to include representatives of the Anglo-American bourgeoisie on the executive boards of these organizations. For instance, Zbigniew Brzezinski, one of the monopoly bourgeoisie's top foreign policy experts and Carter's National Security Advisor, sits on the board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the late Winthrop Rockefeller was a permanent member of the board of the National Urban League.²⁵

On the other hand, Vernon Jordan, until recently the executive director of the National Urban League, sits on the board of Bankers Trust and the Celenese Corporation.²⁶ It is widely known that in the exchange for the Rockefeller Foundation's generous gifts, representatives of the Foundation have personally picked out and arranged for the training of the top leadership of the National Urban League and the United Negro College Fund.

Strategy of the Proletariat against the Capitalist Class

Within the U.S. capitalist class there are many conflicts. There are conflicts between the monopoly capitalists and the lesser capitalists as the former cannibalize the latter. There are conflicts between the capitalists of the Anglo-American oppressor nation and the capitalists of the oppressed nations within the U.S. borders. There are conflicts between the capitalists of the various agricultural and industrial sectors and between the capitalists of one region and those of another. There are conflicts between the politically liberal wing of the capitalists and the fascist wing.

All of these conflicts, however, are conflicts among the enemy and there is no basis whatsoever for a proletarian revolutionary strategy based on an alliance between the proletariat and any

sector of the capitalist class. All sectors of the bourgeoisie are reactionary. All sectors support and benefit from imperialism. All sectors support the suppression of the working class and the maintenance of the capitalist system by force.

Under the banner of an "anti-monopoly coalition," the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) promotes an alliance of the workers and the non-monopoly capitalists:

"For our Party," writes Gus Hall, "the anti-monopoly struggle must now become target center for our strategic and tactical considerations.... The sharp edge of the struggle must be directed against the monarchs of monopoly capital, the top dominating section of monopoly capital.... It is this that gives a special meaning to the concept of using divisions in the ranks of the ruling class."²⁷

In line with the CPUSA's "special meaning" of "using divisions in the ranks of the ruling class," it includes among the proletariat's **strategic** allies the sector of "small business" which it defines as an "elastic term stretching from the corner grocer to firms employing hundreds of workers."²⁸ Quite an "elastic term" the CPUSA has picked up – one that lumps the poorest of the small proprietors who do not exploit labor together with rich capitalist exploiters. According to the CPUSA, all of these "small business owners," even those who exploit hundreds of workers (!), "can be brought into an alliance with the working class against monopoly."²⁹

The CPUSA paints a picture of virtually all of society, workers, professional employees, small proprietors and non-monopoly capitalists, marching together in a great "anti-monopoly coalition" against a handful of monopoly capitalists. It's a pretty picture, but it is a farce. The revisionist strategy of the CPUSA directly contradicts the fundamental political program of Marxism-Leninism, which makes a clear distinction between direct and indirect reserves of the proletariat. The direct reserves of the proletariat, and its **strategic** allies in its battle against capital, include the small proprietors who **do not exploit labor**, other non-exploiting strata and the national revolutionary movements.

The proletariat can make use of the conflicts within the capitalist class, including the resistance of the small capitalists against the monopolists, but these are only **indirect reserves** – divisions in the ranks of the enemy. Despite the conflicts between them, **the interests of the small capitalist and the monopoly capitalist are identical vis-à-vis the proletariat.**

The small capitalist is not stupid. He knows that the fall of the monopoly bourgeoisie would never, and could never, mean the rise to power of the small capitalist, but rather the rise to power of the proletariat, the destruction of the capitalist system and the seizure of his property. Genuine Marxist-Leninists have no use for the CPUSA's "special meaning" of using divisions among the ruling class because it amounts to nothing more than tailing after the petty bourgeoisie and the capitalists and surrendering the revolutionary aims of the proletariat.

Further, the idea of a **revolutionary** alliance between the proletariat and the capitalists of the oppressed nations within the borders of the U.S. is equally bankrupt. The Afro-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican and Native American capitalists are overwhelmingly compradors, tied by a thousand strings to the Anglo-American monopoly bourgeoisie. They may very well want a bigger piece of the action within their nations, but they have not undertaken, and are not about to undertake, revolutionary struggle against the U.S. imperialists. They adopt liberalism and reformism as their political stand. They are absolutely opposed to revolution and, therefore, support not only class exploitation but national oppression as well.

There exists the theoretical possibility that **some sectors** of the capitalists of the oppressed nations within the U.S. borders could play a revolutionary role under **certain conditions**. The national bourgeoisie (excluding the compradors) in numerous oppressed nations has taken part in national anti-imperialist revolutions, although their role has always been one of conciliation, attempts to limit the revolutionary struggle and, eventually, bitter struggle against the carrying of the revolution through to the end. The most recent examples of this have been in the anti-imperialist revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua.

The extreme weakness of the capitalists of the oppressed nations in the United States and their dependence on U.S. imperialism severely limits the possibility of their participation in revolutionary wars. However, under conditions in which the Anglo-American imperialists are severely weakened by war or revolution, and in which there arises a powerful national revolutionary movement that appears headed for victory, it is conceivable that smaller and more independent national capitalists could side with the revolution. The proletariat would, of course, welcome this assistance, while at the same time fighting to assure proletarian hegemony in the revolutionary movement, and safeguarding it against bourgeois treachery.

Notes

1. Frederick Engels, note to *The Communist Manifesto*, reproduced in *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, Lewis Feuer, Ed., New York, Doubleday-Anchor, 1959, p. 7.

2. Karl Marx, *Capital* V. 1, p. 308.

3. Frederick Engels, "Synopsis of Capital", *Engels on Capital*, New York, International Publishers, 1937, p. 75.

4. The data in Table A-1 is from *The State of Small Business: A Report of the President*, Small Business Administration (SBA), 1982, p. 190. Because this source classifies companies by number of employees it is useful in identifying the social classes that are represented by these companies. We have classified all companies with over five employees as capitalist but, of course, the selection of any particular number as the dividing line between capitalist and petty bourgeois is necessarily somewhat arbitrary. In today's conditions, an employer who has five or more employees, in most cases, is no longer required to participate in productive work himself, but dedicates his entire work time to the supervision of his workforce and the sale of its products. He, therefore, leaves the world of the petty bourgeoisie and enters the world of the capitalist (see Karl Marx, *Capital* V. 1, pp. 307-309, for his discussion of the minimum amount of money necessary for a "small master" to "metamorphose himself into a capitalist"). Of course, the number of employees necessary for this transition varies depending on the rate of surplus value in a particular sector and enterprise at a particular time. In 1898 Lenin cited one study of the furniture industry in Moscow which related that:

"The employment of 2 or 3 workers provides the proprietor with such a small surplus that he has to work alongside of them.... The employment of five workers already gives the proprietor enough to enable him to give up manual labour in some measure, to take it easy somewhat, and to engage mainly in the last two business functions" (i.e., purchase of material and sale of goods). "As soon as the number of wage workers reaches 10 or exceeds this figure, the proprietor not only gives up manual labour but practically ceases to supervise his workers: he appoints a foreman for the purpose.... He now becomes a small capitalist, a 'born master'". (Lenin, *Collected Works*, V. 3, p. 358-9)

Our division of companies into social class categories corresponds, to a certain extent, with broad categories used by the SBA: companies with less than five employees (petty bourgeois) the SBA calls "family businesses"; companies with more than five hundred employees (large capitalists), the SBA calls "large businesses", while it calls companies with over five thousand employees (monopoly capitalists) "government-sized businesses". This division understates monopoly capitalist control because many of the smaller companies are also controlled by monopoly bourgeois families and the monopoly corporations.

The data in this chart excludes the great majority of the petty proprietors – those who employ no labor. However, this lower stratum, while relatively numerous and important socially and politically, are economically inconsequential. According to Internal Revenue statistics in 1977 there were 9,295,000 businesses that had less than \$25,000 in annual business receipts but all of these businesses put together accounted for less than 1.3% of total U.S.

business receipts (*Statistical Abstract 1981*, Census Bureau, p. 534). The petty bourgeoisie will be discussed in greater detail in another section of this article.

5. *The State of Small Business: A Report of the President*, SBA, 1982, p. 207.

6. Lawrence White, "Aggregate Concentration in the United States", *Journal of Industrial Economics*, March 1981.

7. Ibid.

8. Phillip Blumberg, *The Mega-Corporation in American Society*, figures from 1973, p. 85.

9. James Smith, in *Data on the Distribution of Wealth in the United States*, Budget Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, 1977, p. 181.

10. Ferdinand Lundberg, *The Rich and the Super Rich*, New York, Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1968, pp. 140-162, 211-319.

11. Ibid., and "The Richest People in America" *Forbes*, Fall, 1983.

12. *U.S. Government Organizational Manual* – various years

Council on Foreign Relations Annual Report – various years

Latin America and Empire Report, Nov. 1971, North American Congress on Latin America

Who's Who in America – various years.

13. Alan Crawford, *Thunder on the Right*, N.Y., Pantheon Books, 1980

Michael C. Jensen, "The Pews of Philadelphia," *New York Times*, Oct. 10, 1971

Karen Rothmyer, "Citizen Scaife," *Columbia Journalism Review*, July/Aug., 1981, p. 41

"Do You Know These Godfathers?," *Mother Jones*, Feb./March, 1981, p. 33;

The New Right, Michigan Education Ass'n, 1980.

14. *1977 Survey of Minority Owned Business Enterprises: Summary*, Census Bureau, 1980.

15. *Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1981*, (1977 figures), Census Bureau, p. 534.

16. *1977 Survey of Minority Owned Business Enterprises: Summary*, Census Bureau 1980.

17. *Black Enterprise*, May and June, 1982.

18. *Black Enterprise*, May, 1982.

19. *Black Enterprise*, June, 1982.

20. *Black Enterprise*, May, 1982 (Mathematical inconsistency [101 total businesses] in original source).

21. "The Black Directors", *Black Enterprise*, Sept., 1973.

22. "General Motors Notice of Annual Meeting of Stockholders", 1976.

23. *Black Enterprise*, Nov., 1981, p. 44.

24. *Black Enterprise*, May and June 1982.

25. *Who's Who in America*, 1976 and 1980.

26. Ibid., 1980.

27. Gus Hall, *The Crisis of U.S. Capitalism and the Fight Back*, p. 70.

28. *New Program of the CPUSA* (May 1970), New York, New Outlook Publishers, 1970, p. 79.

29. Ibid. p. 80. In addition to the CPUSA's "strategy" of alliance with the non-monopoly bourgeoisie in an "Anti-monopoly Coalition", it promotes "tactical" alliances with the liberal wing of the monopoly bourgeoisie. This "tactical alliance" has been a long-time policy of the CPUSA. Its most recent expression is the slogan of building an "All Peoples Front Against Reaganism." According to CPUSA leader, Henry Winston, such political representatives of the monopoly bourgeoisie as Averel Harriman, George Kennan, and Robert McNamara (who as Secretary of Defense prosecuted the Vietnam War), are envisioned as participating in this front. In reality this is no "temporary tactic". For decades the CPUSA has tailored its entire activity so that it would be acceptable to the bourgeois liberals. It has given up even the pretense of supporting the revolutionary overthrow of the monopoly bourgeoisie.

II. Proletariat

The proletariat is, in Engels' words, "the class of modern wage labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live".¹ The concentration of the means of production in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the expropriation of the small producers is mirrored by the growth of the proletarian class. At the turn of the century the majority of the U.S. labor force was still made up of farmers and other small proprietors. By 1940, the importance of the petty proprietors had declined greatly, but they still made up over 22% of the labor force.² By 1982 the number of petty proprietors had been so reduced that they made up less than 10% of the labor force. Nearly 90% of the labor force had been converted into wage workers.³

The extreme degree of economic concentration and class polarization can be further seen by the fact that only 6% of wage workers in the private sector work for the petty proprietors; the remaining 94% work for the capitalist class (employers of five or more workers). The majority work for large capitalist enterprises that employ at least five hundred workers.⁴

U.S. society has been almost completely polarized into a tiny number of large capitalist property owners and a massive number of propertyless wage workers. Not all of those who work for wages, however, are proletarians. The population that works for wages is divided into two fundamentally distinct classes – the proletariat and the petty bourgeois employees. Both of these classes own no means of production and are compelled to sell their labor power to the capitalists. However, the proletarian wage-earner and the petty bourgeois wage-earner are distinguished by differences in the nature of their work, the conditions of their work and the level of their compensation.

The great mass of the wage-earning population are proletarians. The characteristics that distinguish this class from the petty-bourgeois strata of wage-earners are its separation from the responsibilities of management, the relatively greater weight of manual labor in its work, the relatively smaller amount of education required to carry out its work, and, for the great majority, lower wages and worse working conditions. Out of some 96,000,000 wage and salary workers in the United States, more than 68,000,000, or 71 %, are proletarians (see Table B-1).

Table B-1

Proletarian Occupations (1981)

Government Classification	Main Occupations	Employed Full-time⁶	Employed Part-time⁷	Unemployed⁸	Seasonal⁹	Total
Operatives (Non-transport)	Manufacturing and Mining Machine Operators, etc.	9,440,000	778,000	1,781,000		11,999,000
Transport Operatives	Drivers, Forklift Drivers, etc.	2,792,000	402,000	382,000		3,576,000

Laborers (Non-farm)	Construction Laborers, Freight Handlers, Stock Handlers, etc.	3,227,000	1,039,000	935,000		5,201,000
Farm workers		766,000	217,000	179,000	1,259,000	2,421,000
Craft workers	Building Trades, Metal Trades, Maintenance Workers, Mechanics, Repairers, Printers, etc.	8,786,000	525,000	1,253,000		10,564,000
Clerical	Secretaries, Bookkeepers, Computer Operators, Telephone Operators, Postal Workers, Clerks, etc.	13,839,000	3,883,000	1,110,000		18,832,000
Retail Workers	Retail Clerks	1,411,000	1,649,000	163,000		3,223,000
Service Workers	Janitors, Food Service Workers, Health Service Workers, Childcare Workers, Household Workers, Guards, etc.	6,320,000	5,208,000	1,303,000		12,831,000
Total		46,581,000	13,701,000	7,106,000	1,259,000	68,647,000
Total, excluding "self-employed"						68,227,000

Explanation of Table B-1

The figures in Table B-1 are based on data provided by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) on the number of workers in the occupational classifications used by the government that are principally composed of proletarians. The BLS occupational classifications have a number of weaknesses, the main one being that they cover up class distinctions by including owners, petty bourgeois employees and proletarians within the same

classifications. Therefore we had to separate the bourgeois and petty bourgeois sectors from the proletarian sectors in a number of classifications.

First of all, where possible, we have removed all supervisors from the classifications of clerical workers, service workers, farm workers and "blue collar" workers (craft workers, operatives and laborers). We have divided the BLS classification of "sales workers" into sales representatives, who are petty bourgeois, and retail sales workers, who are proletarians. From the classification of "service workers" we removed 796,000 police, firefighters, sheriffs and bailiffs who are part of the special sector of armed enforcers of bourgeois rule.

We have also removed 420,000 people from these classifications who identified themselves as "self-employed," indicating that, although they officially worked for wages, they **owned** the corporations that they worked for.⁵ Presumably, most of these are petty bourgeois craft workers, such as master plumbers, who have incorporated their businesses. Because they officially pay themselves wages, the government statisticians include them among wage and salary workers. A detailed breakdown of these "blue collar" owners by occupation was not provided, so although it is likely that most of them were in the craft occupations, we subtracted the total number (420,000) from the total of all proletarian occupations.

The wage and salary workers not included in this table, those in the petty bourgeois occupations, are listed in Table C-4.

The petty bourgeois section of the wage-earning population, so-called because of its intermediary position between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, is composed of several broad groups of employees. First, there are the management personnel employed by the capitalists, including the administrators of the bourgeois state. Among this group are included the capitalists' sales representatives, and all supervisors and foremen. Second, and closely related to the first group, there are the officers of the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state (military officers, police officers, etc.). Third, there is the intelligentsia, composed of the professional employees and upper-level technical workers. The wage-earning petty bourgeoisie will be discussed in a separate section.

Productive and Non-Productive Labor

The distinction that Marxism makes between productive and non-productive labor does not aim to distinguish between the utility of different kinds of labor; its purpose is to analyze the relations of production under capitalism. "Productive labour", wrote Marx, "is... – in the system of capitalist production – labour which produces **surplus value** for its employer."¹⁰ Marx wrote that it did not matter whether labor produced material goods or whether it produced services; what mattered was that it produced surplus value for the capitalist that employed it. Moreover, Marx wrote:

"The same kind of labour can be productive or unproductive.... A singer who sells her song for her own account is an unproductive labourer. But the same singer commissioned by an entrepreneur to sing in order to make money for him is a productive labourer; for she produces capital."¹¹

Productive labor, therefore, refers first of all to labor in the employ of capital and not to labor which is not employed by capital (i.e., the labor of the small proprietor, the labor of the government administrator, domestic labor). Second, among the labor employed by capital,

productive labor refers only to that labor which produces surplus value. Only labor which directly produces the goods and services from which the capitalists derive surplus value is productive; the realms of commerce, finance, etc. are necessary for capitalist production but they do not produce surplus value.

"It is in the nature of things that labor consisting merely of intermediate operations connected partly with calculating values, partly with realizing them and partly with re-converting the realized money into means of production, is labour whose magnitude therefore depends on the quantity of the produced values that have to be realized, and does not act as a cause, like directly productive labour, but rather as an effect, of the relative magnitudes and masses of these values.... The capitalist increases the number of these labourers whenever he has more value and profits to realize. The increase of this labour is always a result, never a cause of more surplus value."¹²

The proletariat as a class carries out nearly all of the productive labor in society. This does not mean that all sectors of the proletariat are engaged in productive labor, or that productive labor is limited to the proletariat.* The proletariat, on the whole, however, is the class charged with productive labor. On the other hand, the petty bourgeois wage earners, on the whole, specialize in the non-productive sphere, with commerce, finance, government administration, etc. being their special responsibilities.

*For instance: bank tellers, who are proletarians, produce no surplus value through their labor, while engineers and foremen, who are petty bourgeois employees, produce surplus value to the extent that their labor is directly connected to the production of commodities. In this regard, Marx wrote:

"With the development of the specifically capitalist mode of production, in which many labourers work together in the production of the same commodity, the direct relation which their labour bears to the object produced naturally varies greatly. For example the unskilled labourers in a factory referred to earlier have nothing directly to do with the working up of the raw material. The workmen who function as overseers of those directly engaged in working up the raw material are one step further away; the works engineer has yet another relation and in the main works only with his brain, and so on....

"It is indeed the characteristic feature of the capitalist mode of production that it separates the various kinds of labour from each other, therefore also mental and manual labour – or kinds of labour in which one or another predominates – and distributes them among different people. This however does not prevent the material product from being the common product of these persons, or their **common product** embodied in material wealth; any more than on the other hand it prevents or in any way alters the relation of each one of these persons to capital being that of wage-labourer and in this pre-eminent sense being that of **productive labourer**. All these persons are not only directly engaged in the production of material wealth, but they exchange their labour **directly** for money as capital, and consequently **directly** reproduce, in addition to their wages a surplus value for the capitalist." (Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value, Part I*, p. 412)

Marx distinguished between the labor of supervisors who directly oversee production and the labor of the rest of capitalist management which is involved in the purchase of the means of production, raw materials and labor power and the sale of the finished product (which are essentially commercial functions), identifying the former as productive labor and the latter as non-productive.

The productive sectors of the proletariat include not only those involved in the production of material goods (industrial workers, agricultural workers, construction workers, etc.) but also those involved in the transportation of these goods (truck drivers, railroad workers, warehouse

workers, etc.) and those who render services sold by the capitalists (restaurant and hotel workers, laundry workers, hospital workers etc.) The sectors of the proletariat in the non-productive sphere include private domestic wage workers, retail clerks, and clerical, janitorial and maintenance workers in the spheres of finance, commerce, government administration, etc.

As capitalism has developed, the number of productive workers has declined relative to the number of non-productive workers. This relative decline is, fundamentally, the result of the tremendous development of the productivity of labor. With the introduction of ever more modern technology and the intensification of labor, the same number of workers produces a much greater quantity of goods (and surplus value). This, on the one hand, limits the number of workers required in production and, on the other hand, increases the number of workers required to market these massive quantities of goods, keep track of the capitalists finances, etc. "[T]he extraordinary productiveness of modern industry", wrote Karl Marx in *Capital*, "accompanied as it is by both a more extensive and more intense exploitation of labour-power in all other spheres of production, allows of the unproductive employment of a larger and larger part of the working class...."¹³

The increasing productivity of labor is the fundamental factor which both causes and allows the capitalists to employ a larger amount of unproductive labor. Other characteristics of the capitalist mode of production, however, also act to inflate the unproductive sector. The spontaneity of the capitalist market requires the development of massive, redundant and competitive marketing apparatuses. Private appropriation leads to sharp contention between capitalists over the distribution among them of the surplus value appropriated from the workers, with all of the industrial, commercial and financial enterprises building up extensive bureaucracies for this purpose. Finally, the class antagonisms inherent under capitalism require a tremendous state apparatus for the control and repression of the exploited classes. The size of this state apparatus, and especially its repressive organs, has grown during the imperialist era as the contradictions of capitalism have become more severe.

In the following pages we will discuss some of the changes that have taken place in the structure of the working class and the current characteristics of three different sectors of the class: the industrial proletariat, the agricultural proletariat, and proletarian clerical and technical workers.

The Industrial Proletariat

The industrial proletariat is the heart of the working class and has traditionally been its largest and most powerful section. The decisive role of the industrial proletariat is derived, first, from the productive nature of its work, and, second, from the collective and large-scale nature of its work.

Proletarians who work in production are in the best position to understand the nature of capitalist exploitation. It is their hands that produce the goods and services which provide sustenance for all of society. Factory workers, farm workers, construction workers, contract janitors, etc., are in a position to see that the product of their labor is the source of the capitalists' profits. This picture of the essence of capitalist exploitation, which is critical to the development of class consciousness, is not so readily visible to the bank teller, the government clerk, or the private domestic worker. In addition, the conditions of work in the productive sector sharpen class antagonisms. Industrial workers are driven by capital to continually intensify their labor to the limits of human endurance, and their workplaces are almost universally dirty, unhealthy, and dangerous. Of course, many workers in the non-productive sector suffer under similar

conditions, but these conditions are most extreme where material production and the creation of surplus value are involved.

The industrial proletariat stands out among productive workers, not only because it is the largest contingent of the productive workers, but also because in manufacturing and mining production takes place in the most collective fashion, and, on the largest scale. * Many factories and mines employ thousands and even hundreds of thousands of workers. The highly collective nature of this work imbues the industrial workers with a sense of discipline and organization which is invaluable in waging the class struggle.

The massive concentration of workers facilitates organization and political and economic activity. The dependence of the economy, first and foremost, on the production of industrial goods gives the industrial proletariat decisive economic strength. The concentration of industrial production in the hands of the monopoly bourgeoisie (to an even greater degree than other economic sectors) places the main contingent of the industrial proletariat in a position of direct confrontation with the ruling sector of the capitalist class. For these reasons the industrial proletariat has always played the decisive role in the working class movement.

The industrial proletariat includes within its ranks major contingents of all nationalities that make up the U.S. working class and a large proportion of industrial workers are women (39% of "non-transport operatives", an occupational classification that principally refers to the operators of factory machinery).¹⁴ Some industries are predominantly female (i.e. textiles, electronics, food processing) while others are predominantly male (i.e. mining, iron and steel, chemicals). National composition varies by region, and even though the majority of industries have been integrated, systematic discrimination and artificial stratification have kept national minority workers, in most cases, in the lowest paying, hardest and most dangerous jobs. There are, however, a great number of Anglo-American and national minority and male and female workers laboring side by side in the same jobs in many factories and this is a major factor which builds unity within the industrial working class.

In 1979, according to government statistics, there were 15,787,000 production and related workers employed in the manufacturing and mining sectors.¹⁵ This number specifically included production, maintenance, construction, repair, material handling and power plant workers in manufacturing and mining. This then was the approximate size of the employed section of the industrial proletariat, to which must be added the several million industrial workers who were on layoff.

The size of the industrial proletariat has varied greatly over the years. The industrialization of the economy led to the growth in the absolute and relative size of the industrial proletariat until World War II, although this growth was stunted and irregular because of the recurring, severe, capitalist economic crises. During the colossal industrial expansion that accompanied World War II the number of industrial workers grew to an all-time high of over 16,000,000. During the industrial contraction that followed the war, millions of workers were laid-off with the number of industrial workers reaching a low of 12,629,000 in 1949.¹⁶ Since then the number of industrial

* Here we use **industrial** to mean manufacturing and mining as opposed to other productive sectors of the economy such as agriculture, construction, transport, etc. **Industrial capital**, in a broader sense refers to all productive capital. See Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 750-751.

workers has grown again, reaching, as we reported, 15,787,000 in 1979. This growth was once again marked by severe contractions during the periods of industrial crises.

Another long-term trend, however, also began to limit the growth of the industrial proletariat. The accelerated introduction of labor-saving technology and the intensification of labor had reached the point that the size of the industrial proletariat had begun to decline in comparison to other sectors of the working class. In 1947, the first year for which comparable statistics are available, the industrial proletariat made up over 41% of all "non-supervisory workers on private non-agricultural payrolls." By 1979 this proportion had fallen to just over 26% (despite the fact that the absolute number of industrial workers had grown).¹⁷

The decline in the relative size of the industrial proletariat does not in the least take away from its role as the leading and decisive section of the working class. This leading role is connected with social and economic factors (the productive, collective, large-scale and decisive nature of its work) and not with its relative size. In czarist Russia, the industrial proletariat was only a small minority of the working masses (most of whom were peasants) but this did not diminish its leading role in the revolution. The industrial proletariat plays the leading role in the working class movement in all capitalist countries regardless of its size relative to the entire working population.



"The decisive role of the industrial proletariat is derived, first, from the productive nature of its work, and, second, from the collective and large-scale nature of its work."

The Agricultural Proletariat

The size of the agricultural proletariat has declined greatly, along with the entire agricultural workforce (farmers and farm workers alike), as agriculture has become increasingly mechanized. The number of hired farm workers, however, has not fallen nearly so fast as the number of farmers because the development of capitalism in agriculture means the replacement of the labor of small producers with the labor of hired workers. Thus, the size of the agricultural proletariat in proportion to the entire agricultural labor force has grown greatly: from 25% in 1910 to 44% in 1981, according to U.S. government statistics.¹⁸ This figure, however, fails to completely show the importance of hired labor in agriculture in that, first, government figures greatly underestimate the number of hired farm workers and, second, the productivity of hired labor on large capitalist farms is tremendously greater than that of the small farmer on a small tract of land. The fact is that today the great bulk of all agricultural products are produced by hired labor on large capitalist farms. Government statistics indicate that since 1970, the number of hired agricultural jobs has not only grown relative to "family labor", but absolutely as well.¹⁹

The agricultural proletariat is the lowest paid and most oppressed section of the proletariat. With the development of large-scale capitalist farming, however, the ability of the agricultural proletariat to organize itself has grown greatly. The unionization of the farm workers on monopoly capitalist farms in Hawaii, California, Arizona and Florida after protracted and heroic struggles attests to this fact.

We have included in the number of farm workers, in addition to the 1,162,000 hired agricultural workers listed as full-time, part-time and unemployed, another 1,259,000 farm workers whom the government statisticians classify as "not in the labor force" because of the seasonal nature of their work.²⁰ Still, this total number (2,421,000) greatly underestimates the actual number of farm workers, especially migrant workers and undocumented foreign workers. For instance, the official government statistics reported that there were less than 59,000 "Hispanic" migrant farm workers in the entire country.²¹ Another survey, however, which studied the migrant labor force in Hidalgo County, Texas, reported that 40,000 Mexican-Americans leave this single county each spring to do farm work elsewhere in the U.S.²² Obviously, 68% of all "Hispanic" migrant farm workers do not live in Hidalgo County! The severe limitation of the official statistics about farm workers is illustrated by the national composition of the workers that are counted in the government survey: in 1979, 75% were white while only 12% (318,240) were "Hispanic", and 13% (344,760) were Black and other nationalities.²³ There are clearly far more farm workers from the oppressed nations than these figures indicate.

In addition to the hundreds of thousands of Afro-American farm workers in the Black Belt South and the hundreds of thousands of native Chicano farm workers in Texas and the Southwest, hundreds of thousands, if not over a million workers come to labor in the fields of the U.S. from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Haiti and other countries. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) estimated that there were some 10 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. in mid-1977, in addition to 4 million immigrants with legal work permits (green cards). The number of undocumented immigrants, the INS added, was growing by about 10% per year. Of the undocumented workers apprehended by the INS, about 90% are Mexicans and of the Mexican workers who are employed at the time they are apprehended, about 60% are working in agriculture.²⁴ It would surely not be an exaggeration to conclude that the actual number of farm workers could be more than twice as high as the official government estimates.

The figures that we are using also do not reflect the great number of children working in the fields because only workers 16 years of age or older are included. A special government report in 1969 estimated that "approximately 375,000 children between the ages of 10 and 13 perform hired farm labor."²⁵



"With the development of large-scale capitalist farming, the ability of the agricultural proletariat to organize itself has grown greatly."

Proletarian Clerical and Technical Workers

Until relatively recently workers employed in the capitalists' offices were a small group, the great majority of whom enjoyed the privileges allowed petty bourgeois employees. With the further development of capitalism, however, the number of office workers has grown tremendously, and a sharp class differentiation has taken place among them. The lower strata, which includes the great majority of clerical workers and a growing number of technical workers, have been made to conform more and more to the conditions of proletarian work. Marx foresaw this development and, speaking of workers in the sphere of commerce, explained the reasons why these workers would be reduced to the level of the common proletarian:

"The commercial worker, in the strict sense of the term, * belongs to the better paid class of wage-workers – to those whose labour is classed as skilled and stands above average labour. Yet the wage tends to fall, even in relation to average labour, with the advance of the capitalist mode of production. This is due partly to the division of labour in the office, implying a one-sided development of the labour capacity, the cost of which does not fall entirely upon the capitalist, since the labourer's skill develops by itself through the exercise of his function, and all the more rapidly as the division of labour makes it more one-sided. Secondly, because the necessary training, knowledge of commercial practices, languages, etc., is more and more rapidly, easily, universally and cheaply reproduced with the progress of science and public education the more the capitalist mode of production directs teaching methods, etc., towards practical purposes. The universality of public education enables capitalists to recruit such labourers from classes that

* Meaning those involved in purely commercial activities, such as bookkeeping, as opposed to the transport, packing, storage and distribution of goods.

formerly had no access to such trades and were accustomed to a lower standard of living. Moreover, this increases supply and hence competition. With few exceptions, the labour power of these people is therefore devaluated with the progress of capitalist production."²⁶

Clerical Workers. These developments were only in their infancy at that time (1865). The development of the clerical workforce over the last century shows that Marx's conclusions have been fully verified with time. In 1870, according to the U.S. Census, there were only 98,000 "clerical and kindred workers" making up about 3/4 of 1% of all "gainful workers."²⁷ As a strata, clerical workers were considered highly skilled and carried out many of the functions of management; in 1900 three quarters of them were male and they typically made twice the wages earned by production workers in their respective industries.²⁸ The change over the last century has been dramatic. By 1981 the number of clerical workers had grown to 18,832,000 and they made up over 17% of the labor force.²⁹ Seventy eight percent of all clerical workers were women. The average weekly pay of clerical workers was \$233, which was about \$10 below the average pay of most factory workers.³⁰ The reasons for these changes were exactly those that Marx spoke of. Clerical work has been broken down into a series of detail jobs, each of which requires a relatively limited amount of training (usually available in high school), and most of which have been reduced to manual operations on the machinery of the office: typewriters, word processing machines, key punch machines, copy machines, billing machines, switchboards, postage meters, etc.

In the financial centers, corporate headquarters and government offices clerical work has been organized into office assembly lines divided into data processing centers, word processing centers, switchboards, etc. which employ thousands of workers in single concentrations with a high degree of division of labor. The epitome of the "factory organization" of clerical workers is the post office where thousands of postal employees work in assembly line fashion in the major distribution centers. In these massive clerical operations there is certainly no place for the antiquated relations of paternalism which characterized the old capitalist office. Fully developed capitalist/proletarian relations are encountered complete with systematic (and low) wage scales, time clocks and time-study work procedures.

Work in the capitalist office has been divided into two increasingly distinct strata – an upper, petty bourgeois stratum composed of managers and professionals and a lower, proletarian stratum composed of lower-level clerical workers. This division can be clearly seen in computer operations. On the one hand, there are the computer analysts and programmers, who are considered professionals, have fairly extensive training, do almost exclusively mental work, and receive high salaries (1981 average weekly pay: \$454). On the other hand, there are the computer and key punch operators, who are considered clerical workers, receive a minimum of training, largely are limited to mechanically entering information, and receive low wages (\$238).³¹

Among clerical workers there are certain upper strata which still carry out some of the functions of management. This is true not only of those who supervise clerical work, but also of a small number of upper-level workers in the capitalist bookkeeping, payroll, timekeeping, bill collecting departments, etc. (the vast majority of the hundreds of thousands of workers in these departments, however, are simply lower-level clerical operatives). Certain occupations among clerical workers have much in common with lower-level management occupations, both in the nature of their work and the level of their compensation, such as production expeditors and controllers (1981 average weekly pay: \$328) and estimators and investigators (\$319).³²

That intermediate strata still exist between management and clerical occupations is not surprising – at one time there was little that distinguished the two. The whole process of class differentiation in the office and proletarianization of clerical workers, however, works to narrow these intermediate strata and produce two ever more distinct class forces within the capitalist office.

Technical Workers. The same process of class differentiation that has taken place in the capitalist office is also taking place in the scientific and technical spheres of work. Employees in these spheres have traditionally enjoyed the status of petty bourgeois employees, with the accompanying privileges. As these fields have grown and developed, however, capitalism has been impelled to create proletarian strata in these fields as well. Engineering offices, scientific laboratories, etc., many of which now employ hundreds or even thousands of workers, have a high degree of labor stratification ranging from engineers, chemists and other professionals at the top (themselves highly stratified) to the many detail workers at the bottom who perform increasingly routine and mechanical tasks. The more complex the technology involved the more routine become the tasks of the lower level technical workers who increasingly are converted into machine operatives akin to their counterparts in the factory or the clerical office. The introduction of computer drafting machines, for instance, further stratifies design work between engineers and architects, on the one hand, and drafting data entry operators on the other.

Employment as a detail technical worker in many cases requires no more than a high school diploma; in other cases the completion of a special technical course is necessary. In any case, an increasing number of these workers are drawn from the working class and continue to share the fundamental class characteristics of the proletariat. Those classified as technical workers by the government are a diverse group with diverse characteristics. Health technicians (X-ray technicians, clinical laboratory technicians, dental technicians, etc.), most of whom are women, were paid an average weekly wage of \$287 in 1981. Radio operators made an average of only \$233 a week. Electrical and electronic technicians, on the other hand, made an average of \$387 a week.³³ In the clerical field class differentiation has already produced a large and clearly identifiable proletarian stratum. This process is at an earlier stage in the field of technical work, and the proletarian stratum is smaller and more difficult to distinguish precisely. What is unmistakable, however, is that this class differentiation is taking place.

For the purpose of figuring the overall number of proletarian and petty bourgeois wage-earners (and only for this purpose) we have included all workers classified by the government as clerical workers, with the exception of clerical supervisors, among the proletariat, and all workers identified by the government as technical workers among the petty bourgeois employees. Precisely identifying the number of clerical workers that belong among the petty bourgeoisie, and the number of technical workers that belong among the proletariat would have been a very difficult task, especially given the limitation of U.S. government statistics. Our failure to do this is not of great consequence in terms of the overall size of either the proletariat or the wage-earning petty bourgeoisie. The relatively small number of petty bourgeois clerical workers is more or less comparable with the number of proletarian technical workers. In any case, the number of workers that have been misclassified in both of these groups add up to less than 2% of the labor force.

White Collar and .Blue Collar Workers. Bourgeois social "science" divides the working population into "white collar" and "blue collar" workers, "white collar" referring broadly to

office work and "blue collar" referring broadly to work in the shop. Both of these terms are used to cover up class distinctions.

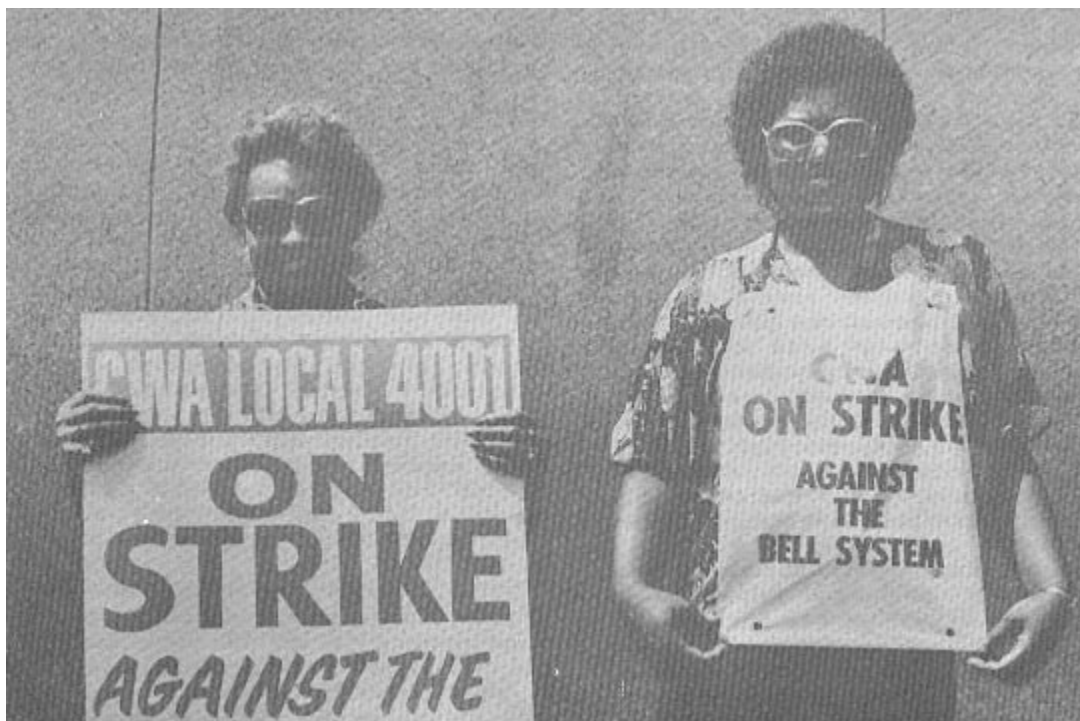
The classification "blue collar" includes both proletarian laborers and petty bourgeois supervisors (not to mention "independent" craftsmen who are small proprietors or even capitalists). The classification "white collar" includes both petty bourgeois managers and professionals (as well as small proprietors and capitalist owners) and proletarian clerical, retail and technical workers. Nevertheless the term "blue collar" assumes a popular meaning akin to proletarian while the term "white collar" assumes a popular meaning akin to petty bourgeois employee.

Bourgeois social "scientists", using these anti-scientific classifications, attempt to show that capitalist society is becoming "deproletarianized" and that the working population is being "upgraded" by pointing to the relative increase in "white collar" workers compared to "blue collar" workers. The increasing ratio of "white collar" workers to "blue collar" workers is a reflection of the relative increase of the number of non-productive workers compared to productive workers in capitalist society.* This shift in no way reflects a decrease in the relative size of the proletariat. The exact opposite is true – it is the proletarian strata among the "white collar" workforce that are growing the fastest. In 1870 clerical workers made up only 13% of all "white collar" workers while today they make up nearly 40% of this category.³⁴ The other proletarian sections of the "white collar" workforce, retail sales clerks and lower level technical workers, make up another 8%, more or less, of "white collar" workers.³⁵ Together then, the proletarian strata among "white collar" workers today make up nearly half of this group, and their weight within it is growing.

Any suggestion that capitalist society is being "deproletarianized" is absurd. The great mass of the people have never been so removed from ownership of the means of production. These means of production have never been centralized into so few hands. There has never been such a great division between mental and manual labor, and between the organization of production and production itself. In short, there has never been such great class polarization as there is today. Moreover, the process of proletarianization is continuing relentlessly and irreversibly with the further centralization of capital, the ruthless expropriation of the remaining small proprietors, the growth in the scale of capitalist operations and the increasing division of labor within them. The size of the proletariat in this or that sector may change, workers may be shifted from one sector to another, but the overall size of the proletariat is always growing.

"Despite the changes that have taken place in the contemporary capitalist world," wrote Enver Hoxha of the Party of Labor of Albania, "the working class is stripped of any kind of ownership over the means of production, of its management, organization and aim... contrary to the sermons of the bourgeois and revisionist ideologists, capitalist society is not being deproletarianized, but on the contrary is being proletarianized continuously."³⁶

* The term "white collar," however, is not synonymous with non-productive labor and the term "blue collar" is not synonymous with productive labor. "White collar" operators at the telephone company, for instance, perform productive labor while "blue collar" maintenance workers employed by government offices perform unproductive labor.



"With the development of capitalism the number of office workers has grown tremendously and a sharp class differentiation has taken place among them."

The Labor Aristocracy

The most critical question that we must address in analyzing the U.S. proletariat is the extent and influence of the labor aristocracy – the privileged upper stratum of the working class.

"One of the chief causes hampering the revolutionary working class movement in the developed countries," wrote Lenin, "is the fact that because of their colonial possessions and the super-profits gained by finance capital, etc., the capitalists of these countries have been able to create a relatively larger and more stable labour aristocracy, a section which comprises a small minority of the working class. This minority enjoys better terms of employment and is most imbued with a narrow craft minded spirit and with petty bourgeois and imperialist prejudices. It forms the real social pillar of the Second International, of the reformists and the 'Centrists'; at present it might even be called the social mainstay of the bourgeoisie. No preparation of the proletariat for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie is possible, even in the preliminary sense, unless an immediate, systematic, extensive and open struggle is waged against this stratum...."³⁷

Numerous positions have been put forward about the extent of the labor aristocracy in the U.S. Right opportunists, represented in the first place by the Communist Party, USA, deny the existence of a bribed sector of the working class. Other pseudo-Marxists have advanced the thesis that the entire U.S. working class is bribed, or at least, that the industrial proletariat has been "bourgeoisified." Both these positions are wildly inaccurate and have been created to justify counterrevolutionary political lines. A correct understanding of the extent of the labor aristocracy in the U.S. must be based on a concrete analysis of the actual conditions of all the various sectors of the working class, and of the social and political role they play.

The condition of the U.S. working class can be compared to that of the British working class during the period of Britain's industrial monopoly and colonial hegemony during the second half of the 19th century. In 1885, Engels wrote:

"[D]uring the period of England's industrial monopoly the English working class have, to a certain extent, shared in the benefits of the monopoly. These benefits were very unequally parcelled out among them; the privileged minority pocketed the most, but even the great mass had, at least, a temporary share now and then."³⁸

According to Engels, the fact that the great mass of workers received "a temporary share now and then" did not mean that the entire working class was bribed, that it was in its interest to support imperialism, that it was no longer exploited, that it no longer suffered under capitalism, etc., as certain American pseudo-Marxists claim in regard to the U.S. working class (a position completely consistent with the propaganda of U.S. imperialism that "the workers and the capitalists have the same interests"). These benefits, said Engels, had led to a temporary decline in the proletarian socialist movement in Britain but, he added, these benefits would be eroded and the socialist movement would rise again.

Following World War II, the U.S. bourgeoisie enjoyed a monopoly position in imperialist plunder and world trade. It was able to create in the U.S. a relatively large and influential labor aristocracy and, at the same time, spread temporary and partial privileges to much larger sectors of the working class. A large trade union bureaucracy has been built under the administration of the labor aristocracy, staffed with the most loyal and pro-imperialist "labor leaders." It is the strength and influence of the labor aristocracy and the trade union bureaucracy that has temporarily retarded the revolutionary proletarian movement in the U.S.

We estimate that the labor aristocracy in the U.S. numbers some 5,700,000, or 8% of the proletarian class. This includes some 2,000,000 workers in the industrial sector, some 1,300,000 workers in the construction sector, some 1,000,000 workers in the transport sector with the remainder in the utilities, services, financial, commercial and government sectors. In the following pages we will examine the extent of the labor aristocracy in the two sectors where most of this stratum is concentrated: construction and industry. We will also discuss the trade union bureaucracy and the class position of those who administer it. First, however, a few general characteristics of the labor aristocracy must be discussed.

The distinction between the labor aristocracy and the common proletariat has its origin in the division between skilled and unskilled labor that arose with the development of capitalism. The system of handicraft production, typical of the feudal era in Europe, relied on the skilled labor of the artisan. Capitalist cooperation brought artisans together in large workshops and, subsequently, manufacturing led to the strict segmentation of labor and created a new stratum of unskilled workers alongside the skilled workers. These unskilled workers could be paid less than the skilled ones because the value of their labor power did not include the additional costs of training. With the introduction of machinery, the number of unskilled and semi-skilled workers was greatly enlarged, while the number of skilled workers was reduced. Though feudalism was not established in the U.S., handicraft methods were the basis of early production in the colonial era, therefore the evolution of the capitalist workshop proceeded along the same lines as in Europe.³⁹

At the dawn of the imperialist era the great mass of workers had been reduced to performing unskilled and semi-skilled work, while mental and skilled labor had been increasingly

monopolized in the hands of a small elite. The capitalists nurtured the small number of skilled workers into a labor aristocracy, providing wages and other privileges that, in comparison with those of the common worker, far outstripped any justification in terms of the greater value of skilled labor. The capitalists, with conscious purpose, stratified the workforce to the maximum extent possible, with the responsibilities, compensation and working conditions of the different strata specifically designed to divide the working class politically.

"Historically, the bourgeoisie of every country," wrote Filip Kota of the Party of Labor of Albania, "has bought off some of the qualified workers, the working class aristocracy, and detached them from the masses of the proletariat, by providing them with easy jobs and posts with fewer headaches but greater rewards. Fat salaries, favours and advantages brought about their gradual estrangement from the working class, both economically and ideologically. [T]he bourgeoisie is interested in increasing the ranks of this aristocracy by artificially increasing the number of job qualification and categories which leads to pronounced differences between the wages of the ordinary workers and those of the specialized ones, and by promoting the latter to various jobs and responsibilities in and outside production."⁴⁰

With the introduction of imperialist superprofits the bourgeoisie of the developed capitalist countries have been able to effectively bribe the top stratum of workers, the labor aristocracy, and turn it into a trusted and loyal ally.

The selection of those workers to receive special training is not a matter left up to chance. The capitalists select and promote a certain category of workers to skilled positions. Whether this selection is the responsibility of the capitalists' supervisors or of the reactionary union officials (who are direct beneficiaries of the traditions which maintain the labor aristocracy), the results are the same. National minority and women workers are, for the most part, excluded from skilled positions in order to perpetuate the special oppression of these workers and inflame national chauvinism and male supremacy. In order to guarantee the political character of the labor aristocracy, the most "loyal" and reactionary workers are selected.

The size of the labor aristocracy, the jobs associated with it, and the extent of the privileges given to the workers holding these jobs, are not fixed permanently. The size and privileges of the labor aristocracy grew with the monopoly position of U.S. imperialism and its temporary revival following World War II. With the deepening of the economic crisis the capitalist class is forced to narrow the ranks of the labor aristocracy, reducing many to the position of common workers.

The labor aristocracy cannot be identified by any simple measure of skill because it is not primarily defined by skill, but by privileges. Some skilled workers are included among the labor aristocracy, others are not. A railroad car repairer may be no more skilled than an auto mechanic, simply measuring mechanical knowledge. But rail transport is critical to the bourgeoisie and it is therefore willing to pay a premium to preserve "labor peace" in this sector. Thus, the railroad car repairer is given the privileges of the labor aristocracy while the auto mechanic remains, more or less, a common worker.

Nor can the labor aristocracy be identified by a simple measure of wages. Wages vary considerably among regions and various economic sectors because of national oppression, women's oppression, the labor market, the organization of labor, the importance of an industry to the economy, etc. To one degree or another, the capitalists have created a labor aristocracy in every region and in every economic sector. The wages of the labor aristocracy are not set by any

country-wide standard. However, they are set in relation to the common wages in a particular region and industry.

An electrician in a Southern textile mill, for example, may only make half the wages of an electrician in a steel mill in the industrial Midwest; his wages may, in fact, be only slightly higher than those of a common worker, taking the average of all regions and all industries. But in the context of the Southern textile mill he is a labor aristocrat, receiving wages 50% higher than those received by most of the textile operatives (whose wages are particularly depressed because of special oppression).

In addition to money wages, moreover, he enjoys all the non-monetary privileges granted to industrial maintenance workers (including relief from having to do much work), and may receive other fringe benefits commonly received by labor aristocrats, such as the use of company tools and property for personal profit, the operation, in his free time, of concessions (drink machines, etc.) or other small businesses in the plant, etc. In identifying the labor aristocracy we must, therefore, consider a number of factors including wages and other privileges, taking into account all the conditions faced by each group of workers, and the particular conditions in each region and economic sector.

In addition to economic privileges the labor aristocracy receives political privileges unavailable to the masses of workers. Access to the bourgeois political system is afforded, in the first place, through the trade union apparatus, which is the bastion of the labor aristocracy. The legal trade unions are completely tied up with the bourgeois political parties: primarily with the Democratic Party and, in some cases, with the Republican Party.

Through their connections with the bourgeois political parties the labor aristocrats have access to the state apparatus to some extent, both on a national and local level. In some industrial centers like Chicago, the labor aristocracy plays a significant role in the Democratic Party and the local political bureaucracy. Many labor aristocrats serve as local Party precinct leaders (and so on) and receive all the traditional benefits built into these positions. Of course, their access to them is predicated on their reactionary political stand and they use these positions, not to fight for the interests of the working class, but to increase the influence of the labor aristocracy, to promote its political position and strengthen its ideological and political grip on the masses.

In addition to these institutions many labor aristocrats belong to a host of other political organizations which play extremely reactionary roles, such as the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. These organizations serve as mass bases for fascism among the working people. Their active membership is largely made up of small proprietors, petty bourgeois employees and labor aristocrats. All these organizations – the trade unions, the bourgeois political parties and the various other political organizations – serve as centers for bourgeois ideological and political indoctrination of the labor aristocracy, in order that they might best play their role as "the real agents of the bourgeoisie in the working class movement, the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class, real vehicles of reformism and chauvinism."⁴¹

The Labor Aristocracy in Construction. The most visible and one of the largest sections of the labor aristocracy has always been in the "building trades." The wages paid skilled union construction workers are far better than those paid the masses of workers and many receive compensation equal to that of lawyers, doctors, engineers and other petty bourgeois professionals. In 1980 the median weekly wage scale for union carpenters was \$489; for union plumbers, \$509; for union structural ironworkers, \$508; for union electricians, \$526, etc.⁴² The

median weekly wage for all union construction craft workers in 1980 was \$502, more than twice as high as typical proletarian wages.

The elite status of the construction craft workers has been perpetuated by the building trades unions. Craft unions are fundamentally different from industrial unions and are completely reactionary both in concept and practice. Organized along the lines of guilds, the craft unions have no interest in organizing the masses of workers or in fighting for the interests of the workers as a whole; on the contrary, they are interested in limiting entrance into their unions in order to protect the privileged position of their members.

The craft unions have arrogantly barred membership to women and national minority workers. A 1979 government survey of 317 locals of the Plumbers Union, for instance, showed that of 210,194 members over 92% were white and over 99.5% were men.⁴³ Entrance into craft unions is many times limited to relatives and friends of members, reinforcing the exclusive nature of these organizations. Craft unions consistently engage in strike-breaking against other unions and they are the most disgusting promoters of national chauvinism, imperialist patriotism, class collaboration and reaction.

In May, 1980 there were somewhat more than 1,000,000 construction craft workers who belonged to the building trades unions.⁴⁴ However, the majority of construction craft workers are excluded from the building trades unions (we say excluded because most of these workers undoubtedly would join the union if they were allowed, so as to receive union rates).⁴⁵ Non-union construction workers are paid dramatically less than their union counterparts. Non-union carpenters were paid an average of only \$252 a week in 1980; all other non-union construction craft workers made an average of only \$278 a week. Among these non-union construction craft workers earnings were sharply divergent – 142,000 (11%) made over \$400 a week, while 312,000 (24%) made less than \$200 a week.⁴⁶ Part of this divergence is attributable to regional differences but the main reason is the distinction between high-paid and low-paid crafts. Clearly, some of the workers in the more elite crafts (plumbers, electricians, structural ironworkers, etc.) can make high wages despite their lack of union membership, while workers in the lower-paid crafts (carpenters, roofers, painters, drywall installers, etc.) who cannot get into the union are forced to work for common proletarian wages or less.

On top of this, the less qualified construction workers bear the brunt of the high rate of unemployment in the construction industry, which is more than twice the average rate for all sectors. The lower strata of construction craft workers, consisting of most of those who are excluded from the building trades unions, do not share the privileges of the labor aristocracy, are



"The bourgeoisie has been able to effectively bribe the top stratum of the workers, the labor aristocracy, and turn it into a trusted and loyal ally."

not so infected with the elite craft mentality and see themselves as common workers. They are not part of the labor aristocracy. Neither are the 700,000 to 1,000,000 construction laborers who carry out the heaviest and most difficult work involved in construction and are paid the least (1980 mean weekly wage: \$264).⁴⁷ Thus, in the construction industry the labor aristocracy makes up a very large part of the workforce (probably a larger part than in any other major sector of the economy), but they are still a minority.

The reduction of the size of the labor aristocracy under the weight of the capitalist economic crisis can be seen most distinctly in the construction industry where the capitalists are increasingly using non-union labor. The response of the reactionary building trades unions to this is typical. First, they are further restricting entrance into their unions to compensate for the smaller sphere of union construction work and insure that their members have sufficient work. At the same time they occasionally organize militant demonstrations attacking non-union construction sites, demanding that hiring be restricted to their elite ranks. Never does their policy call for **organizing** the non-union construction workers because that would be counter to the whole philosophy of the elite craft unions, which is to restrict their ranks.

The Labor Aristocracy in Industry. The industrial labor aristocracy is particularly important to the bourgeoisie because of its critical role in maintaining bourgeois control over the industrial unions and infecting the industrial workers with chauvinism, class collaborationism and reformism. Numerically, it is the largest section of the labor aristocracy, and it wields influence far greater than its numbers. Nevertheless it makes up a small portion of the industrial proletariat – perhaps 10-12%.

The main section of the labor aristocracy in the mining and manufacturing industries is the skilled industrial maintenance workers. This section includes 507,000 industrial maintenance mechanics (1980 median weekly wage: \$381), 135,000 industrial maintenance electricians (\$407), 91,000 millwrights (\$430) and a smaller number of pipe fitters, boilermakers, maintenance welders, maintenance machinists, etc.⁴⁸

Closely related to this group are the workers in the factory tool rooms who make the dies, patterns, jigs and specialized machinery parts for the manufacturing industry. This group includes 166,000 tool and die makers (1980 median weekly wage: \$414) and a smaller number of tool room machinists, patternmakers, etc.⁴⁹ Altogether then, the industrial maintenance and tool room workers number somewhat over 1,000,000, making up a little over 6% of the industrial proletariat. Their wages are, on the whole, over 60% higher than those of most industrial workers.⁵⁰ But their privileges go beyond higher wages. In the midst of the intense pace of factory production the pace of their work is leisurely. Industrial maintenance workers work only a few hours a day when machinery breaks down and many times they are provided with air conditioned "offices" with refrigerators, micro-wave ovens, etc.

In addition to maintenance and tool room workers a section of the workers directly involved in production has been elevated to the position of labor aristocrats. These workers occupy a relatively small number of the more highly skilled jobs that are critical to the overall production process. In industries characterized by a large number of individually operated production machines, for instance, a small group of workers is selected to set up those machines for the workers who operate them – such as job and die setters in large machine shops and loom fixers in the textile industry. In oil and gas extraction each drilling rig is run by a drill operator who is

relieved from all the dangerous and difficult work which is carried out by other lower-paid workers (roughnecks, roustabouts, etc.).

In the steel industry, the operators of the mammoth rolling and casting machines (tandem mill rollers, blooming mill rollers, continuous slab casters) are labor aristocrats, commanding wages even higher than the maintenance workers and nearly twice as high as a steel mill laborer. Furthermore, many of these operators are insulated from the heat and smoke of the steel mill in air-conditioned control rooms where their labor consists mainly of watching dials and flipping switches; any difficult work is delegated to helpers. The most dangerous, dirtiest, heaviest and hottest work in steel mills – which is concentrated in the coke works, the furnaces and the finishing mills (wire mills, rail mills, etc.) – is reserved for the workers who receive the lowest pay.

In paper mills, the situation is similar. The operators of the huge paper machines make the highest wages and do the least work; the rough and intensive work – feeding logs into the barker, finishing the paper and operating the cutting and converting machines that turn it into envelopes, cartons, etc. is carried out by the lowest-paid workers.

This is the way that capitalist industry is organized. In each case, the privileged workers make up a small percentage of the workforce and they typically make 30-60% more than the median wage in the plants in which they work, and many times more than twice as much as the lowest-paid workers.⁵¹

Most factory workers are paid low wages. The great majority of industrial workers are classified by the government as either operatives or laborers. In 1981 the median weekly wage for operatives (almost all of whom operate industrial machinery) was \$242; the median weekly wage of non-farm laborers, of whom about 26% work in manufacturing (the others work in mining, construction, transport, etc.) was \$238.⁵² A large number of factory workers are paid just above minimum wage. Low wages are prevalent in the textile, garment, lumber, furniture, plastics, electronics and food processing industries. Nearly one-third of all operatives and 40% of all manufacturing laborers made less than \$200 a week in 1980.⁵³

On the other hand, workers in some industrial sectors – steel, automobiles, armaments, mining, etc. – have won substantially higher wages than most industrial workers. This has led some pseudo-Marxists to classify all workers in these industries as part of the labor aristocracy. This is a wrong and, in fact, a dangerous assessment.

Production in these sectors takes place on a huge scale, and this production is critical to the economy. Therefore these workers have been able to organize powerful industrial unions and wrest concessions from the capitalists. After suffering great defeats at the hands of the industrial union movement in the 1930's and 1940's, the capitalists adopted the tactic of granting concessions to maintain "class peace" in these critical sectors. Following World War II, the temporary economic revival and the monopoly position of U.S. imperialism enabled the capitalists to grant many of the workers' economic demands in these sectors. These economic concessions were combined with a fierce attack on the workers' political rights and a drive to eliminate communist presence in the trade union movement. These tactics were used to insure the domination of the reformists in the legal trade unions.

Even the economic concessions, however, were only partial and temporary. While wages were increased, working conditions remained horrendous. The pace of work in the auto plants is

geared to the absolute limit of human capacity. Steel mills and coal mines in the U.S. remain among the most dangerous in the world, and tens of thousands of steel workers and coal miners are killed or disabled each year.⁵⁴ These workers have also been especially subject to the cyclical crises of capitalism and the development of automation. A laid-off autoworker, steelworker or coal miner has no choice but to look for work as a laborer or an operative in some low-paying industry. All this differentiates these workers from the aristocratic craft workers who, in addition to better pay, have far better working conditions, are often retained during mass layoffs, and who, despite layoffs, retain their skilled trades which they can use in looking for other aristocratic jobs. Many use their skilled trades to go into business for themselves, at least temporarily.



"The temporary economic improvements received by the common workers in the auto, steel, coal and other industries are being eroded today in the midst of the chronic economic crisis."

The temporary nature of the economic improvement received by the common workers in these industries is becoming clearer today in the midst of a chronic economic crisis, in which the erosion of the U.S. monopoly in world trade is being acutely felt. Massive layoffs have been accompanied by the drying up of special unemployment benefits (TRA, SUB pay). The autoworkers and steelworkers have been forced to accept steep wage cuts, surrendering billions of dollars in wages to the capitalists. The coal miners have also lost certain benefits, and have only prevented much greater losses through militant strikes.

Therefore, the autoworkers, steelworkers, coal miners and other workers in similar positions cannot be viewed as part of the labor aristocracy. The higher wages they receive, however, have clearly been successful in dampening the class consciousness and class struggle in these sectors. The lack of militant resistance to the wage-cutting offensive of the last several years by U.S. autoworkers and steel workers has been the painful result of the years of "class peace" under reformist leadership that lulled the workers to sleep.

The Trade Union Bureaucracy. All the major trade unions in the U.S. are controlled by the bourgeoisie and administered by the labor aristocracy. The control of the labor aristocracy has been extended beyond the craft unions to the great industrial unions that were built by the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in the 1930's and 40's. The trade union officials as a whole have been converted into a special petty bourgeois order of labor managers. In fact, of all categories of capitalist managers, trade union officials are among the highest paid. All full-time union officials receive salaries and other compensation (expense accounts, bribes, etc.) sufficient

to insure them of a comfortable, petty bourgeois standard of living. The top rung of union officials receives salaries and "fringe benefits" comparable to top corporate officials. Many international union presidents receive over \$100,000 in annual compensation, placing them in an income bracket that includes only the top 0.4% of all income recipients. Jackie Presser, the new head of the Teamsters Union, is paid over \$500,000 in annual salary.

Some of the top union officials have become capitalists in their own right. The multi-million dollar financial dealings of the top Teamsters officials, including the transformation of the union pension funds into their own personal capital, are now infamous. George Meany, Lane Kirkland and various other AFL-CIO officials went in with a number of U.S. capitalists to buy a large plantation-resort in the Dominican Republic, receiving in this way a more direct share of imperialist superprofits.⁵⁵

Confirmation of the fact that the top trade union officials have become a special sector of the capitalist class has been provided by the appointment of Douglas Fraser, former head of the United Autoworkers, to the Board of Directors of the Chrysler Corporation, and the selection of Lane Kirkland to join the Council on Foreign Relations.

Union officials are typically drawn from the ranks of the skilled craft workers. This holds true not only in the craft unions, but in the industrial unions as well. In addition to these union officials, all the major unions have established a large technical apparatus composed of petty bourgeois lawyers, "labor relations" experts, economists, etc. During the course of their careers, these "labor relations" professionals will move back and forth between the unions, the employers and various government labor boards and offices, working for the highest bidder.

The trade union officialdom as a whole has become an institution of the labor aristocracy, the greatest exponents of "labor peace" and the most despicable chauvinists and imperialists.



"The trade union officials have been converted into a special petty bourgeois order of managers. The top union officials have become a special sector of the capitalist class."

The Super-Exploitation of National Minorities and Women

By denying national minorities and women workers equal social and political rights and promoting national and male chauvinism, the capitalists have been able to pay them wages far below the general rate. National minority and women workers have been relegated to specific occupations and industries in which the wage rates have been held particularly low. They have been used as a reserve labor force by the capitalists to be drawn into production during times of growth and thrown out in great numbers during periods of crisis and stagnation. The bourgeoisie has taken especially brutal measures to deny the workers in the oppressed nations (the Afro-American nation, the Chicano nation, Puerto Rico, the Native people's territories), immigrant workers and women the right to union organization. Despite the concessions that have been won

by the movements of the oppressed nationalities and women in recent years, this system of super exploitation continues in full force.

In 1980, the median annual wage of national minority men was only 65% that of white men.⁵⁶ The annual income of national minority households was only 56% that of white households.⁵⁷ Moreover, the **gap** between the income of white and national minority households has not narrowed, but has **grown** in recent years. Between 1970 and 1980 the income of national minority households compared to white households fell by 5%.⁵⁸ These facts explode the myth of "growing equality." The fact is that while a handful of the petty bourgeoisie have improved their positions, the vast majority of the oppressed nationalities have become more oppressed with time.

National minority workers continue to be excluded from managerial, professional, technical and skilled trades occupations, and are concentrated in the lowest-paying proletarian occupations. They continue to suffer unemployment rates twice the national average. In December, 1982, the employment rate for national minority workers was 20.2%.⁵⁹ Another 15% of national minority workers were also unemployed but had given up looking for work and therefore were not considered in the unemployment statistics.⁶⁰ Thus, even according to government statistics, over 35% of all national minority workers who wanted work were unable to find jobs.

In 1981, the median annual wage of women was only 48% that of men.⁶¹ Women made up only 4.7% of all engineers, 16% of manufacturing sales representatives, 2.1% of truck drivers and 5.6% of craft workers, while they made up 78.4% of clerical workers, 60.3 % of retail clerks, 68.7% of textile operatives, 87.4% of health service workers and 94.6% of private household workers. The sectors where women are allowed to work are characterized by low wages. In 1981 the median weekly wage for full-time women clerical workers was only \$220; for women factory operatives, \$187; for women service workers, \$146.⁶² In addition, 11,069,000 women had only part-time jobs (28% of all employed women) and these women had a median weekly wage of only \$84.⁶³

The most oppressed section of the working class is the women of the oppressed nationalities. A large number of these women are restricted to work as domestic slaves in the homes of the wealthy, while others are restricted to cleaning and cooking jobs in restaurants, schools, hospitals, etc. or to jobs in factory sweatshops.

This system of super exploitation has obvious benefits for the capitalists. First, the low wages paid to national minority and women workers result directly in higher rates of surplus value extracted from their labor. Second, the capitalists have been able to use this lower wage rate to bring downward pressure on the wage rate of the working class as a whole. Third, the relatively better wages and greater social rights granted to Anglo-American and male workers act as material incentives to support the system of national and women's oppression and the spread of white and male chauvinism. This support for white and male chauvinism within the working class acts to divide the class, weakening the workers' resistance against the capitalists' wage-cutting offensive and holding back the development of a proletarian revolutionary movement.

Is the Anglo-American Working Class Bribed?

A popular theory among certain pseudo-Marxists is that the entire Anglo-American working class has been bribed, and that its material conditions determine that it cannot be a revolutionary class. This argument is absurd and indefensible on the basis of both theory and fact. All Marxists

must agree that the Anglo-American proletariat, **in comparison to the proletariat of the oppressed nationalities**, receives numerous economic, social and political privileges, and that these privileges are the material underpinning of widespread white chauvinism within the working class. This condition of the Anglo-American proletariat is part and parcel of the system of national oppression. In 1916, Lenin wrote that the conditions of the working classes of the oppressed and oppressor nations were distinct **from the standpoint of the national question**:

"Economically, the difference is that sections of the working class in the oppressor nations receive crumbs from the **super profits** the bourgeoisie of those nations obtains by extra exploitation of the workers of the oppressed nations. Besides, economic statistics show that here a **larger** percentage of workers become "straw bosses" than is the case in the oppressed nations, a larger percentage rise to the **aristocracy**. That is a fact. **To a certain degree** the workers of the oppressor nations are partners of **their own** bourgeoisie in plundering the workers (and the mass of the population) of the oppressed nations.

Politically, the difference is that, compared with the workers of the oppressed nations, they occupy a **privileged** position in many spheres of political life.

Ideologically, or spiritually, the difference is that they are taught, at school and in life, disdain and contempt for the workers of the oppressed nations. This has been **experienced**, for example, by every Great Russian who has been brought up or lived among Great Russians."⁶⁴

These **national** privileges accorded to the proletariat of the oppressor nation do not affect its basic condition **as a class**. It remains exploited by the capitalists, it remains stripped of the means of production and political power, its political and social rights remain severely restricted.

The Anglo-American proletariat makes up a majority of the U.S. population. Is it possible that the majority of the working class can become a "labor aristocracy?" Facts show that this is not the case and that, despite its petty privileges, the Anglo-American proletariat suffers severe class oppression and exploitation.

Table B-2 lists the median weekly wages of the U.S. proletariat, divided by occupation, sex and nationality. Unfortunately, we are forced to use the government's unscientific classifications in terms of both nationalities and occupations. The data in the table confirm that Anglo-American workers get privileged wages in nearly every sector (the only exception is among farm workers where Chicano and Mexican farm workers earn more because of the large number who work on the huge corporate farms in the Southwest and California and have been able to win union recognition). At the same time, the data confirm that the great majority of the Anglo-American proletariat is not getting rich, and that its wage privileges are very restricted. (The exception is, of course, the labor aristocracy, whose wages are not adequately described in this table because only median wages for each category are given.)

Table B-2

Median Weekly Wages of Full-Time Workers (1981)⁶⁵

Government Occupational Classification	All Workers			"White"			"Black"			"Hispanic"		
	Both Sexes	Men	Women	Both Sexes	Men	Women	Both Sexes	Men	Women	Both Sexes	Men	Women
Operatives (Non-transport)	242	298	187	246	304	189	222	267	179	199	231	169
Transport Operatives	303	307	237	314	319	237	257	258	*	261	261	*
Laborers (Non-farm)	238	244	193	241	247	193	217	220	*	222	225	*
Farm workers	179	183	148	181	185	148	147	154	*	185	191	*
Craft Workers	352	360	239	356	364	239	309	314	239	296	304	*
Clerical Workers	233	328	220	233	335	219	230	286	220	226	280	214
Service Workers	192	238	165	195	245	165	182	214	166	173	190	147

In 1980, there were 63,819,000 white workers in the U.S. who were paid less than \$15,000 a year. The median wage for all white wage workers (including petty bourgeois employees) was \$10,303 (an average of \$198 a week).⁶⁶ In 1982 there were over 21,000,000 Anglo-Americans who, according to government standards, were impoverished.⁶⁷ These are hardly characteristics of a bribed class.

The fact that white chauvinist ideas are still widespread among the Anglo-American proletariat is not the result of **actual economic interests**; it is the result of **ignorance** of their true class interests (economic, political, spiritual). As we have pointed out, the low wages received by national minority workers puts downward pressure on the wages of Anglo-American workers, and the divisions created by white chauvinism pave the way for the capitalist offensive on the standard of living of the **entire** working class. Thus, even in terms of **immediate economic interests** (leaving aside political, social and spiritual considerations and the long-term interests of the class), the Anglo-American proletariat suffers from the continuation of national oppression and white chauvinism and stands to gain by its eradication. From the standpoint of its economic and political interests the Anglo-American proletariat is revolutionary. It can only put an end to its own exploitation by joining with its class brothers and sisters of all nationalities to overthrow its exploiters and destroy U.S. imperialism.

National chauvinism is the ideology of the bourgeoisie; it serves the interests of the bourgeoisie and it does not serve the interests of the working class. This is not changed by the fact that many workers are influenced by national chauvinism. Lenin wrote, in response to the Bund (a Jewish workers' organization in Russia); that the ignorant, chauvinist actions of some Russian workers did not mean that the workers had an interest in national chauvinism:

"If... the Bundists had pondered a bit over this question... they would have understood the link that **immediately** exists between anti-Semitism and the interests of the bourgeois, and not of the working class sections of the population. If they had given it a little more thought they might have realized that the social character of anti-Semitism today is not changed by the fact that

dozens or even hundreds of unorganized workers, nine-tenths of whom are still quite ignorant, take part in a pogrom."⁶⁸

The Erosion of Temporary Privileges. Between 1973, when the current economic crisis set in, and 1981, the wages of U.S. workers in constant dollars (adjusted for inflation) fell by 13.9%.⁶⁹ Although wage data for the last two years have not yet been compiled, there is no question but that wages have been further slashed. Indeed, 1981 was only the beginning of the current wage-cutting offensive. These cuts in many wages combined with the growing number of workers relegated to unemployment and part-time work, the cuts in government social programs and increasing taxes has led to a sharp decline in the standard of living of the working class. Between 1978 and 1982 the number of people living below the government-established poverty level grew by nearly 10,000,000, an increase of 40%.⁷⁰

The capitalist economic crisis has led to wage cuts throughout the capitalist world, including all the developed capitalist countries. But wage cuts in the United States have been sharper than in most other developed capitalist countries. This is the result of the erosion of the monopoly position of U.S. imperialism as well as the stronger resistance of workers in other countries to wage cuts. As the temporary benefits that the U.S. working class has received are taken back by the ruling class, the U.S. proletariat will learn to fight again in the magnificent way that it has in the past.

The Mobilization of the Proletariat for Revolution

Today the revolutionary potential of the U.S. working class is smothered under the stultifying influence of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois trade union apparatus and the Democratic Party are chaining the working class to wage slavery as the ball and chain bound the chattel slave. The main agent of bourgeois control, the link in the political and ideological chain between the working class and the oppressor is the labor aristocracy. This chain must be broken, the influence of the labor aristocracy over the working class must be destroyed.

"Without a struggle against this stratum," wrote Lenin, "without the destruction of every trace of its prestige among the workers, without convincing the masses of the utter bourgeois corruption of this stratum, there can be no question of a serious communist workers' movement."⁷¹

The revisionists in the working-class movement, represented first and foremost by the CPUSA, constantly seek to blunt the struggle of the workers against the labor aristocracy and the trade union bureaucracy. Under the banner of "Left-Center Unity," the CPUSA urges the workers to trust and support the majority of the trade union bureaucrats who, according to the CPUSA, are "in transition from Right to Center, moving toward the Left."⁷² "Left-Center Unity," says the CPUSA, is the "centerpiece" of its trade union policy.⁷³

"Examining the forces involved and their policies," admits Gus Hall, "it is clear that the Center forces have an intermediate position on economic struggles, not consistently militant; and a Center position on the struggle against racism, sometimes seeking to opportunistically get around the issue; and on political action they are moving in a Left direction but have not yet reached the level of the Left and broken with the two old parties."⁷⁴

This is quite an understatement! The CPUSA's "center forces" (Fraser, Winpisinger, Chavez, Sadlowski, etc.) that it admits are "not consistently militant" are actually strike breakers, class collaborationists and corporate directors; they don't simply seek "to get around the issue of

racism," they actively inflame national divisions among the workers and promote U.S. chauvinism; they not only have not "broken with the two old parties," they are the chief Democratic Party hacks in the working-class movement. These traitors can only appear as "center forces" when compared to the arch-reactionaries who make up the right wing of the trade union leadership.

Among the leadership of the legal trade unions there is no tendency of any kind which has any interest in revolution; they are all for collaboration with the bourgeoisie and for destruction of the communist movement. Conditions might compel Marxist-Leninists to enter into limited joint actions with these labor traitors, against the capitalists; however, the purpose of these joint actions, the "centerpiece" of **our** trade union policy, is to isolate these labor traitors, to free the working class from their influence so that, under genuine communist leadership the workers can carry out the class struggle.

The trade union apparatus is an unofficial organ of the bourgeois state, and its leadership is reactionary, but there are honest working-class activists among the lower-level elected positions (on the shop floor) who can be won to the side of revolution. But in order to win these workers, and the great mass of workers, to a revolutionary position, an uncompromising and relentless struggle must be waged against the trade union bureaucracy and the labor aristocracy.

Communist work must not be directed towards the small elite of skilled and highly-paid workers, but towards the great mass of unskilled and semi-skilled workers.

"[It] is... our duty," wrote Lenin, "if we wish to remain socialists, to go down lower and deeper, to the real masses; this is the whole meaning and the whole purport of the struggle against opportunism. By exposing the fact that the opportunists and social chauvinists are in reality betraying and selling the interests of the masses, that they are defending the temporary privileges of a minority of workers, that they are the vehicles of bourgeois ideas and influences, that they are really allies and agents of the bourgeoisie, we teach the masses to appreciate their true political interests, to fight for socialism and for the revolution through all the long and painful vicissitudes of imperialist wars and imperialist armistices."⁷⁵

In organizing the common proletariat communist work must be concentrated, in particular, among the workers in the productive sector who work in large concentrations. Here we are speaking not only of the industrial proletariat in mining and manufacturing, but also of the agricultural workers who labor in the capitalists' "factories in the fields", the workers in the large capitalist distribution and transportation centers, the hundreds of thousands of communications workers, etc. Because of the productive, collective and large-scale nature of the work in these sectors these workers are in a better position to organize, have greater potential strength and are in a better position to gain class consciousness. For these reasons they play the vanguard role in the class struggle.

With regard to the common proletariat the level of pay cannot be used as the criteria in identifying the leading sections. Many of the lowest paid workers are outside of the realm of production, such as hired domestic workers, secretaries, retail clerks, etc. In addition, many of the lowest paid workers in the productive sphere work in small enterprises and in small isolated units, such as farm workers on middle-sized farms, restaurant workers, etc. The conditions of work in these sectors retard the organization and class consciousness of these workers. While

they will no doubt participate wholeheartedly in the revolution, their conditions of work prevent them from playing the leading role.

Because of the double yoke of national oppression and class exploitation national minority workers are, in many cases, the most ready to carry out the struggle against the capitalists, and the most desirous of revolutionary change. This great revolutionary potential must be mobilized to the fullest extent, organizing the struggle of these workers against both class and national oppression.

The struggle to organize Anglo-American workers cannot be allowed to lapse, however, as many "left" organizations have done. The majority of the U.S. proletariat are Anglo-American workers and redoubled efforts must be made to organize this largest contingent of the class.

In order to break down national chauvinism and national divisions within the working class a constant campaign must be waged to combat white chauvinism and build internationalism. All working-class organizations, including the party and the trade unions, must be organized along internationalist lines, and cannot be nationally exclusive. On this point we cannot succumb to the bourgeois nationalism of either the oppressor or the oppressed nations.

Notes

1. Frederick Engels, note to *The Communist Manifesto*, Edition cited, p. 7.

2. *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1944-1945, Census Bureau, p. 124.

3. Notes III [The Bourgeoisie], 3.

4. *The State of Small Business*, Small Business Administration (SBA), p. 190.

5. "The Self-Employed: Their Number is Growing", *Monthly Labor Review*, Nov. 1980, p. 7.

6. The figures in this column were calculated based on data provided in *Analyzing 1981 Earnings Data From the Current Population Survey*, BLS, 1982, pp. A-1 - A-10. We separated proletarian from non-proletarian occupations within the BLS' broad occupational classifications as described in the explanation to this table.

7. The figures in this column were calculated based on data provided in *Analyzing 1981 Earnings Data From the Current Population Survey*, BLS, 1982, p. A-11. The BLS only provides data on part-time workers by their broad classifications (i.e. "sales workers", "clerical workers", "service workers"), and therefore, we were unable to separate



"Despite the concessions that have been won by oppressed nationalities and women in recent years, the system of super-exploitation continues in force."

the proletarian and petty bourgeois workers in these classifications as we did for full-time workers. We assumed, however, that virtually all the petty bourgeoisie in these classifications (i.e. supervisors, police, sales representatives) work full-time. We therefore, included all of the part-time workers in these broad occupational classifications among the proletariat.

8. The figures in the column were calculated based on data provided in *Employment and Earnings*, Jan. 1982, BLS, p. 22. Less than 10% of the workforce is small proprietors and less than 2% of these were classified as unemployed.

The government only provides unemployment data for its broad occupational classifications. Therefore, in every broad occupational classification in which we removed a petty bourgeois section of the employed workers we removed a proportional number of the unemployed. We made an exception in the case of the police, firefighters and sheriffs, among whom the unemployment rate is very low, and, counted all unemployed "service workers" (the broad classification in which the BLS places the police) among the proletariat. This method undoubtedly overestimates the number of unemployed petty bourgeois employees and underestimates the number of unemployed proletarians because retail clerks are laid off before sales representatives, factory workers before supervisors, etc.

9. The *Hired Farm Working Force of 1979*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1981. These 1,259,000 farm workers are counted as "not in the labor force" because of the seasonal nature of their work (this number does not include those seasonal farm workers who work other jobs most of the year. We have included these workers because they make up an important part of the farm labor force. We've made no effort to include seasonal workers in other occupational classifications who are not counted in the labor force.

10. Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, Part I, p. 396.

11. Ibid., p. 401.

12. Marx, *Capital*, V. III, pp. 299-300.

13. Marx, *Capital*, V. I, p. 446.

14. "Occupational Earnings of Men and Women", *Monthly Labor Review*, April, 1982 p. 28.

15. *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1982/1983*, Census Bureau, 1983, p. 396.

16. *Historical Statistics, Colonial Times to 1970*, Census Bureau, 1976, p. 138.

17. Same as 15 and 16 above.

18. *The Hired Farm Working Force of 1979*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1981, p. 3; and *Farm Population of the United States: 1981*, Census Bureau, 1982, p.5.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Stephen Sosnick, *Hired Hands: Seasonal Farmworkers in the United States*, p. 10.

23. *The Hired Farm Working Force of 1979*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1981. These particular figures represent ethnic rather than the government's standard racial classifications. The classification "Hispanic" includes all people of Chicano, Latin American and Spanish nationalities while "white" refers only to Anglo-Americans.

24. Sosnick, pp. 431-432.

25. Ibid, p. 14.

26. Marx, *Capital*, V. 3, p. 300.

27. B. Solomon and R. Burns, "Unionization of White Collar Employees", R. Lester, ed., *Labor: Readings on Major Issues*, p. 13 Z.

28. Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, pp. 295-97. This book deserves some comment because it is so highly touted among some circles of academic "legal Marxists" in this country. The strength of this book is its detailed description of certain changes in the labor process, the division of labor, the development of technology, etc., and their effect on various sectors of the working population. Its analysis, however, is limited by the academic

framework through which Braverman looked at these questions which has more in common with bourgeois sociology than revolutionary class analysis. Braverman was a social-democrat and not a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist. His main concern was "the degradation of work in the Twentieth Century" (the subtitle of his book), and not the social position and political roles played by the various classes and strata in capitalist society. Thus, the cultivation of an aristocracy of labor by the capitalists does not enter into Braverman's analysis (although he was undoubtedly familiar with its social position and class outlook, working for years as a skilled craftsman in the metal trades). Just as seriously, he saw no fundamental distinction between the proletariat and those hired to supervise the proletariat. The lower strata of managerial employees, according to Braverman's thinking, were already proletarians (page 380), or were most likely destined to become proletarians (page 407-409) because of their being subject to capitalist rationalization and layoffs, the routine nature of their work, their "increasing alienation", etc.. In all of this the fundamental role of the foreman gets lost. No matter how low in the managerial bureaucracy, no matter how ill-paid, no matter how routine or lacking in real authority on his job, the foreman remains the agent of capital to control labor and extract from it as much surplus value as possible, and therefore remains alien from and hostile to the proletariat. Similarly, Braverman supposed that "objections might be raised" to classifying the police as workers but fails to actually raise any such objection (using his criteria the police, too, presumably join the proletariat once their work is sufficiently degraded).

29. See Table B-1.

30. "Occupational Earnings of Men and Women", *Monthly Labor Review*, April, 1982, BLS.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. B. Solomon and R. Burns, p. 132, and Ibid.

35. "Occupational Earnings of Men and Women" *Monthly Labor Review*, April, 1982, BLS.

36. Enver Hoxha, *Report to the 6th Congress of the Party of Labor of Albania*, Tirana: "8" Nentori Publishing House, 1971, pp. 216-17.

37. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, V. 31, pp. 193-194.

38. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, Preface to the English Edition, (Granada Publishing) p. 34.

39. This process is described in Karl Marx, *Capital*, V. I, Part IV, Chapter 13, Co-operation and Chapter 14, Division of Labour in Manufacture.

40. Filip Kota, *Two Opposing Lines in the World Trade Union Movement*, Tirana: "8" Nentori Publishing House, 1974, p. 68.

41. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, V. 22, p. 194.

42. *Union Wages and Benefits: Building Trades, July 1980*, BLS, 1981.

43. *Job Patterns for Minorities and Women in Apprenticeship Programs and Referral Unions*, 1979, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1979.

44. This source lists 1,269,000 union construction craft workers. Many of these workers, however, were not employed in the construction industry per se, but rather in manufacturing or other industries. (*Earning and Other Characteristics of Organized Workers, May 1980*, BLS 1981.

45. Ibid. This source lists 1,312,000 non-union construction craft workers. Many of these workers, as well, were not employed in the construction industry, per se.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid. This publication estimates the number of construction laborers at 715,000 while the BLS' *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 1982-1983* puts their number at 1,000,000.

48. *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 1982-1983*, BLS.

49. Ibid.
50. The mean wage for the industrial maintenance and tool room workers for whom we have data was \$399 a week in 1980 (see text). The mean wage for non-transport operatives and manufacturing laborers, the two main government classifications of industrial workers, was \$245 a week in 1980. (See *Earnings and other Characteristics of Organized Workers*, BLS, May 1980, Table 10.
51. BLS, *Industry Wage Surveys: Oil and Gas Extraction in 1911; Textile Mills and Textile Dyeing and Finishing Plant, August, 1980; Machinery Manufacturing, January 1981; Basic Iron and Steel, 1978-1979; and Occupational Outlook Handbook, 1982-1983*, entry on paper mill workers, BLS.
52. "Occupational Earnings of Men and Women" *Monthly Labor Review*, April, 1982, BLS.
53. Ibid.
54. *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1982-1983*, Census Bureau, 1983.
55. "Boss and Bureaucrat", *Latin America and Empire Report*, May-June, 1977, North American Congress on Latin America, p. 20.
56. *Money Income of Households, Families and Persons in the U.S., 1980*, Census Bureau, 1982, p. 18.
57. *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1982-1983*, Census Bureau, 1983, p. 429.
58. Ibid.
59. *Employment and Earnings*, Jan. 1983, BLS.
60. *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1982-1983*, Census Bureau, 1983, p. 380. These were unemployed who wanted a job but were not looking for one at the time of the survey.
61. *Money Income of Households, Families and Persons in the U.S., 1980*, Census Bureau, p. 181.
62. "Occupational Earnings of Men and Women", *Monthly Labor Review*, April 1982, BLS.
63. "Usual Weekly Earnings", *Monthly Labor Review*, April 1982, BLS.
64. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, V. 23, pp. 55-56.
65. "Usual Weekly Earnings," *Monthly Labor Review*, April, 1982, BLS.
66. *Money Income of Households, Families and Persons in the U.S., 1980*, Census Bureau, 1982, p. 181. This figure is substantially lower than the median weekly wages listed in Table B-2 for several reasons. First, this figure is from 1980 as opposed to 1981. Second, this figure includes the wages of part-time workers while Table B-2 only includes full-time workers. Third, this figure is an annual figure and therefore includes weeks in which individual workers were unemployed, while the figures in Table B-2 refer only to weekly wages of employed workers.
67. *Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States: 1982*, Census Bureau, 1983, p. 4. According to this source some 23,517,000 "white" people lived below the poverty level in 1982. Some of these people, however, were not Anglo-Americans but rather Chicanos, Mexicans or other people of "Spanish Origin". Approximately 56% of the people of "Spanish Origin" are counted as "white". In 1982 there were 4,301,000 people of "Spanish Origin" living below the poverty level of whom perhaps 2,400,000 (56%) were counted as "whites".
68. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, V. 5, pp. 331-32.
69. "Usual Weekly Earnings", *Monthly Labor Review*, April 1982, BLS.
70. *New York Times*, August 3, 1983, p. 1.
71. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, V. 29, p. 563.
72. Gus Hall, *The Crisis of Everyday Living and the Winning Fightback*, 1978, p. 41.
73. Ibid., p. 45.
74. Ibid., p. 42.
75. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, V. 23, p. 120.

III. The Petty Bourgeoisie

The petty bourgeoisie is an intermediate class between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, composed of a myriad of different sectors which vary from poverty-stricken to wealthy. It is divided into two main sections: 1) the small proprietors who still own the means of their own livelihood and "work for themselves"; and 2) the petty bourgeois employees, made up of the professional and managerial strata of wage earners.

The Small Proprietors

This is the classical section of the petty bourgeoisie. Because they own the means of their own livelihood they are, in one sense, "small capitalists." Unlike the capitalists, however, the petty bourgeoisie work for a living and, in this sense, they are similar to the proletariat. The small proprietor often does the same type of work as the wage laborer – i.e. both independent truckdrivers and hired truckdrivers drive trucks, the difference being that the first sells the **product** of his labor, while the second sells his **labor power** itself. Because they own or rent their own means of production, small proprietors are often called "independents," but they are independent in name only. In reality, they are totally dependent on the capitalist class, and this dependence increases with the development of capitalism. Through debt, rent and capitalist control of the market, their labor is indirectly exploited by the bourgeoisie.

"The ascendancy of capitalist production relations", wrote Lenin, "extends its area more and more with the steady improvement of technology, which, by enhancing the economic importance of the large enterprises, tends to eliminate the small independent producers, converting some of them into proletarians and narrowing the role of others in the social and economic sphere, and in some places making them more or less completely, more or less obviously, more or less painfully dependent on capital".¹

As we have already shown the ranks of the small proprietors have been decimated and this decimation is continuing at a relentless pace today, ruining more and more of the small owners and driving them into the ranks of wage labor.

The epoch of the small proprietor has long since passed and today they are relegated to the economic sidelines of a social system that has become the domain of large-scale capitalist production and its main social classes – bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The marginal economic role of the small proprietor can be seen in the fact that as of 1979, businesses with less than \$200,000 in annual receipts accounted for only 6.75% of total U.S. business receipts.² But while the economic role of small owners is only marginal, there are still approximately 10,500,000 people in this group, comprising nearly 10% of the labor force.³

Major sections among the "independent" petty bourgeoisie include: farmers (1,416,000); retail merchants (1,543,000); professionals, including doctors, dentists, lawyers, architects, accountants, entertainers, etc. (1,177,000); craft workers, including carpenters, plumbers, painters, brickmasons, roofers, carpet installers, auto mechanics, auto body shop workers, radio and TV repairers, jewelers, cabinet makers, upholsterers, dressmakers and tailors, shoe repairers, etc. (1,310,000); service workers, including childcare workers, janitors, laundry workers, hairdressers and barbers, bootblacks, etc. (765,000); wholesale distributors (273,000); transportation workers, including truck drivers, movers and haulers, cab drivers, etc. (255,000); and landlords, restaurant and bar owners, motel owners, contractors, insurance and real estate

agents, door-to-door salesmen and other peddlers, newspaper vendors and carriers, woodcutters and lumber workers, fishers, hunters and trappers, gardeners, etc.⁴

There is great diversity among the small owners in terms of the type of work they do and in terms of wealth. The class interests of a poor farmer or newspaper vendor are clearly different from those of a wealthy rancher or well-to-do doctor. The petty proprietors are divided into four basic social and economic strata:⁵

1. The semi-proletariat own some means of making an "independent" living, but not enough to survive solely by those means: they must also hire out their labor power. This semi-proletarian status is usually a midway point on the journey towards complete expropriation and proletarianization. Typical of the semi-proletarian is the small farmer who is compelled to seek work in a factory in order to make ends meet.
2. The small petty proprietors own the means of their own livelihood and are not compelled to work for others, but their property is so small that it is barely sufficient to provide for their subsistence. They do not hire labor and rely entirely on their own and their family's labor.
3. The medium petty proprietors own sufficient property not only to provide subsistence for their families but also, in good times, to produce a surplus. They still depend primarily on their own labor but they frequently hire wage labor as well. Examples are the middle-size farmer who hires seasonal help and the gas station owner with one employee.
4. The large petty proprietors own sufficient property to make regular use of several hired workers. They are distinguished from the capitalist only by the fact that they take part directly in the work of their enterprise. For instance, a doctor who hires several nurses, receptionists, technicians, etc., but who also examines patients, or a master plumber who lives mainly off the labor of his hired workers but who still installs pipe himself.

The semi-proletariat and the small petty proprietors make up the great majority of the small proprietors. The Internal Revenue Service informs us that in 1980 out of 12,701,597 business income tax returns filed by "sole proprietors," 9,002,162 (71 %) had no payroll, i.e., no employees. Some 9,095,111 (72%) had annual business receipts totaling less than \$25,000.⁶ The median annual income in 1980 for "self-employed" men from all sources was \$10,816, the equivalent of \$208 a week, a low proletarian wage. The "self-employed" woman had a median annual income of \$2,144, or \$41 a week. The median annual income of an "unpaid family worker," most of whom were women who worked primarily in their husband's businesses without direct compensation, was \$1,183, presumably mainly from outside part-time work.⁷ Clearly, the majority of the small proprietors are just making ends meet – if they can even do that. And this is not surprising.

"Because of lower labour productivity in small establishments and the defenseless position of their owners in the market (especially in the case of agriculturists)," writes Lenin, "it is possible that the earnings of an independent handicraftsman may be lower than those of a wage worker – and the facts show that this very often is the case."⁸

Of course, there are a large number of middle and upper petty bourgeois entrepreneurs as well. In 1981 there were 1,318,000 people who earned between \$15,000 and \$25,000 in "self-employment" income, another 913,000 who earned between \$25,000 and \$50,000, and another 340,000 who earned over \$50,000.⁹ Among the middle and upper petty bourgeoisie must also be

counted at least one million who have incorporated their businesses (and therefore are not counted among the "self-employed").¹⁰ Most of these small corporations hire labor.

Unfortunately, government statistics do not provide a breakdown of the entire small proprietor class, either in terms of income or the hiring of wage labor. They do, however, provide more information about specific groups, including two of the largest: retail merchants and farmers.

Retail merchants. Table C-1 shows the distribution of total annual income (business income, wage earnings, government payments, etc.) among "self-employed" retail merchants in 1981.

Table C-1

**Distribution of Income Among
"Self-Employed" Retail Merchants (1980)¹¹**

Income Class	Number of Merchants	Percent of Merchants
Loss or under \$5,000	335,000	38.5
\$5,000-9,999	127,000	14.6
\$10,000-14,999	113,000	13.0
\$15,000-19,999	96,000	11.0
\$20,000-24,999	90,000	10.3
\$25,000-29,999	52,000	6.0
\$30,000-39,999	25,000	2.9
\$40,000-49,999	27,000	3.1
\$50,000-59,999	2,000	.2
\$60,000-74,999	2,000	.2
\$75,000 and over	2,000	.2
Total *	870,000	100.0
* Independent rounding may result in totals varying from the sum of the individual units		

Fully 66% of "self-employed" retail merchants earned less than \$15,000 in 1981, which was only a proletarian income. The large number (38.5%) who lost money or earned less than \$5,000 reflects the continuing centralization of retail trade in the hands of the capitalist retail chains, driving tens of thousands of independent merchants into bankruptcy every year.

Farmers. For years, agriculture remained the last stronghold of the small producers in the realm of material production. And, indeed, the myth still exists today that food in the U.S. is produced by millions of "family farms". The epoch of the "family farm" has long since given way to the centralization of agricultural production in the hands of large-scale capitalist farms that depend exclusively on hired labor. In 1935 there were over 6,800,000 farms in the U.S.¹² By 1981 there were only 2,436,000. Between 1975 and 1981 alone, a net of 331,000 farms were eliminated.¹³ The concentration of agricultural production is shown in Table C-2.

Table C-2

Concentration of Farm Sales (1981)¹⁴

Sales Class (Annual Sales)	Number of Farms	Percent of Farms	Percent of Sales	Percent of Net Income
Under \$20,000	1,464,000	60.1	6.5	-8.2
\$20,000-39,999	278,000	11.4	6.1	-1.2
\$40,000-99,999	396,000	16.3	19.0	7.7
\$100,000-199,999	186,000	7.6	19.1	15.1
\$200,000 and over	112,000	4.6	49.3	86.6
Total*	2,436,000	100.0	100.0	100.0
* Independent rounding may result in totals varying from the sum of the individual units				

Large-scale capitalist farms (those with over \$200,000 in sales), which made up only 4.6% of all farms, accounted for nearly half of farm sales. On the other hand, small farms (those with under \$40,000 in sales), which made up 71.8% of all farms, accounted for only 12.6% of farms sales. Even more lopsided was distribution of net income. Small farms, on the whole, lost money while large-scale capitalist farms collected 86.6% of all farm net income.

A government report published in 1979 described the large scale at which capitalist farming takes place today:

- Over 50% of all cattle are fed in 422 feed lots
- 15 to 20 hog farms each market 50,000 to 200,000 head of pigs a year
- 5,000 egg producers, each with over 20,000 birds, produce 70% of all eggs
- two farms, Sun Harvest and Bud Antle, both owned by industrial conglomerates, produce 20% of lettuce¹⁵

At the top of the farm pyramid are 28,000 corporate farms which had average annual sales of over \$500,000 in 1974.¹⁶ Corporate farms, and large-scale capitalist farming in general, are especially prevalent in California, Florida and Texas. The largest of these corporate farms are owned by monopoly bourgeois conglomerates such as Del Monte, Campbell Soup, Coca-Cola,

Great Western Sugar, Heinz, Libby, Ralston Purina, United Brands, Tenneco, Safeway, Dow Chemical, Getty Oil, Standard Oil of California, Southern Pacific Railroad and Prudential Insurance. The extent of the operations of these monopoly enterprises is tremendous:

Del Monte Corporation employed 39,000 seasonal workers at its peak in 1969 many of them being housed in Del Monte's own labor camps.... It owns 32,000 acres of farmland in various states, leases 78,000 acres more, operates processing plants in 10 countries, owns 114 can manufacturing plants, a label printing concern, 5 trucking organizations, a tuna freezing company, 24 public restaurants, and dozens of other agribusinesses.

Tenneco... in addition to pipelines, petroleum, chemicals, farm machinery, shipbuilding, containers, and... its various other businesses farms 35,000 acres. It employs 1,100 farm workers full time and 3,000 more at harvest peak. Tenneco is the country's leading shipper of fresh fruits and vegetables, marketing both its own crops and crops purchased from about 3,000 independent growers.¹⁷

This is the farming of the future. Smaller farms simply cannot compete against monopoly farming.

Although small farms have been facing ruin for decades, it is only now that the middle-sized farms (annual sales between \$40,000 and \$100,000) are going under in large numbers. By the year 2000 the USDA predicts that the number of farms will be reduced by another third and that the only class of farm that will increase in number is the large-scale capitalist farm with sales over \$200,000. The largest 50,000 farms will produce 63% of all farm products (up from 36% in 1977). The largest 1% of all farms will produce 50% of all food, while the smallest 50% will produce only 1%.¹⁸

After increasing up to the present, the number of medium-sized farms is projected to decline through the end of the century. Such a downturn will highlight the sharp distinction evolving between small and large farms, with little middle ground. Medium-sized farms, rather than representing a transition between the small farm and the large, seem to be too large for part-time farming and too small for efficient full time farming.¹⁹

Thus, agricultural production is being rapidly polarized into two types of farms – "efficient full-time farms" (meaning large-scale farms depending mainly or exclusively on hired labor), and "part-time farms" (meaning semi-proletarian farms which produce only a meager amount of products for the market and which are not sufficient to sustain the farm family). The 1,742,000 small farms (annual sales of less than \$40,000) have nearly all been converted into semi-proletarian farms. Burdened by mounting debts to the capitalists, higher taxes on higher priced land and profiteering by the agricultural marketing firms (controlled by the capitalist farmers and merchants), these farms, as a whole, are losing money on farm operations. Tens of thousands are going under every year and those that survive are doing so only by depending on wage income. According to a 1981 report, of 2,924,000 working farm residents only 1,430,000 were working **primarily** on their own farms, the other 1,494,000 (51%) were working primarily for wages off of the farm.²⁰ The great majority of these semi-proletarian farmers worked in low-paying proletarian jobs that are typical in rural areas. Table C-3 shows the distribution of income among farm residents.

Table C-3

Distribution of Income among Farm Residents (1981)²¹

Income Class	Number of Residents	Percent of Residents
Loss or under \$2,000	1,015,000	25.9
\$2,000-4,999	797,000	20.3
\$5,000-9,999	747,000	19.0
\$10,000-14,999	552,000	14.1
\$15,000-19,999	316,000	8.1
\$20,000-24,999	181,000	4.6
\$25,000-29,999	142,000	3.2
\$30,000-34,999	57,000	1.4
\$35,000-49,999	73,000	1.8
\$50,000-74,999	31,000	.8
\$75,000 and over	9,000	.2
Total*	3,920,000	100.0
* Independent rounding may result in totals varying from the sum of the individual units		

Over 79% of all farm residents make less than \$15,000 a year in income from all sources. Nearly half make less than \$5,000 a year – testimony to the desperate economic situation of the farmer and the low wages paid to wage laborers in rural areas, and especially to rural women.

The difficult situation faced by small farmers and retail merchants faces every sector of the small owners to one extent or another. The future is bleak for this class as a whole. During the 1950's and 1960's many farmers who had sold their land bought tractor-trailers hoping to remain "their own bosses" in the expanding field of trucking. This was a vain hope. Over the last decade, the large capitalist trucking firms have driven more and more independent truckers out of business. Thus, the small farmer, turned independent trucker, has now been expropriated twice and has few options left but to join the ranks of wage labor.

The ruined farmer, like the other small owners who are crushed by capital, no longer can find proletarian jobs as easily as during the years of relative prosperity in the 1950's and 1960's. Today, the economic crisis has closed the doors to the cities, causing the number of unemployed and impoverished people to grow in the countryside. The rural poor are denied the ability to make a living on the land, and at the same time are denied regular wage work. They eke out a living, working seasonally or whenever they can find work, producing what they can on the land they may have, attempting to make a living in various other enterprises (pulpwood cutting, fishing, hunting, hauling, carpentry, etc.) and getting whatever food stamps or welfare may be available.

The situation is particularly acute in the Afro-American nation in the Black Belt South, the Chicano nation in the Southwest, the areas of Chicano concentration in Texas, the reservations of the Native peoples and in Appalachia and other regions of the South. Among the Native peoples the official rate of unemployment is 75% and in many counties in the Black Belt South it hovers

around 30%. Moreover, a great many more people in these rural areas are not even counted in the labor force or are counted as "employed" because they have a small farm or a meager pulpwood cutting business that, in reality, cannot even provide subsistence for their families.

The Struggle of the Small Proprietors Against the Capitalists.

A basic tenet of the revolutionary strategy of Marxist-Leninists is the alliance between the proletariat and the lower section of the small proprietors. This alliance is the decisive factor in the revolutionary struggles in backward countries where the peasantry and other small producers make up the majority of the population. In highly developed capitalist countries such as the United States, the small proprietors are a much smaller class (relative to the proletariat), but their class character does not change, and the great majority of them can become allies of the proletariat in carrying out the socialist revolution.

"The Social-Democrats,"* wrote Lenin, "defend and champion the interests of all toilers, not only the urban workers, who are more class conscious and more united than the others, but of the agricultural workers as well, and of the small artisans and of the peasants, in so far as they do not employ labor, do not try to imitate the rich and do not take the side of the bourgeoisie."²²

Marxist-Leninists adopt different stands towards the various strata of the petty owners: first, they work to build a close alliance with the semi-proletarians and small, non-exploiting proprietors; second, they work to render the middle small proprietors neutral in the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; and, third, they work to destroy the influence of the upper strata of the small proprietors who live mainly by the exploitation of labor. These class distinctions within the petty bourgeoisie must always be borne in mind when we work to build an alliance between the proletariat and the small owners.

The crushing of the small proprietors by the capitalists has been met by sharp resistance, especially during the economic crisis of the last decade. Small and middle-sized farmers organized militant demonstrations and tractorcades, and disrupted government auctions of bankrupt farms. Independent truckers organized several countrywide truck strikes which were marked by sharp confrontations with the police. These struggles by the small proprietors against the capitalists and the capitalist state must be supported by the proletariat in order to build an alliance with these forces against the bourgeoisie.

The proletariat comes to the defense of the poor and exploited sectors of the small owners **not to protect their independent position**, but because it defends the standard of living and political rights of all exploited working people against the capitalists. The proletariat, as the champion of the cause of all the poor and oppressed, promises to wage a joint struggle to relieve the burdens of poverty and unemployment that the capitalists are placing on the backs of both wage earners and small proprietors. The proletariat can make no promises to the small owners to help save them from impending proletarianization. Rather, it must show them that their interests and their future hope lie with the proletariat.

"The small peasantry," wrote Lenin, "can free itself from the yoke of capital only by associating itself with the working-class movement, by helping the workers in their struggle for the socialist system, for transforming the land, as well as the other means of production (factories, works, machines, etc.), into social property. Trying to save the peasantry by protecting small-scale

* Until the split in the Second International during World War I, the Russian Communists called themselves Social-Democrats.

farming and small holdings from the onslaught of capitalism would be a useless retarding of social development; it would mean deceiving the peasantry with illusions of the possibility of prosperity even under capitalism, it would mean disuniting the labouring classes and creating a privileged position for the minority at the expense of the majority."²³

The proletariat can never support the petty bourgeois slogans of "breaking up the trusts" and going back to the old way of small-scale property. These slogans are based on reactionary dreams of turning back history. However, the proletariat can, and must, support the immediate demands of the small proprietors to relieve the hardships imposed on them by the capitalists. In supporting these demands special care must be taken to avoid even the slightest possibility of promoting reactionary programs favoring small-scale petty bourgeois property over large-scale capitalist property as a system.

In order to relieve the economic hardship faced by the small proprietors, the proletariat must support:

- the abolition of rent and mortgage debt owed by the small proprietors to the capitalists
- the reduction of taxes extracted from the small proprietors (and the increase of taxes for the rich proprietors)
- reforms to stop the fleecing of small proprietors by capitalist merchants who control both the sale of goods to the small producers and the sale of the small producers' goods
- improved social security, medical benefits, education and other government services for the small proprietors, especially in the rural areas
- **certain types** of government price subsidies which benefit the small producers, either by holding down the cost of their raw materials or increasing the revenue for goods sold, provided that these do not result in increasing prices for the proletariat and the rest of the working people
- the return of **certain** lands and mineral, timber, water and fishing rights stolen by the capitalists from the small producers.

This last demand is particularly important in regard to the Afro-American farmers in the Black Belt South, the Chicano farmers in the Southwest, the Native peoples, the colonized peoples in Puerto Rico, the Pacific Islands, and so on, because of the national character of these struggles. These demands, however, are not necessarily limited to the small producers of the oppressed nations.

In supporting these latter demands, in particular, special efforts must be made to oppose petty bourgeois programs for the breaking up of capitalist property in general. While we would, for instance, **support** the struggles of small Appalachian farmers to stop the strip-mining of their land, or the struggles of small Western farmers to regain water rights expropriated by the large capitalist farmers, we would **oppose** any call for the break-up of the mining monopolies or the capitalist agribusinesses in favor of small-scale property.

The proletariat champions these demands in order to widen the class struggle against the bourgeoisie and bring more allies into this struggle. The demands of the petty bourgeoisie must be considered from this viewpoint: we cannot support every demand, but only those which strengthen the class struggle and unite the oppressed people – not those which weaken or divide this struggle.

The proletariat cannot support demands which harm the proletariat (such as government price supports that are nothing more than handouts to the capitalists at the expense of the poor and working people, and restrictions on the import of goods from foreign countries). It especially will not support demands which divide and harm the class struggle, such as restrictions on the rights of immigrant and national minority small proprietors, the lowering of the minimum wage and restrictions on workers' rights to organize. Campaigns to promote these reactionary policies are, of course, inspired first and foremost by the bourgeoisie, but they enlist the support of many small owners.

The demands that we raise on behalf of the small proprietors, like all partial demands, can only be realized to a very limited extent under the rule of the capitalists. Any of these reforms can be, and undoubtedly will be, distorted by the bourgeois state for the benefit of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, while we support these demands, we must convince the small proprietors that they will only be realized to any meaningful extent under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

"**The Social Democrats,**" wrote Lenin, "**fight for all improvements in the conditions of the workers and peasants** which can be introduced immediately, even before we have destroyed the bourgeoisie, and which will help them fight against the bourgeoisie. But the Social Democrats do not want to mislead the peasant, they tell him the **whole truth**, they warn him straightforwardly that as long as the bourgeoisie is in power no improvements will rid the people of want and misery."²⁴

The small and middle petty proprietors stand to gain immensely from the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletarian government will expropriate the capitalists, turning the means of production in their hands into the property of the proletarian state. The proletarian government, however, will never seize the land and small enterprises owned or operated by the small proprietors who do not exploit labor. Their rent and mortgage payments will be cancelled and, in certain cases, part of the land confiscated from the capitalists will be redistributed among the land-starved small farmers. "The Social Democrats," wrote Lenin, "want to deprive only the big proprietors, **only those who live by the labour of others**, of their property. The Social Democrats **will never take away the property of the small and middle farmers who do not employ labourers**."²⁵

Of course, the proletariat supports the eventual socialization of all the means of production, not only those of the capitalists, but also of the small owners. As long as private property remains, the possibility exists for it to be accumulated into the hands of a new class of rich exploiters, and it will be impossible to build a classless society.

Moreover, modern production techniques make small-scale production increasingly inefficient compared to large-scale production, and the expansion of large-scale social production at the expense of small-scale production is an irreversible historical process that will continue to advance despite the will of any class. This process takes place in both capitalist and socialist society, but the manner in which it takes place is completely different. The bourgeoisie violently expropriates the small owners, seizing their property through bankruptcy court and sheriffs' auction. All this property is concentrated in the hands of the few wealthy monopoly capitalist exploiters, while the expropriated small owners are driven into wage slavery, poverty and unemployment.



"The proletariat comes to the defense of the poor and exploited small proprietor not to protect their independent position, but because it defends the standard of living and political rights of all exploited working people against the capitalists."

The dictatorship of the proletariat, on the contrary, does not seize the property of the non-exploiting small proprietors. Instead, it encourages them to form cooperatives, so as to combine small, inefficient means of production into larger, more efficient ones through an organized process that benefits all. The process of collectivization is carried out on a **voluntary** basis, expressing the free will of the small proprietors. Socialist planned production eliminates unemployment, the idling of productive forces, wild price fluctuations and inflation that are characteristic of the anarchic system of capitalist production relations. Thus, it will improve the material well-being of all working people.

While the proletarian state will never expropriate the **non-exploiting** proprietors it will just as certainly never allow the development of new capitalists. Historically, the upper-level small proprietors who exploit labor have played a reactionary role, constantly striving to become capitalists and opposing socialism and collectivization to the end. Initially, restrictions will be placed on these exploiting small proprietors so that they cannot enlarge their holdings. Those who accept collectivization will be encouraged and allowed to join the process along with the non-exploiting proprietors, although the non-exploiters must always be in the forefront of this process. Whether through collectivization or expropriation, however, the individual ownership of property by the small exploiters will be done away with in time, because exploitation is contrary to the entire basis of socialism.

The proletarian movement must support the formation of organizations of small proprietors such as the small farmers' organizations, independent truckers' unions, pulpwood cutters' unions, etc. We must realize that within these movements there are inevitably a wide variety of social and political forces, ranging from revolutionary to fascist. Currently, the liberal reformists are in command. The fascists are clearly attempting to make inroads and rally behind them some of the small proprietors that are being ruined. Examples of this have been the fascist Senator Jesse Helms' demagogic support of the independent truckers' demands to stop Reagan's gas tax, the efforts of the Posse Comitatus, a fascist para-military organization, to establish a base among the farmers in the Midwest and the western plains, and the Ku Klux Klan's organization of shrimp fishermen in Texas to attack Vietnamese fishermen.

The agitation of the revolutionary proletariat must be directed towards exposing the capitalists as the enemy of the small producers and exposing the upper petty bourgeoisie and the fascists as the agents of the capitalists, despite their populist demagoguery. Within these movements, the revolutionary proletariat must develop its alliance with the poor working people, encouraging them to break with the capitalists and the upper petty bourgeoisie and bringing them into a united struggle with the proletariat against the capitalists. Communists must work within the existing mass organizations of the small proprietors and, simultaneously, build **revolutionary** organizations to represent the small proprietors and link their struggles with the struggle of the proletariat.

The Petty Bourgeois Employees

As the small proprietors have been steadily eliminated, another intermediate stratum has been created and has grown alongside the proletariat – the petty bourgeois employees. The wage-earning petty bourgeoisie is comprised of management and supervisory personnel, sales representatives, professional and upper-level technical workers and military and police officers. These strata make up an intermediate group between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, sharing characteristics with both.

They share with the bourgeoisie a separation from manual labor, which has been delegated almost exclusively to the proletariat. Their work, in general, falls in the categories of mental labor that in the past, before the colossal concentration of production that characterizes developed capitalism, were the realm of the wealthy classes that owned property. Today the ownership of productive property has been limited to a tiny and ever-decreasing part of the population. Therefore, the commercial, managerial, governmental, intellectual and professional functions that were once carried out by a large number of property owners have now been delegated to an upper stratum of employees. Hence, as the number of owners is continually diminished, the number of management employees increases; as the number of "independent" doctors, lawyers, architects and engineers diminishes, the number of employees in these professions increases.

This upper stratum of employees still shares similar tasks and a similar class outlook, to a certain extent, with its independent predecessors and its contemporary employers.* On the other hand, this upper stratum of employees shares with the proletariat the characteristic of being a dispossessed class that owns no means of production and is compelled to sell its labor power to the capitalists in order to live.

Economically, the petty bourgeois employees are also in an intermediate position between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, with the income of the divergent strata overlapping that of both classes. Upper level petty bourgeois employees, such as a well-paid management official or engineer in a large corporation, may often earn more than the capitalist owner of a small company. At the same time the lower level petty bourgeois employees may earn little more than common proletarians and less than the labor aristocracy.

* The exploiting classes have always maintained a special cadre of military officers, government administrators, intellectuals, clerics, etc. who were drawn not only from the exploiting classes but from other classes as well, and who carried out functions similar to the modern-day petty bourgeois employees. The point is that these strata have been enlarged as capitalism has developed and, in terms of personnel, have become increasingly distinct from the shrinking number of property owners (while at the same time their work is ever more subordinated to the interests of the ruling class).

The wage-earning petty bourgeoisie, as a whole, numbers nearly 28,000,000, making up 29% of wage and salary workers and 26% of the total labor force (see Table C-4).

Table C-4

Occupations of the Petty Bourgeois Employees (1981)²⁶

Government Classification	Main Occupations	Employed Full-time	Employed Part-time	Unemployed	Total
Professional and Technical Workers	Doctors, Lawyers, Engineers, Architects, Computer Programmers, Scientists, Teachers, Social Workers, Nurses, Health Technicians, Engineering and Science Technicians, Clergy, Writers, Artists, Entertainers	12,378,000	1,948,000	510,000	14,836,000
Managers and Administrators	Bank Officers, Buyers, Building and Office Managers, Public Administrators, Health Administrators, School Administrators, Union Officials, Restaurant and Bar Managers, Sales Managers, Other Managers	6,814,000	370,000	340,000	7,524,000
Supervisors	Clerical, "Blue Collar," Service and Agricultural Supervisors	2,220,000		142,000	2,362,000
Sales Representatives	Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, Stocks and Bonds, Real Estate, Insurance, Advertising	2,008,000		124,000	2,132,000
Military and Police Officers	Police, Detectives, Sheriffs, Bailiffs, Military Officers and Cadets, Firefighters	1,046,000			1,046,000
Total		24,466,000	2,318,000	1,116,000	27,900,000

Explanation of Table C-4

Table C-4 is based on statistics provided by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) on the number of workers in the occupational classifications used by the government that are mainly composed of petty bourgeois employees. As in the case of Table B-1, which covered proletarian occupations, we had to separate the petty bourgeois strata from the proletarian strata in a number of the government's occupational classifications of wage and salary workers. The classification of supervisors in this table is composed of supervisory workers separated from several proletarian occupational classifications. Sales representatives have been separated from retail sales clerks, who have been included in Table B-1. Police, detectives, firefighters, sheriffs and bailiffs were removed from the government classification of service workers and included in this Table, among the petty bourgeois employees. To this

group we have added 300,000 commissioned officers and cadets in the armed forces who were not included in the BLS statistics (which only covered civilian employees).

It should be noted that among the 28,000,000 employees included in this table is a section of the capitalist class, namely the top corporate officers who nominally appear as "wage and salary" workers. Because of the limitations of government statistics it is impossible to separate these capitalists from their petty bourgeois employees: Their number, however, is quite small, hardly enough to greatly inflate the number of petty bourgeois employees. We were able to remove from these classifications some 1,680,000 proprietors who were readily identifiable as such because they identified themselves as "self-employed" (see notes 3 & 26, this section).

Managers, Administrators, Supervisors and Sales Representatives. Karl Marx described the function of the hired manager under the capitalist mode of production as follows:

"The work of directing, superintending and adjusting becomes one of the functions of capital, from the moment that labour under the control of capital, becomes cooperative. Once a function of capital, it acquires special characteristics. The directing motive, the end aim of capitalist production, is to extract the greatest possible amount of surplus value, and consequently to exploit labour-power to the greatest possible extent. As the number of cooperating labourers increases so too does their resistance to the domination of capital, and with it, the necessity for capital to overcome this resistance by counter-pressure. The control exercised by the capitalist is not only a special function, due to the nature of the social labour-process, and peculiar to that process, but it is, at the same time, the function of the exploitation of a social labour-process, and is consequently rooted in the unavoidable antagonism between the exploiter and the living and labouring raw material he exploits....

Just as at first the capitalist is relieved from actual labour so soon as his capital has reached that minimum amount with which capitalist production, as such, begins, so now, he hands over the work of direct and constant supervision of individual workmen, and groups of workmen, to a special kind of wage-labourer. An industrial army of workmen, under the command of a capitalist, requires, like a real army, officers (managers), and sergeants (foremen, overlookers), who, while the work is being done, command in the name of the capitalist. The work of supervision becomes their established and exclusive function."²⁷

In a large capitalist corporation the number of these bourgeois deputies multiplies, and in the largest monopoly corporations they number in the thousands. At the top of the managerial hierarchy are the capitalists themselves, surrounded by their closest lieutenants, who also must be considered part of the capitalist class. These top managers are backed up by an army of subordinates, petty bourgeois managers and administrators who are very well paid. More than 2,862,000 managers and administrators made over \$500 a week in 1981 and more than half of all managers and administrators made over \$400 a week.²⁸

At the lowest level, many managers, foremen and supervisors make little more than the workers they supervise, and frequently less than workers in other industries. For instance, the median weekly salary of restaurant, cafeteria and bar managers in 1981 was \$275.²⁹ Low wages, however, do not change the fundamental class character of the supervisor as the agent of the capitalist, whose function is to extract the greatest amount of surplus value possible from the workers, a position which is completely alien and hostile to that of the proletariat.

Those directly charged with supervising workers are mainly drawn from the working class – from among the most politically backward workers who identify most closely with the capitalist and who will gladly step on their class brothers and sisters to get ahead.

Government administrators share the basic characteristics of the administrators of private industry, the difference being that, ideally, they do not command in the name of an individual capitalist, but rather in the name of the capitalist class as a whole, or the ruling sector of it.

Sales representatives also carry out the capitalists' responsibility (marketing) and identify with the capitalist. The upper section of the sales representatives are well compensated – 1,206,000 make over \$400 a week.³⁰ However, even the lowest-paid corporate salesmen, real estate agents or insurance brokers are imbued with the capitalist philosophy and the hope of "making it big."

Agents of State Repression. The U.S. bourgeoisie has built up a huge repressive apparatus to defend its rule. This apparatus includes, first of all, the military – the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marines and the various divisions of the National Guard, as well as the civilian component of the Defense Department. It includes the state, county and city police forces, and the entire judicial and prison systems at all levels. It includes the special secret and political police – the FBI, the CIA and numerous other federal, state and local agencies. It also includes the extra-legal forces of repression – the fascist para-military organizations. This repressive apparatus employs several million people.

The largest part of the repressive apparatus is the military, which numbers some 2,127,000 people.³¹ The majority of the people in the military, however, the common soldiers, must be considered separately from the rest of the repressive apparatus. These soldiers are virtually all children of the working class and the poorer sections of the petty bourgeoisie. They are pressed into military service by conscription or economic necessity, and only participate in it temporarily, returning to the working masses after their tours are over. They are oppressed, humiliated, denied all democratic rights and thrown into battle against the oppressed peoples around the world to shed their blood for the profits of the imperialists.

The soldiers in the capitalists' armed forces are a powerful tool of bourgeois repression. Organized by the proletarian party, however, the masses of soldiers can be split away from the bourgeois armed forces and become an essential and decisive force in the armed insurrection of the proletariat.

"The masses of soldiers," wrote Enver Hoxha, "made up of the sons of workers and peasants have interests diametrically opposed to the character of the army and the mission the bourgeoisie charges it with. Like the workers and other working people, the masses of soldiers are interested in overthrowing the exploiting order, and that is why the bourgeoisie shuts it up in the barracks and isolates it from the people, turning the army, as Lenin pointed out, into a 'prison' for millions of soldiers."³²

The military **officers**, on the other hand, are professional soldiers in the service of the bourgeoisie. Here we are talking, first and foremost, of the **commissioned** officers who are drawn from the middle and upper petty bourgeoisie. Some of the top-ranking officers are even members of bourgeois families. There are some 293,000 commissioned officers, making up about 14% of military personnel.³³

The non-commissioned officers are drawn primarily from the ranks of the working class and the lower petty bourgeoisie. These lower-ranking officers are also inculcated with the idea of

defending imperialism and reaction but their position is distinct from that of the commissioned officers. "Work with the lower ranking officers," wrote Enver Hoxha, "in order to separate them from the caste of senior officers and to convince them not to raise their hand against the people, must not be excluded...."³⁴ In the conditions of revolutionary crisis and popular insurrection, a number of these lower-ranking officers can be won to the side of the revolution, as happened during the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

The armed enforcers of bourgeois rule on a day-to-day basis are some 578,000 police, detectives, sheriffs and bailiffs. Among this force we must also include 218,000 firefighters because of their close personal, social and political association with the police.³⁵ Many sheriffs and police chiefs are chosen from among the upper petty bourgeoisie, the large landowners and small capitalists. The rank-and-file police officers, however, are drawn from among the working people. They are recruited from among the most dishonest, brutal and vicious elements in society. Their salaries are only somewhat higher than most proletarian wages (an average of \$363 a week in 1981³⁶) but they can supplement their salaries with criminal activities: extorting petty bribes from working class victims, collecting kickbacks and protection money from criminal syndicates, etc. Many times the police themselves head up these criminal organizations.

The extra-legal organs of repression – the Ku Klux Klan, the Nazis and other fascist paramilitary and mercenary organizations, are organized primarily through the military (especially the "Special Forces"), the police, the FBI, the CIA, the sheriffs departments, the fire departments, etc. A great number of these thugs are paid directly by the government.³⁷

Professional and Technical Workers (The Intelligentsia). This is the largest sector of the petty bourgeois employees, numbering nearly 15,000,000. Lenin outlined the position of this sector as follows:

"In all spheres of the people's labour, capitalism increases the number of **office and professional workers** with particular rapidity and makes a growing demand for intellectuals. The latter occupy a special position among the other classes, attaching themselves to the bourgeoisie by their connections, their outlooks, etc. and partly to the wage workers as capitalism increasingly deprives the intellectual of his independent position, converts him into a hired worker and threatens to lower his living standard. The transitory, unstable, contradictory position of this stratum of society now under discussion is reflected in the particularly widespread diffusion in its midst of hybrid eclectic views, a farrago of contrasting principles and ideas, an urge to rise verbally to the higher spheres and to conceal the conflicts between the historical groups of the population with phrases...."³⁸

With the development of capitalism the number of the intelligentsia has grown greatly and they have become highly stratified. The main occupations within this sector, the number of people in these occupations and their median weekly wages are listed in Table C-5.

Table C-5

Professional and Technical Employees (1981)³⁹

Occupation	Number of Full Time Employees	Median Weekly Wage
(Upper)		
Lawyers & Judges	299,000	550
Engineers	1,459,000	540
Architects	60,000	428
Physicians, Dentists, Pharmacists, etc.	314,000	468
Life & Physical Scientists	277,000	474
Social Scientists	238,000	461
College Teachers	438,000	441
Computer Specialists (Programmers & Systems Analysts)	583,000	454
Operations & Systems Analysts	212,000	485
Personnel & Labor Relations Workers	419,000	402
Accountants	960,000	379
Airplane Pilots	53,000	530
(Lower)		
Nurses (Registered), Dieticians & Therapists	1,168,000	327
Teachers (non-college)	2,624,000	333
Vocational and Educational Counselors	156,000	388
Social Workers	357,000	309
Recreation Workers	97,000	226

Engineering & Science Technicians (Electronic, Chemical, Drafters, Surveyors, etc.)	1,056,000	348
Health Technicians (Clinical Lab, X-ray, etc.)	511,000	287
Radio Operators	56,000	233
Other Technicians	63,000	---
Research Workers (not specified)	157,000	362
Religious Workers (Clergy, etc.)	268,000	284
Writers, Artists & Entertainers	791,000	350
Librarians, etc.	146,000	323
Foresters & Conservationists	60,000	331

The intelligentsia can be divided roughly into upper and lower-level professions based on income and social position, with approximately 40% belonging to the upper professions and 60% belonging to the lower professions (of course, division by profession alone is not sufficient because many individual professions are divided into distinct upper and lower sections).

The bourgeoisie relies on the support of an array of intellectuals who serve as highly placed scientists, engineers, political advisers, military experts, economists, lawyers, propagandists, etc. This intellectual elite is extremely highly paid and is completely integrated into the top levels of the bourgeois power structure in both industry and the state. Their political stand is identical with that of the monopoly bourgeoisie.

In addition there is a much larger sector of highly paid professionals who staff the capitalist technical apparatus and are a strong base of support for the bourgeoisie. This upper sector of professionals includes most lawyers, doctors, engineers, scientists, college professors, computer specialists, etc. Some 3,345,000 professionals made over \$500 a week in 1981.⁴⁰ Their high salaries, along with their privileged conditions of work and their elite status, separate them from the masses of people and identify them with the bourgeoisie... Many of the upper-level professionals supervise the work of subordinate technical workers and actually do very little work themselves (i.e. doctors supervise nurses, engineers supervise technicians and drafters, college professors supervise teaching and research assistants, etc.), which contributes further to their world outlook as masters rather than workers.

A number of these higher-level professions are directly concerned with the management of capitalist enterprises (operations and systems analysts, personnel and labor relations experts and accountants) and have all of the reactionary characteristics that this entails. Lawyers are the agents of the bourgeois legal system and most of them serve, either directly or indirectly, the repressive state apparatus or the capitalist corporations.

The upper-level professionals are a closed and self-perpetuating stratum, composed predominantly of Anglo-American men who are themselves children of upper-level professionals. Systematic discrimination and carefully constructed educational and professional barriers maintain this elite status.

The majority of professional and technical workers, however, do not belong to this upper stratum. Nurses, school teachers, social workers, technical workers, etc. do not enjoy the high salaries or the social status accorded the top professions. This group, for the most part, stands above the proletariat, enjoying somewhat better wages and conditions of work. These petty privileges are, once again, maintained through a system of educational barriers, but these barriers are not so extensive as those connected with the upper-level professions, and a large number of these workers are drawn from the ranks of the proletariat. Those allowed into the lower-level professional and technical positions are predominantly, but not exclusively, Anglo-Americans. Among the lower-level professions are those that have been traditionally set aside for women (nurses, school teachers, librarians, social workers, etc.). Women are still largely barred from scientific and engineering work.



"An increasing number of lower level professional and technical workers are moving to organize unions, recognizing that their employment relations are becoming increasingly similar to those of the proletariat."

The economic position of the lower-level intelligentsia is not tremendously better than that of the proletariat, and many of them live no better than the common worker. Half of all full-time professional and technical workers (6,436,000) made less than \$377 a week in 1981 – this half comprising most of the members of the lower-level professions and technical occupations. Of these workers, 3,834,000 made less than \$300 a week and nearly a million made less than \$200 a week, which is a poor wage regardless of whether one has a professional title or not.⁴¹ The 1,948,000 part-time professional and technical workers were paid less still – a median weekly wage of \$123 for an average of 19.1 hours' work, which works out to \$6.44 an hour.⁴²

The extent to which the capitalist has placed the lower categories of the intelligentsia into a position similar to the proletariat is demonstrated by the increasing number that are paid by the hour (rather than salaries), which is the typical method of purchasing proletarian labor power. In 1979 over 4,000,000 professional and technical workers were paid hourly wages. The typical hourly wage for men in this group was \$6.87, while women made \$5.08.⁴³

As we have discussed earlier, within technical work a lower-level stratum is being created which is distinctly proletarian. Today most technical work is still carried out by employees who, to one degree or another, still enjoy petty bourgeois status, but this reality is changing.

Allies and Enemies of the Proletariat among the Petty Bourgeois Employees

The fact that petty bourgeois employees share characteristics with both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and the great divergence of their incomes leads to a divergence of class interests and political alignments. Some strata which have more in common with the bourgeoisie will take the side of their masters, while other strata which have more in common with the working class will take the side of the proletariat.

A large sector of the petty bourgeois employees are, because of the nature of their special role in society, enemies of the proletarian revolution. This sector includes managers, supervisors, sales representatives, police and military officers and other employees of the repressive state apparatus (judges, wardens, lawyers, etc.). Regardless of their level of income this sector is invariably reactionary because their position gives them the outlook of the overseer, the masters' agent, the henchmen and the petty oppressor.

Unions and professional associations among these occupations (police, firefighters' and prison guards' unions, for instance) are inherently reactionary, in fact fascist, organizations and should not be allowed to parade as "workers' unions," or join proletarian trade union associations.

The intelligentsia, in distinction from the above mentioned groups, cannot be seen as one unified group and characterized, as a whole, as either reactionary or progressive. The various strata within the professional and technical workers have different characteristics, and among these strata the proletariat has both enemies and allies.

"On the basis of a concrete analysis," wrote Bajram Abdiu of the Party of Labor of Albania, "the working class and its Marxist-Leninist party define their stand toward the various categories and strata of the intelligentsia, towards the upper stratum which is closest to the bourgeoisie and takes part jointly with it in the exploitation of the proletariat, towards the middle and lower strata which are connected with and closer to the proletariat than the bourgeoisie. On these strata the working class and its party must exert their influence and leading role, they must strive for their education and re-education, they must lead and plunge them into the revolutionary class struggle so that they may be tempered, may master the Marxist-Leninist world outlook and consciously pass to and remain on the positions of the working class and socialist revolution."⁴⁴

The upper-level intelligentsia stand with the bourgeoisie and reaction. The proletariat cannot set itself the goal of winning any major sectors of these people to its side before it seizes power. It must, however, work to neutralize those sectors which are not directly connected with the capitalists, so that they do not play an active role in the counterrevolution. After the revolution, when the proletariat is in power, it will have the ability to win the majority of these people to its side, while crushing the counterrevolutionary activity of those that maintain their alliance with the capitalists.

The social position and the class interests of the lower-level intelligentsia, on the other hand, are much closer to the proletariat than to the bourgeoisie. A large number of these people share the economic position of the proletariat. Many of them, however, maintain a degree of "professional prejudice" which leads them to keep their distance from the working class, and attempt to copy the lifestyle and ideals of the upper petty bourgeoisie and the capitalists. The impact of professional status and somewhat higher wages is illustrated by the wrecking activity undertaken by many registered nurses in the efforts to establish industrial unions in hospitals.

On the other hand, an increasing number of professional and technical workers are moving to organize unions, recognizing that their employment relations are becoming increasingly similar to those of the proletariat. Teachers, who have suffered sharp wage cuts and massive layoffs in recent years, have waged militant strikes every school year. To the extent that the unions of professional and technical workers act as narrow "professional associations," however, they can be reactionary and divisive in the same way that craft unions are. The struggles of the intelligentsia can be progressive only to the extent that the intelligentsia ally themselves with the proletariat in a common struggle against the bourgeoisie, and do not seek to improve their position at the expense of the workers.

The proletarian party must actively organize these workers, seeking to bring them under the leadership of the proletariat and drive a wedge between them and the upper petty bourgeoisie. It must work to combat the bourgeois ideas and "professional prejudices" that have been imbued in them, and show them that their only hope lies in an alliance with the proletariat under its leadership.

"The ranks of the small proprietors have been decimated. More and more small owners are being driven into the ranks of wage labor."



Notes

1. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, V.29, p. 100.

2. *Statistics of Income: Sole Proprietor Returns, 1979-1980; Statistics of Income: Partnership Returns, 1979-1980; and Statistics of Income: Corporate Returns, 1979*, Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

3. It is impossible to identify the precise number of small proprietors because large sectors of the class are difficult to distinguish from the proletariat and the small capitalists, given the limitations of the statistics available. On the one hand, the semi-proletariat has much in common with the proletariat and the small capitalists. On the other hand, the upper petty proprietors have much in common with the small capitalists. Our estimate of 10,500,000 is based on the following information provided by government statistics:

The BLS divides the civilian labor force into three major "employment classes": "self-employed workers", "unpaid family workers", and "wage and salary workers". In 1982, there were 8,853,000 self-employed workers, 535,000

unpaid family workers and 89,482,000 wage and salary workers (*Employment and Earnings*, Jan. 1983, BLS). The "self-employed" category consists of the owners of all unincorporated businesses who make most of their income from these businesses (from babysitters to real estate agents). Among this group there are certainly some capitalists (i.e., owners who live exclusively by the labor of others), but their number is not considerable because most capitalists find it beneficial to incorporate their businesses. Even most of the "self-employed" in the upper-income brackets are most likely well-to-do professionals who still depend on their own labor. Because it is impossible to separate the capitalists in this category, and because their number is relatively insignificant, we have included all 8,853,000 "self-employed" among the petty bourgeoisie. We have also included all 535,000 unpaid family workers in the ranks of the small proprietors. These are mainly women who work in their husband's businesses and children (over 15 years old) who work in their parents businesses without direct compensation. The classification of "wage and salary" workers is the most deceiving and muddled. It includes the hired workers of unincorporated businesses **including the owners** (who, by virtue of the norms of incorporated businesses, pay themselves wages). There is no way, using government statistics, to divide the employers and the employed within these groups. The BLS gave us one indication when it reported in 1979 that of nearly 90,000,000 "wage and salary workers" some 2,100,000 identified themselves as "self-employed", indicating that they owned the corporations that they worked for. (See *Monthly Labor Review*, Nov. 1980, p. 7.) There were, undoubtedly, many other owners that were content to identify themselves as "wage and salary" workers (including, we imagine, most of the larger capitalists; Henry Ford III would hardly identify himself as "self-employed"). Therefore, this figure of 2,100,000 does not include all of the owners of incorporated businesses but it is the only figure that we have to work with, and it is conceivable that most incorporated petty bourgeois proprietors would still identify themselves as "self-employed". We are still faced with the task of separating the petty bourgeoisie from the capitalists in this group of incorporated owners. Lacking a more scientific method, we included among the petty bourgeoisie those 1,050,000 incorporated owners who identified their occupation as "salesman", "craftsman", "professional", etc. rather than "manager". The total of 8,853,000 "self-employed", 535,000 "unpaid family workers" and 1,050,000 incorporated owners (who were not managers) is 10,438,000, which we have rounded to 10,500,000 so that it would not appear any more precise than it actually is. (The 2,100,000 "wage and salary" workers who **identified themselves** as "self-employed" have been removed from the classifications of proletarian and petty bourgeois employees for the purpose of our analysis).

The attempt to fix the number of small proprietors is also complicated by the extreme instability of petty bourgeois businesses. Millions of these businesses are established every year and millions more go out of business. This means millions of people transfer between wage labor and self-employment every year. This transfer goes both ways but the balance is almost always in favor of wage labor. This constant fluctuation can be illustrated by comparing IRS and BLS statistics for 1979. That year the IRS reported that 18,039,128 proprietors of unincorporated businesses filed business income tax returns (this figure includes both sole proprietors and partners). (*Statistics of Income: Sole Proprietor Returns, 1979-1980, and Statistics of Income: Partnership Returns, 1979*, IRS). In December of that year, however, the BLS reported that there were only 8,266,000 "self-employed" workers, a category identical to the proprietors who were counted by the IRS, except that it does not include those who made most of their income through outside wage labor (*Employment and Earnings*, Jan. 1980). The number of these workers (who mainly worked for wages but who also had their own business on the side) was reported by the BLS to be 1,500,000 in 1979 (*Monthly Labor Review*, Nov. 1980, p. 4). If we add the "full-time" proprietors, to the "part-time" proprietors in the BLS figures the total still falls more than 8,000,000 short of the IRS figure. This, then, is the approximate number of people who abandoned their attempts to "strike out on their own" sometime during the year and left the labor force or joined the ranks of wage labor.

4. *Monthly Labor Review*, Nov. 1980, Bureau of Labor Statistics, p. 3. Also see *Monthly Labor Review*, Jan. 1975, and Jan. 1963.

5. These same basic strata were identified by Lenin in analyzing the class differentiation among the peasantry in capitalist countries. These peasant strata also describe class differentiation among the petty proprietors as an entire class. The peasantry, according to Lenin, consisted of:

"[The] semi-proletarians or peasants who till tiny plots of land, i.e.: those who obtain their livelihood partly as wage labourers at agricultural and industrial capitalist enterprises and partly by working their own or rented plots of land, which provide their families only with part of their means of subsistence.

[The] small peasantry, i.e., the small-scale tillers, who either as owners or tenants, hold small plots of land which enable them to satisfy the needs of their families and their farms, and do not hire outside labour.

[The] 'middle peasants', those small farmers who, (1) either as owners or tenants, hold plots of land that are also small but, under capitalism, are sufficient not only to provide, as a general rule, a meagre subsistence for the family and the bare minimum needed to maintain the farm, but also produce a certain surplus which may, in good years at least, be converted into capital; (2) quite frequently (for example, one farm out of two or three) resort to the employment of hired labour.

The big peasants are capitalist **entrepreneurs** in agriculture, who as a rule employ several hired labourers and are connected with the "peasantry" only in their low cultural level, habits of life, and the manual labour they themselves perform on their farms". (Lenin, *Collected Works*, V. 31, pp. 153-7).

6. *Statistics of Income: Sole Proprietor Returns, 1979/1980*, Internal Revenue 'Service.

7. *Money Income of Households, Families and Persons in the United States: 1980*, Census Bureau, 1982.

8. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, V. 2, p. 413.

9. *Money Income of Households, Families and Persons in the United States: 1980*, Census Bureau, 1982.

10. See note 3, this section.

11. *Money Income of Households, Families and Persons in the United States: 1980*, Census Bureau, 1982, pp. 192-197. This document listed "self-employed retail trade managers," which is apparently a narrower category than the BLS category of "self-employed workers in the retail trade industry."

12. *1982 Handbook of Agricultural Charts*, USDA, 1982, p. 15.

13. *Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1981*, Census Bureau, 1982, p. 673 and *1982 Handbook of Agricultural Charts*, USDA, 1982, p. 4.

14. *1982 Handbook of Agricultural Charts*, USDA, 1982, p. 4.

15. L. Schertz, ed., *Another Revolution in U.S. Farming*, USDA, pp. 4-10.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-26.

17. Stephen Sesnick, *Hired Hands: Seasonal Farm Workers in the United States*.

18. T. McDonald and G. Coffman, *Fewer, Larger U.S. Farms by the Year 2000 and Some Consequences*, USDA, 1980.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Farm Population in the U.S.: 1981*, Census Bureau, 1982, p. 15.

21. *Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States: 1981*, Census Bureau, 1982, p. 15.

22. V.I. Lenin, quoted in Anna Rochester, *Lenin on the Agrarian Question*, International Publishers, 1942, p. 43.

23. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, V. 4, pp. 422-23.

24. V.I. Lenin, quoted in Rochester, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

25. *Ibid.*

26. See notes and explanation for Table B-1 for basic sources and explanation of this table. Additional notes: The occupational classifications listed in this table include not only petty bourgeois employees but capitalists as well because the BLS makes no attempt to separate owners from workers among corporate "employees" (see note 3, this section). For instance, the classification "bank officers" includes the assistant manager of a local branch bank, along with Walter Wriston, Chairman of the Board of Citibank, and everyone in between. It is impossible for us to completely separate the capitalists from the petty bourgeoisie in these classifications and therefore the figures presented on this table represent the total number of petty bourgeois employees with a certain number of capitalists. Since the number of capitalists is small, the figures should not be greatly inflated.

While we could not completely separate the capitalists from the petty bourgeois employees, we were able to isolate a number of the capitalists. Within the BLS category of "white collar wage and salary workers" in 1979, 1,680,000 people identified themselves as "self-employed," indicating that they owned the corporation that they worked for (see note 2, this section). They, of course, should be classified among the petty bourgeois and capitalist proprietors and not among the wage earners, and we have therefore removed them from the classification of the wage-earning

petty bourgeoisie. Of these "self-employed" owners, 1,050,000 were classified as "managers and administrators," and we have therefore subtracted this number from that occupational classification. The occupations of the remaining 630,000 "white collar" owners were not specified. Assuming they were not clerical workers or sales clerks, we removed these owners from the "professional and technical workers" and "sales representatives" classifications in proportion to the size of these classifications (492,000 from the professional and technical classification and 138,000 from the sales representatives classification).

The BLS data from which this chart was drawn included only civilian employees and did not include military officers and cadets. The number of officers and cadets was reported in *Defense '83*, American Forces Information Service, Sept., 1983.

27. Marx, *Capital*, V. 1, pp. 331-332 (International Publishers)

28. *Analyzing 1981 Earnings Data From the Current Population Survey*, BLS, 1982, p. A-10.

29. "Occupational Earnings of Men and Women," *Monthly Labor Review*, April, 1982., p. 27.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Defense '83*, American Forces Information Service, Sept., 1983, p. 24.

32. Enver Hoxha, *Eurocommunism is Anti-Communism*, Tirana, "8" Nentori Publishing House, 1980, p. 275.

33. *Defense '83*, p. 24.

34. Enver Hoxha, *Eurocommunism is Anti-Communism*, Tirana, 1980, p. 2.77.

35. "Occupational Earnings of Men and Women," *Monthly Labor Review*, April, 1982, p. 29.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Libby Wilson and Tamara Johnson, *Rise Up Against the Klan!*, Trade Union Action League, Birmingham, Alabama, 1980, pp. 15-25. See also: David L. Aasen, "Coming Distractions," *The Nation*, Feb. 28, 1981, pp. 246-248; Ben Cutts, "Who Is Mitchell Livingston WerBell IV?," (four-part series), *Atlanta Constitution*, July 27-30, 1980; Charles Goldman, "World Anti-Communist League," *Public Eye*, 1978; Paul Valentine, "The Fascist Specter Behind the World Anti-Red League," *Washington Post*, May 28, 1978.

38. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, V. 4, p. 202. In this passage, Lenin was paraphrasing the words of Karl Kautsky, in reviewing a polemic by Kautsky against Bernstein revisionism. The polemic was written during Kautsky's Marxist period and received Lenin's support.

39. "Occupational Earnings of Men and Women," *Monthly Labor Review*, April, 1982, p. 26.

40. *Analyzing 1981 Earnings Data From the Current Population Survey*, BLS, p. A-10.

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Wage and Salary Data From Income Development Program, 1979*, Census Bureau, 1982.

44. *Albania Today*, No. 3, 1972, p. 33.

IV. The Lumpen Proletariat

There remains to be discussed one more stratum in capitalist society: the lumpen proletariat. The lumpen proletariat is that sector of the population that, having been denied a legitimate way to make a living, resorts to the illegitimate: i.e. thieves, fences, drug pushers, numbers men, gamblers, pimps, prostitutes, loan sharks, beggars, thugs, etc. The general crisis of capitalism swells the ranks of this stratum because it displaces more and more proletarians and small proprietors from the productive process and prevents large numbers of youth from entering it. Of course, by the lumpen proletariat we do not mean all of those who are unemployed, and not even all of those who, out of desperation, dip into illegitimate means of living while out of work. The lumpen proletariat is that stratum of people who have made those illegitimate means their regular livelihood, their "profession." It is impossible to determine the exact size of this stratum, or even make a close estimate, but it surely numbers several million.

For several years the idea was current among certain sectors of the revolutionary movement that the lumpen proletariat had become the "new vanguard" of the revolution. According to the Black Panther Party, Franz Fanon and others, the lumpen proletariat, among whom they incorrectly included all of the unemployed, were the most impoverished and oppressed and were, therefore, the most revolutionary section of the population. This view is fundamentally anti-Marxist and served to spread confusion about the forces of revolution and counterrevolution.

Despite the fact that most lumpen proletarians are drawn from the ranks of the displaced proletariat, the way in which they make their living is completely different from that of the proletariat, and they therefore have a very different, and in many ways opposite, world view. The lumpen lives off the proletariat, which serves as the primary prey for its thievery and a market for its illicit trade. Thus, the lumpen proletariat shares with the bourgeoisie the common trait of being a parasitic class which lives off the labor of the others. Many lumpens dream of becoming rich and a small number of them actually do, becoming capitalist merchants in the criminal world. Most of the lumpen proletariat, of course, cannot realize any such dreams and are among the most destitute and victimized people in society (i.e., impoverished alcoholics, junkies, prostitutes). But the destitution of those people does not, in itself, make them revolutionary and in fact the lumpen proletariat, as a whole, plays a reactionary role. This stratum, wrote Marx and Engels, "may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue."¹ Members of this class have consistently been used as anti-union gun thugs, police informants, agent provocateurs, assassins, Klansmen, mercenaries, etc.

The revolutionary proletariat must exercise great caution toward those members of the lumpen proletariat who are able to join the revolutionary movement because they often tend to be unstable and advocate adventurism and anarchism, harming the disciplined character of the movement.

The reactionary role of the lumpen proletariat is institutionalized through **organized** crime. Organized crime dominates every aspect of the criminal world like the monopoly corporations dominate every aspect of the legal economy. The most wealthy and powerful of the criminal "bosses" are completely tied in with the capitalist class and the capitalist state; they must be considered capitalists themselves. A whole sector of the bourgeoisie, the most seedy side of this class, is involved in organized criminal activities as well as "legitimate" businesses. It hardly needs to be said that these criminal capitalists are among the most reactionary, ruthless and

fascist members of the bourgeoisie. Organized crime has acted as butchers for reaction, combating the revolutions in China, Algeria, Cuba and many other countries. In the U.S., organized crime has a close working relationship with the CIA, and has been among the most ruthless opponents of communism in the trade union movement, beating and assassinating communists and revolutionary trade unionists.

Notes












1. Karl Marx and Frederic Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, edition cited, p. 18.

V. The Forces of Revolution and Counter-revolution

We have discussed each of the major classes in the U.S. individually, but the whole picture only appears once we discuss them together. Setting aside, for a moment, scientific class distinctions (based on production relations), the revolutionary potential inherent within the U.S. social structure can be seen by the polarization of income, the great gulf in income between the people and the capitalists. Table D-1 divides the working population into income brackets.

Table D-1

Income Classes in the United States {1980}¹
(Total money earnings of civilian workers 15 years old or older)

Income Class		Number	Percent of Total
\$75,000 and Over		495,000	.4
\$60,000-74,999		460,000	.4
\$50,000-59,999		776,000	.7
\$40,000-49,999		1,422,000	1.2
\$30,000-39,999		4,398,000	3.8
\$25,000-29,999		5,439,000	4.7
\$20,000-24,999		9,969,000	8.6
\$15,000-19,999		14,318,000	12.3
\$10,000-14,999		20,792,000	17.9
\$5,000-9,999		23,419,000	20.2
Under \$5,000		34,688,000	29.9
Total		116,178,000	100.0

Over half of the working population earned less than \$10,000 a year (an average of \$192 a week) and over 80% of the working population earned less than \$20,000 (\$384 a week). On the other hand, the truly rich, those that made over \$50,000 a year, made up less than 1.5% of the working population. The gulf between the income of the proletariat and of the monopoly bourgeoisie cannot be completely appreciated looking at this table alone because the monopoly bourgeoisie count their annual income not in thousands, but in millions of dollars. The wealth of some individual monopoly capitalists is known to be well over a billion dollars which, even in "lean" years, should yield annual returns of over \$100,000,000. If reduced to an "hourly wage" (for purposes of comparison) this sum would amount to about \$50,000 an hour. Such stupendous incomes tower not only over the proletariat but also over the incomes of the "middle classes" like a skyscraper over hovels.

The complete extent of class polarization, however, can only be seen if we return to property relations. Table D-2 represents our effort to approximate the sizes of the main classes within the "labor force". Because our data is incomplete, these figures can only be approximate.

Table D-2

Social Classes in the United States*

Class	Class Size	Percent of Labor Force	Divisions Within the Class	Division Size
Proletariat	68,000,000	63	Common	62,300,000
			Labor Aristocracy	5,700,000
Small Proprietors	10,500,000	10	Lower	6,500,000
			Middle	2,000,000
			Upper	2,000,000
Petty Bourgeois Employees	28,000,000	26	Managers, Police & Related Employees	13,000,000
			Intelligentsia	15,000,000
			Lower	9,000,000
			Upper	6,000,000
Bourgeoisie	Under 2,000,000	2	Non-Monopoly	Under 2,000,000
			Monopoly	Under 10,000
Total**	108,500,000	100		
*Only includes those in the "labor force"				
**Independent rounding may result in totals varying from the sum of the individual units				

Of these classes the two largest – the proletariat and the petty bourgeois employees – who together make up 89% of the total, own no means of production. The petty proprietors own less than 6% of the means of production. The bourgeoisie, who make up less than 2% of the total, own 94% of the means of production.*

The class structure of the U.S. is typical of present-day highly developed capitalism. The main characteristics – the domination of the monopoly bourgeoisie, the sharp decline of the petty proprietors, the rapid growth of the proletariat and the petty bourgeois employees are shared by

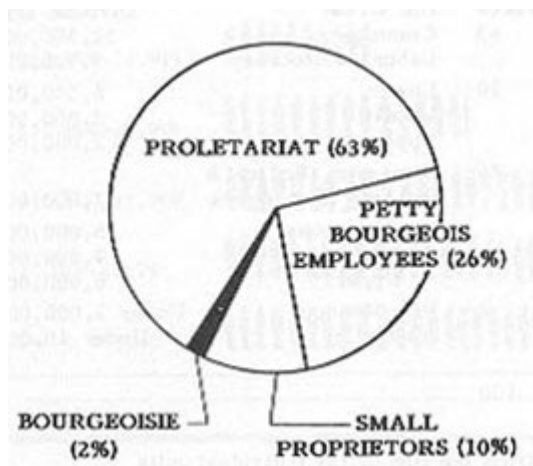
* More precisely, they own the businesses that are responsible for 94% of all business sales (see Table A-1).

all the developed capitalist countries. Other general features, such as the decline in productive labor compared to non-productive labor and the chronic growth of the army of the unemployed, can also be found in all developed capitalist countries. In the U.S. these characteristics are, in general, more developed than elsewhere – i.e. production is more concentrated, the number of petty proprietors is fewer, the number of proletarians is greater.

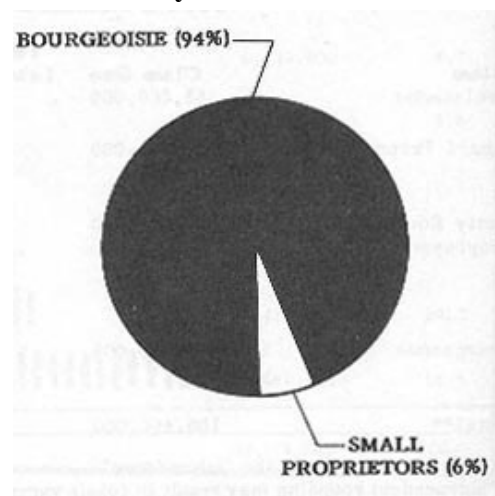
All of these developments, which were predicted by Marx over 100 years ago, have led to ever greater class polarization (the division of all society into employer or employed), and have thus prepared the objective conditions for proletarian revolution and socialism to an unprecedented degree.

The proletariat is a massive class, by now the great majority of society. It is the class that will lead the struggle for socialism, and from its ranks will be drawn the great mass of the revolutionary combatants. The conscious elements of the proletariat must first concentrate on the organization and political development of their own class, heighten its consciousness of its class interests, which are distinct from those of all other classes and strata in society, and of the vanguard role that it must play. But the proletariat does not stand alone against the bourgeoisie; it must also identify and win over its allies in this struggle.

**Chart D-3
Population by Social Class**



**Chart D-4
Ownership of the Means of Production by Social Class**



When the decisive moment of the class struggle arrives, when this conflict erupts into civil war and the members of all social classes are forced to choose between revolution and counterrevolution, between the two great classes in society – the proletariat and the bourgeoisie – the proletariat can expect to be able to win the great majority of society to the side of the revolution.

The working class itself will violently split during a revolutionary conflict and the labor aristocracy will, in Lenin's words, "inevitably, and in no small numbers, take the side of the bourgeoisie".² But the overwhelming majority of the working class (92%) are common workers whose class interests demand socialist revolution.

The small proprietors will split according to economic interest. The rich small proprietors, who live mainly by exploiting labor, will side with the bourgeoisie. The great majority of small

proprietors (at least 62%), however, belong to the lower stratum which does not exploit labor, and which is increasingly impoverished and faces impending ruin at the hands of the capitalists. These working people have every reason to side with the socialist revolution.

The ranks of the wage-earning petty bourgeoisie will also split. Management personnel and the officers of bourgeoisie's organs of repression can be expected to overwhelmingly side with their masters. The intelligentsia, on the other hand, will be sharply divided. The upper strata, which enjoy tremendous privileges, will overwhelmingly stay with the bourgeoisie. The majority of the intelligentsia (60%), however, rank among the lower strata (teachers, nurses, technicians, etc.). A large number of these working people, particularly those of the lowest strata whose income and working conditions are similar to those of the proletariat, can be won to the side of the revolution. The number will depend on the strength of the proletariat (its organization, consciousness and independent action) and the severity of the revolutionary crisis.

The lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie (both among the small proprietors and the employees) are natural allies of the proletariat in the struggle against the bourgeoisie. These strata, however, are not innately inclined to fight for socialism. Their inclination, in fact, is to support private property and class distinctions and therefore, they can never be the vanguard of the struggle for socialism. But they stand to gain tremendously from the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of socialism and, therefore, they can be **won** to the side of the proletariat.

The proletariat and its natural allies make up the great majority of the population. But even beyond these prospective class allies, the rest of the population cannot necessarily be counted as allies of the bourgeoisie. Other strata are also exploited by the bourgeoisie and face ruin at its hands. Many petty proprietors and petty bourgeois employees who are in an intermediate position oppose proletarian rule because they want to hang on to their petty privileges, but they are also at odds with the bourgeois exploiters. The proletariat cannot expect to win these strata to fight on its side, but it must work to keep them in a neutral position and prevent them from actively siding with the counterrevolution.

As the capitalist crisis becomes more aggravated, the bourgeoisie will bear down harder on these strata and many will be stripped of their privileges. The ranks of the labor aristocracy will be narrowed, many professional and technical workers will be reduced to the level of the less privileged, and small proprietors will be massively expropriated and driven into the ranks of wage labor. The capitalist crisis expands the ranks of the lower strata and narrows the capitalists' base of support. Of course, the pressing down of the middle sectors will not only provide recruits for the revolution; it will also provide recruits for fascism.

The class structure of the U.S. has within it tremendous potential for socialist revolution and for socialist construction under the dictatorship of the proletariat. This potential can be unleashed with the sharpening of general crisis of capitalist society and the development of a revolutionary situation. But it can **only** be unleashed if the proletariat and its allies are led by a vanguard revolutionary party. Only such a party can curb the influence of the labor aristocracy, national chauvinism and bourgeois ideology, unite the revolutionary forces of the working class, give their struggle definite political direction, and win over their class allies.

Notes

1. *Money Income of Households, Families and Persons in the United States, 1980*, Census Bureau, 1982.
2. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, V. 22, p. 194.

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