

Erik Olin Wright was born in Berkeley, California, in 1947 while his father was in medical school on the G.I. Bill. He grew up in Lawrence, Kansas, where both of his parents were professors of psychology at the University of Kansas. Aside from a year spent in Australia in 1960, he remained in Kansas until 1964 when he entered Harvard University. After graduating with a B.A. degree in social studies in 1968, he spent two years studying history at Oxford University, working especially with Christopher Hill. Upon returning to the United States in 1970, he spent one year in a Unitarian Theological Seminar in Berkeley, during which time he worked at San Quentin Prison as a student chaplain. On the basis of material gathered while working in the prison, he wrote *The Politics of Punishment: a critical analysis of prisons in America* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1973). In 1971 he entered graduate school in sociology at the University of California where he stayed until completing his doctoral dissertation on *Class Structure and Income Inequality* in the spring of 1976. Author of *Class, Crisis and the State* (New Left Books, 1980), he is currently Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.



Erik Olin Wright

Classes

Verso

Verso is the imprint of New Left Books

Contents

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Wright, Erik Olin
Classes.
1. Social classes
I. Title
305.5 HT609

First published 1985
© Erik Olin Wright

Verso Editions
15 Greek Street London W1V 5LF

Typeset in Times Roman by
Spire Print Services Ltd,
Salisbury, Wiltshire

Printed in Great Britain by
The Thetford Press Ltd,
Thetford, Norfolk

ISBN 0-86091-104-7
0-86091-812-2 pbk

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To the life of M. Erik Wright, my father.