

## ANDRE GORZ AND HIS DISAPPEARING PROLETARIAT

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*Farewell to the Working Class*: an apposite text to review in election week 1983?<sup>1</sup> The erosion of traditional Labour loyalties—first through the relative or even absolute decline in the staple industries and occupations in which Labourism was rooted, second through a switch from political support and identity as an **inbuilt** reflex to more calculative and volatile electoral behaviour—has been a topic of analysis and debate for a quarter of a century. Three successive defeats for Labour in the 1950s provoked influential assertions that the party's working-class identification had become a fatal **handicap**,<sup>2</sup> as well as pleas for a dilution of the state socialist objectives enshrined in the 1918 party **constitution**.<sup>3</sup> Though apparent electoral recovery under Wilson largely stilled such controversies, mass unemployment and the rise of Thatcherism have brought renewed attention to the political implications of the changing composition and structure of the working class.<sup>4</sup>

In the agonisings which will inevitably follow Labour's new disaster, what can British socialists learn from experience and analysis elsewhere? André Gorz is well known among the British Left (and even better in the United States) as a prolific essayist and polemicist. In his early years profoundly influenced by Sartre, he has been a member of the editorial committee of *Les Temps Modernes* since its formation in 1961;<sup>5</sup> and has shown a distinctive capacity to apply a humanistic Marxism to the contemporary predicament and struggles of workers both nationally and internationally. His writings during these years have revealed an uncanny aptitude to crystallise, and at times anticipate, innovatory concerns among socialists: shop-floor union rebellions, demands for workers' control, the growth and seeming radicalisation of technical employment, the nature of capitalist control of the labour process, the connections between work, consumption and the **environment**.<sup>6</sup>

*Farewell to the Working Class* (first published in French in 1980) was written after the defeat of the French Left in 1978; and though no overt reference is made to the immediate political context, the demoralisation and recrimination of the period must have influenced the writing of this book—accentuating its relevance for socialists in Britain today. It is a work characteristic of Gorz's perceptive and rigorously (if often selectively) critical intelligence; and characteristic also in its limited overall

integration. In its 152 pages the book provides a preface, an introduction, nine main chapters, a postscript and two appendices, in the course of which a variety of themes emerge, combine, diverge, disappear and re-appear. Rarely can so brief a work have been so discursively fashioned. Rather than attempting to impose my own structure, however, I propose to set out Gorz's arguments according to his own format before offering a critical assessment of what I regard as the central themes.

For the English reader, Gorz offers his own initial summary: 'Nine Theses for a Future Left'. First, he defines his objectives as 'the liberation of time and the abolition of work', insisting that within capitalism work is always an externally imposed obligation rather than self-determined activity. Second, he relates the contrast between work and autonomous activity to that between exchange-value and use-value. Thus the progressive abolition of waged work implies the reciprocal liberation of productive activity from the domination of commodity relations. Third, he argues that the abolition of work is already in process, as a result of mass unemployment. Current trends offer the alternatives of a society sharply divided between a mass of unemployed or those in casual and marginalised work, and an advantaged minority in relatively secure employment; or one in which socially necessary labour is spread thinly among all who are available to work, freeing the bulk of people's time for self-defined activities. Fourth, Gorz stresses the inadequacy of the 'right to work' as a political slogan. Full-time employment for all is no longer possible, nor necessary or desirable. A guaranteed income for all, as commonly demanded by the Left, would merely represent 'a wage system without work': exploitation by capital would give way to dependence on the state, perpetuating the 'impotence and subordination of individuals to centralised authority' (p. 4). Instead, the aim should be 'the right to autonomous production': access to means of production (in the form defined by Illich as 'tools for *conviviality*')<sup>7</sup> so that individuals and grass-roots communities can produce directly for their own use. One consequence would be to break down the division between social production and domestic labour.

Gorz turns to the question of agency. His fifth thesis is that the abolition of work is not a demand of immediate appeal to the minority of skilled workers still able to take pride in their occupation and exert some control over the labour process; their response to changing technology is typically negative and defensive. But the abolition of work could win the support of routine employees in boring jobs, whom he describes as 'a non-class of non-workers' (p. 7). Restoring skill and creativity to the bulk of work, he insists as his sixth thesis, is not an option. While some aspects of capitalist work organisation and its application of high technology may be rejected, the rapid production of use-values which is the precondition of a major reduction in working time requires 'a standardisation and

formalisation of tools, procedures, tasks and knowledge. . . The **socialisation** of production inevitably implies that microprocessors or ball-bearings, sheet metals or fuels are interchangeable wherever they are produced, so that both the work and the machinery involved have the same interchangeable characteristic everywhere' (p. 8). Seventh, the socialisation of production also limits the scope for self-management. Autonomous collective decisions within productive units can do no more than adjust the details of each unit's integration within the overall social division of labour. Such forms of decentralised democracy 'may eliminate the degrading character of work, but they cannot endow it with the characteristics of personal creativity' (p. 9). In his eighth thesis Gorz distinguishes his view of the 'non-class of non-workers' from the classic Marxist conception of the working class as historical actor. They are a 'non-class' because they share 'no transcendent unity or mission, and hence no overall conception of history and society' (p. 11). Their concerns are parochial and individualistic; but because of their tendency to reject 'law and order, power and authority' they are the potential vehicles of a libertarian social movement. The final thesis is that such a movement is 'fragmented and composite. . . by nature refractory towards organisation,' and suspicious of large-scale political projects. A possible consequence is that 'spaces of autonomy from the existing social order will be marginalised, subordinated or ghettoised' (pp. 11-12). What is required is a synthesis of autonomous movement and political struggle, of a form which Gorz does not attempt to predict or prescribe.

The main text of *Farewell to the Working Class* begins with a critique of Marx, challenging two fundamental principles: that the development of productive forces within capitalism creates the material basis for a socialist society; and that the working class engendered by capital is the inevitable agent of its overthrow. On the contrary, insists Gorz: the productive forces functional to the capitalist mode of production are antagonistic to an alternative socialist rationality; while 'capitalism has called into being a working class (or, more loosely, a mass of wage earners) whose interests, capacities and skills are functional to the existing productive forces and not directly consonant with a socialist project' (pp. 14-15). Marx's theory of the proletariat was essentially metaphysical: the working class as historical subject transcended the concrete reality of empirical workers, its revolutionary essence deduced from a critical engagement with Hegelian philosophy. 'It is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat, at the moment *regards* as its aim. It is a question of *what the proletariat is*, and what, in accordance with this *being*, it will historically be compelled to do': in this famous passage from *The Holy Family*,<sup>8</sup> argues Gorz, are the roots of Marxist substitutionism. The philosophers of revolution best understand the proletariat's essential

nature; this revolutionary essence cannot be contradicted by historical experience, which at most is evidence of temporary deviation from the inevitable path; the question how workers *might become* revolutionary does not require serious attention.

Gorz adds that a mystical vision of the proletariat does not merely pervade the writings of the 1840s, but frames the analysis of *Capital* itself. The possibility of communist revolution is located in the destruction of the artisan character of work, in the transformation of concrete into general abstract labour, in the submersion of workers' limited particularistic interests within an overarching class identity. Reduced by capital itself to interchangeable components of labour in general, workers have no possibility of redemption short of appropriation of 'the totality of productive forces'. But does this mean that they *can* and *will* embrace such a mission? This was unproblematic for Marx, says Gorz, because he already *knew* that the proletariat was revolutionary.

Yet the account of factory labour presented at length in the first volume of *Capital* is a catalogue of degradation: the destruction of creative ability, the suppression of intelligence, the habituation to servility. Was this the agent of revolution? Gorz argues that, from the *Grundrisse* onwards, Marx envisaged the re-emergence of the confident and assertive artisan within capitalist industry itself.

**He anticipated a process in which the development of the productive forces would result in the replacement of the army of unskilled workers and labourers—and the conditions of military discipline in which they worked—by a class of polytechnic, manually and intellectually skilled workers who would have a comprehensive understanding of the entire work process, control complex technical systems and move with ease from one type of work to another. . . He was convinced that the figure of the polytechnic worker embodied the reconciliation of the individual proletarian with the proletariat, a flesh-and-blood incarnation of the historical subject.**

(pp. 27–8)

But modern capitalism has followed the opposite path: not only manual workers, but also technicians and supervisors, have increasingly lost control over the production process; expansion of the power of the collective worker has been associated with the destruction of the power of individuals and work groups.

Only when viewed *from above*, Gorz continues, does the working class possess an organic unity. Hence the collective appropriation of the productive forces cannot reflect workers' own initiative: it can only be undertaken from above in their name. A system in which a 'workers' state' sustains and amplifies the productive forces developed by capitalism cannot avoid 'a quasi-military hierarchical set of relationships and a substantial body of staff officers and quartermasters', workers' continued subordination being underpinned by a set of principles 'akin to the ideo-

logy of the bee-hive' (pp. 32-3).

If one aspect of proletarianisation is the destruction of creativity and autonomy within work, another is the worker's definitive status as **wage-labourer**.

As long as workers own a set of tools enabling them to produce for their own needs, or a plot of land to grow some vegetables, and keep a few chickens, the fact of proletarianisation will be felt to be accidental and reversible. For ordinary experience will continue to suggest the possibility of independence: workers will continue to dream of setting themselves up on their own, of buying an old farm with their savings or of making things for their own needs after they retire. In short, 'real life' lies outside your life as a worker, and being a proletarian is but a temporary misfortune to be endured until something better turns up.

(p. 35)

Perceptive bourgeois rulers may indeed seek to preserve such fragments of autonomy for workers, precisely because they inhibit identification with a general class of dispossessed proletarians. For the same reason, the labour movement has traditionally proved hostile to workers' attempts to preserve or construct areas of individual autonomy, seeing these as detrimental to the broader class struggle. But in fact, says Gorz, the alienation of the 'pure' wage-slave is not expressed in a generalised challenge to capitalist relations of production; at most, conflict with capital is normally manifest in routinism, passive sabotage, impotent resentment; and in a politics which focuses on the state as provider of satisfactions and resources for workers' passive acceptance. The culture of proletarianisation generates no vision of the collective negation of workers' subordination to capital.

Gorz directs this argument specifically at strategies based on the demand for workers' control. 'The factories to the workers' was a slogan which could appeal to an artisan elite, to whom capitalist managers represented arrogant usurpers of workers' legitimate autonomy and culture. No such response is to be anticipated from a more fully proletarianised labour force. Moreover: traditional notions of workers' control (and associated movements to form revolutionary workers' councils) flourished when capitalist industry was relatively decentralised, when 'the site of production was also the site of power' (p. 48). But economic concentration and technological interdependence entail that today, workers' control at factory level can involve at best a limited power of veto, not directive control. Similarly, such bodies as factory councils may succeed in modifying aspects of management policy and practice, but cannot impose a major shift in priorities and strategies; hence their real function is to provide a representative mechanism accommodating workers to the dictates of capitalist production. Indeed, the same type of limitation applies at higher levels of aggregation:

The obstacle standing in the way of workers' control, power and autonomy is not merely legal or institutional. It is also a material obstacle, which derives from the design, size and functioning of factories. It ultimately derives from the 'collective capitalist' responsible for the management of all factories. For the great secret of large-scale industry, as of any vast bureaucratic or military machine, is that *nobody holds power*. Power in such organisms does not have a subject; it is not the property of individuals freely defining the **rules** and goals of their **collective** actions. Instead, all that can be found—from the bottom right up to the top of an industrial or administrative hierarchy—are agents obeying the categorical imperatives and inertias of the material system they serve. The personal power of capitalists, directors and managers of every kind is an optical illusion. It is a power that exists only in the eyes of those lower down the hierarchy who receive orders from 'those above' and are personally at their mercy.

(p. 52)

To 'capture' the productive system without transforming its structural dynamics would permit no alteration of substance.

Gorz reiterates this contention in a chapter which contrasts 'personal' and 'functional' power. The former is associated with superior skill, aptitude, training; those who deploy such power must be ready to demonstrate these qualities in order to establish the legitimacy of their position. Anarcho-sindicalist challenges to management prerogatives were typically associated with craftsmen who denied the superior competence of their appointed supervisors. But power today is characteristically bureaucratic: authority is legitimated by the position occupied rather than the personal qualities of the occupant. When power is personal, a change of personnel may permit far-reaching practical consequences; when it is functional, little can be expected from a change of office-holders. As a result,

the concept of seizure of power needs to be fundamentally revised. Power can only be seized by an already *existing* dominant class. Taking power implies taking it away from its holders, not by occupying their posts but by making it permanently impossible for them to keep their machinery of domination running. Revolution is first and foremost the irreversible destruction of this machinery. It implies a form of collective practice capable of bypassing and superseding it through the development of an alternative network of relations.

(p. 64)

Such an institutional transformation can in turn transform the nature of functional power; but it cannot abolish such power altogether, for a new institutional order will necessarily contain positions of authority. Gorz's prescription is thus to impose strict bounds upon functional power, and 'to dissociate power from domination' (p. 65).

From the elusiveness of the ruling class, Gorz returns to the ambiguities of the working class. In complete proletarianisation, the reduction of all specialised competencies to the level of generalised, homogeneous abstract labour, Marx premissed the growth of working-class unity. Yet the *aspira-*

tion to displace capitalist management of production requires workers committed to their own productive identity and confident of their ability to take control: a commitment and confidence destroyed by **proletarianisation**.

**Loss** of the ability to identify with one's work is tantamount to the disappearance of any sense of belonging to a class. Just as work remains external to the individual, so too does class being. Just as work has become a nondescript task carried out without any personal involvement, which one may quit for another, equally contingent job, so too has **class** membership come to be lived as a contingent and meaningless fact.

For workers, it is no longer a question of freeing themselves within work, putting themselves in control of work, or seizing power within the framework of their work. The point now is to free oneself *from* work by rejecting its nature, content, necessity and modalities. But to reject work is also to reject the traditional strategy and **organisational** forms of the working-class movement. It is no longer a question of winning power as a worker, but of winning the power no longer to function as a worker. The power at issue is not at all the same as before. The class itself has entered into crisis.

(p. 67)

Just as the rise of capitalist production created the working class, so its crisis and decay are creating the 'non-class of non-workers', encompassing 'all those who have been expelled from production by the abolition of work. . . It includes all the supernumeraries of present-day social production, who are potentially or actually unemployed, whether permanently or temporarily, partially or completely (p. 68).

Transient, marginal, insecure, 'they do not feel that they belong to the working class, *or to any other class*' (p. 70). For the post-industrial proletariat, work is simply 'the contingent form of social oppression in general' (p. 71). The microprocessor revolution will accelerate this process of marginalisation, multiplying both unemployment and those employments designed simply to 'provide work'.

What Marx referred to as production for production's sake, accumulation for accumulation's sake, Gorz defines as 'productivism'. The advance of capitalist technology has largely eliminated the *need* to work, but within capitalism it results in an ever more desperate drive to produce more, and more destructively. 'The forward march of productivism now brings the advance of barbarism and oppression' (p. 73). 'The threshold of liberation,' Gorz continues, 'can only be crossed at the price of a radical break, in which productivism is replaced by a different rationality. This rupture can only come from individuals themselves' (p. 74).

More specifically, the break can only come from those who are driven to reject the work ethic. Gorz regards the social aspirations of his 'non-class' as essentially negative: 'to regain power over their own lives by disengaging from the market rationality of productivism' (p. 75). They hold

no common or coherent vision of the type of society in which this aim might be realised; their aspirations are essentially individualist, closer to traditional bourgeois thought than to orthodox socialism. The socialist ideal, as articulated by **Marx**, assumed that individual fulfilment could be unproblematically achieved within collectivised production; and conversely, that the free association of producers would be the sufficient foundation of a socialised economy. Gorz denies this. Small-scale communities may be able to function on the basis of spontaneous collaboration, but grassroots collaboration alone will not sustain a complex large-scale economy with an elaborate social and geographical division of labour.

Under socialism, he insists, economic planning directed towards the attainment of collectively defined goals cannot be the unmediated expression of aggregated individual preferences.

However open and sincerely democratic the process of consultation, the plan schedule and objectives will never be the expression of a common civic will or of **grass-roots** preferences. The mediations which made it possible to coordinate broad social options with grass-roots preferences will be so complex and so numerous that the local community will be unable to recognise itself in the final result. This result—the plan—will inevitably be the work of a state technocracy obliged to make use of mathematical models and statistical materials which in itself can only imperfectly control because of the very large number of inputs, variables and unforeseeable elements. Thus the plan will never be a 'photograph' of everyone's preferences, but will have to adjust each subset of preferences in the light of all the other **sub-sets** and of the technico-economic constraints upon their coherence. In the last analysis, 'democratic elaboration' of the plan does not allow each and all to become the subject of that voluntary social cooperation through which 'the associated producers' are supposed to impose their common will upon the society they seek to create. Instead, the plan remains an '**autonomised result**', intended by no one and experienced by all as a set of external constraints.

(p. 78)

If a socialist economy required workers' unconditional commitment to the plan because it embodied their collective interests and wishes, the experience would indeed be even more oppressive than under capitalist market relations. This is the crucial weakness of contemporary socialist ideology: bourgeois apologists have learned to appeal successfully, through their emphasis on the need for individual choice, 'to the lived experience and aspirations of the post-industrial proletariat, as well as the major part of the traditional working class' (p. 79). Most reject the authoritarian connotations of socialism in favour of 'a private niche protecting one's personal life against all pressures and external social obligations' (p. 80). Rejecting the work ethic, seeking satisfaction in a realm of (at least apparent) autonomy from the world of work, the 'post-industrial neo-proletariat' is repelled by conventional models of socialism and does not

fully recognise that its demands are incompatible with capitalism.

What alternative social order might capture their imagination? Marx himself at times bespoke the diminution of work as the externally directed component of social production, and the enlargement of creative activity outside the domain of economic rationality. Ending the equation of work with full-time wage-labour would enlarge the scope for all to engage in 'raising children, looking after and decorating a house, repairing or making things, cooking good meals, entertaining guests, listening to or performing music' (p. 82);<sup>9</sup> not least among the consequences would be a possible abolition of the traditional sexual division of labour.

In elaborating this vision, Gorz draws explicitly on both Illich and Bahro.

The priority task of a post-industrial left must therefore be to extend self-motivated, self-rewarding activity within, and above all, outside the family, and to limit as much as possible all waged or market-based activity carried out on behalf of third parties (even the state). A reduction in work time is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. For it will not help to enlarge the sphere of individual autonomy if the resulting free time remains empty 'leisure time', filled for better or worse by the programmed distractions of the mass media and the oblivion merchants, and if everyone is thereby driven back into the solitude of their private sphere.

More than upon free time, the expansion of the sphere of autonomy depends upon a freely available supply of convivial tools that allow individuals to do or make anything whose aesthetic or use-value is enhanced by doing it oneself. Repair and do-it-yourself workshops in blocks of flats, neighbourhood centres or rural communities should enable everyone to make or invent things as they wish. Similarly, libraries, places to make music or movies, 'free' radio and television stations, open spaces for communication, circulation and exchange, and so on need to be accessible to everyone.

(p. 87)

The interrelationship of work and autonomous activity is crystallised in the concept of a 'dual society', premised in turn on the insistence that 'contrary to what Marx thought, it is impossible that individuals should coincide with their social being, or that social being should encompass all the dimensions of individual existence' (p. 90). Emotional, affective and aesthetic experiences are essentially subjective; their subordination to impersonal social norms spells oppression. In this realm of individual choice, Gorz adds, is the only terrain for morality.

The obverse of this argument Gorz has already presented: individual autonomy is impossible within the area of social production governed by scarcity and necessity. The much quoted passage from the third volume of *Capital*,<sup>10</sup> he suggests, is often misunderstood:

The actual wealth of society, and the possibility of constantly expanding its reproduction process. . . do not depend upon the duration of surplus-labour,

but upon its productivity and the more or less copious conditions of production under which it is performed. In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of **actual** material production. Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life, so must **civilised** man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production. With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase. Freedom in this field can only consist in **socialised** man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the workingday is its basic prerequisite.

Within the 'realm of necessity', freedom can be only partial and restricted, even given the most democratic social and economic arrangements; real freedom is possible only in the context of activities not directed to sheer subsistence. Gorz links **Marx's** distinction to that made by Illich between manipulative institutions and conviviality. Unless socialism is conceived in terms of self-sufficient small-scale communities with pre-industrial technology (a recipe for back-breaking toil, restricted culture and suffocating interpersonal relationships) much social production (telephones, bicycles, computers) will remain standardised, depersonalised and intrinsically unsatisfying. Such other-directed work cannot be eliminated; but ideally its extent can be minimised; it can be distributed equitably; and it can be utilised to produce goods and services which genuinely enhance the quality of life.

The final chapter in the main body of the book takes issue with another established doctrine of the Left: the withering away of the state. In bourgeois society, the expansion of state functions is in part a necessary socialisation of costs evaded by individual capitals, in part a repressive guarantee of social order. But as with other-directed work, argues Gorz, the functions of the state cannot be abolished under socialism even though they can and must be reduced. If it were possible to do away with the state, then the conflation of state and civil society would paradoxically diminish individual autonomy; for social order could be maintained only through an inflexible adherence to standardised norms and obligations." Echoing his earlier discussion of 'functional power', Gorz defines the socialist objective as 'the abolition not of the state but of domination' (p. 115). The role of the state can diminish only as other sources of social and economic dominance are neutralised. This depends in turn on the mobilisation of struggle from below.

The state can only cease to be an apparatus of domination over society and become an instrument enabling society to exercise power over itself with a view to its own restructuring, if society is already permeated by social struggles that open up areas of autonomy keeping both the dominant class and the power of the state apparatus in check. The establishment of new types of social relations, new ways of producing, associating, working and consuming is the fundamental precondition of any political transformation. The dynamic of social struggles is the lever by which society can act upon itself and establish a range of freedoms, a new state and a new system of law.

(p. 116)

Such struggles constitute the domain of politics: an essential mediation between the spheres of autonomy and necessity—before, during, and also after a transition to socialism.

In a postscript and appendices, Gorz explores further the connections between work, politics, technology and ecology. In capitalism, consumption is subordinated to the dictates of profitable production; and waste, destruction and triviality are built into both. Were the principle of accumulation to be replaced by that of sufficiency, existing technical resources would permit the satisfaction of needs though a small expenditure of labour, opening a substantial space for autonomous creativity. The application of microelectronics could in principle greatly accelerate the opportunity to 'work less, live more' (p. 134). (In a concluding 'utopia', Gorz specifies three pivotal principles: work less, consume better, and re-integrate culture with everyday life.) Enhanced choice by individuals of their expenditure of social labour (and corresponding income), and its phasing over the week, year, and even lifetime, is immediately feasible and increasingly reflects workers' own express wishes. A 'politics of time' could thus represent the key to a realistic socialist programme with genuine popular appeal.

*Farewell to the Working Class* is provocative in both senses of the word: it stimulates fresh perspectives on a range of vital issues for socialist theory and practice; but is often over-anxious to stress the novelty of the positions adopted in opposition to 'orthodox Marxism'. Its structural looseness is allied with a journalistic breathlessness of style, often at the expense of precision and analytical acuity. Thus it is perplexing that Gorz defines his objective as the abolition of work, before going on to insist that work *cannot* be abolished; the revised (and less dramatic) goal must be to overcome the dominance of other-directed labour in social existence. It is equally bewildering that, having argued at the outset that the present forces of production are adapted specifically to capitalist priorities and hence inappropriate for socialism, he appears in all subsequent discussion to assume that current technology will be applied largely unaltered within the sphere of necessity in a socialist economy. Likewise it is frustrating, given the emphasis on the need to differentiate power from domination,

that the criteria for this distinction are nowhere defined.

Gorz as *prestidigitateur*: seemingly striving to make his thesis *appear* more daring than is actually the case. The illusion is helped along by a tendency to straw mannerism in the presentation of 'orthodoxy' as a foil to his own analysis. The treatment of 'Saint Marx', as Gorz terms him in the opening chapter,<sup>12</sup> arguably trivialises the evolution of his arguments over the four decades of his writing, suppresses many of the nuances of his theories, and neglects the extent to which he can be associated with contradictory positions on many key issues. I shall pursue these questions while focusing on what I see as the four main themes of the book: the critique of Marx's theory of the proletariat; Gorz's own conception of the 'neo-proletariat'; the case against 'oversocialised' conceptions of socialism; and the alternative model based on a 'dual organisation of social space'.

Gorz reiterates a now familiar argument in insisting on the idealism of Marx's vision of the revolutionary proletariat.<sup>13</sup> Bahro has recently offered a cautious statement of the case: in the writings and actions of Marx and Engels 'it seems to me that their entire concept of the proletariat was never completely free from the Hegelian antithesis between (rational, essential) reality and (merely empirical, accidental) existence'.<sup>14</sup> Gorz is more forthright: 'Marx's theory of the proletariat is not based upon either empirical observation of class conflict or practical involvement in proletarian struggle' (p. 16). This is, to say the least, an undialectical interpretation: Marx and Engels were surely profoundly influenced by their involvement with the empirical working class, but their vision of the proletariat was refracted by their philosophical polemic with the young-Hegelians. Marx philosophically discovers the proletariat as agent of world revolution (in the *Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*) only *after* moving to Paris in the autumn of 1843 and experiencing a working class which 'pulsed with all the political and social movements from liberal reform to revolutionary communism'.<sup>15</sup> Engels, in England from the end of 1842, was caught up in the ferment of militant Chartism.

Thus it is incorrect to regard Marx's theory as without empirical foundation. What *can* plausibly be argued is that the time and place in which Marx and Engels encountered the working class were exceptional; and that they were encouraged to treat the militant socialist worker as prototypical because the stereotype meshed so neatly with their unfolding world-historical analysis. The extrapolation of the struggles of the 1840s into proletarian revolution was an act of faith, the predicted transition from 'class in itself' to 'class for itself' resting on no more than a loose analogy with the rise of the bourgeoisie. Certainly it is not unreasonable to maintain that faith became increasingly blind when, despite the collapse of the upsurge of 1848, the grave-digging inevitability of victory was so confidently reiterated.<sup>16</sup> Like Bahro, Gorz quite rightly argues that this conviction

has involved a mythologised proletarian ideal; and that the failure of the empirical working class to conform to the prescribed model has encouraged all manner of substitutionist tendencies and projects.

Yet Marxism also contains a divergent conception, in which workers' common class identity and political insurgency are not a mechanical outcome of material necessity. The long *practical* involvement of Marx and Engels in the international working-class movement reflected a *contingent* theory of revolution: a task to be actively accomplished, not passively awaited. Marx does not 'guarantee the success of the revolution in advance or take it for granted. He only indicates its possibilities *historically*.'<sup>17</sup> Significantly Lukács, after starting with the 'essentialist' position of Marx in *The Holy Family*, concludes that 'the objective theory of class consciousness is the theory of its objective possibility'; and that the scientific analysis of the conditions for the development of this potential is thus a priority for Marxists.<sup>18</sup>

It is important to disentangle several distinct sources of Marx's identification of the working-class as agent of revolution. First was the search for a 'universal class' to set in place of Hegel's state bureaucracy; and the discovery of the proletariat as a class whose 'radical chains' entailed that its particular emancipation could be achieved only through *general* social emancipation. Second was the anthropological conception of purposeful social labour as the defining characteristic of humanity, its 'species-being'; the proletariat's function was the embodiment of this human creativity. Third was the connection with the 'philosophy of practice': if consciousness and action combined dialectically with material reality to transform social existence, the labour process could be viewed as the elemental form of human praxis and proletarian revolution its crowning manifestation. The fourth reflected the labour theory of value: if labour was the foundation of social productivity, it seemed to follow that the working class was pivotal for social transformation. The final proposition was that of (relative) immiseration: as the principal victims of capitalist 'progress' and capitalist crisis, workers would surely be driven to revolt, and would continue to revolt until they had eliminated the underlying causes of their misery.

These arguments are evidently varied and differ in the degree to which they are 'philosophically' and 'empirically' derived. In sum they cannot be dismissed as cavalierly as Gorz imagines. Yet it is true that Marx's analysis contains an apparent contradiction which he seems nowhere to have appreciated. If capitalist production progressively degrades and disables the proletariat, reducing the worker to a 'crippled monstrosity', how can the worker then take the stage of history as a 'new-fangled man' who overturns capitalist relations of production and domination and ushers in a new social order?

Gorz's answer, as has been seen, is that Marx envisaged the re-appearance

of the artisan in the guise of the polytechnic worker in high-technology industry. This is surely a perverse reading of Marx. Perhaps a couple of *aperçus* within the rich and visionary complexity of the *Grundrisse* are open to this interpretation;<sup>19</sup> but throughout the whole body of Marx's writings is a consistent and altogether contrary thesis, and one to which Gorz himself alludes. Though the development of capitalist science and technology provides the material prerequisites for the emancipation of labour, by reducing necessary labour time and immensely increasing productivity, the actual consequences are not liberating but enslaving. The individual worker is no longer identifiably productive; established skills are eroded and displaced; the worker is subordinated to the machine; wages are depressed as women and children are employed in place of adult men; both the intensity and the length of the working day are increased. To quote from *Capital*:<sup>20</sup>

Factory work exhausts the nervous system to the uttermost; at the same time, it does away with the many-sided play of the muscles, and confiscates every atom of freedom, both in bodily and in intellectual activity. Even the lightening of the labour becomes an instrument of torture, since the machine does not free the worker from the work, but rather deprives the work itself of all content. Every kind of capitalist production, in so far as it is not only a labour process but also capital's process of valorization, has this in common, but it is not the worker who employs the conditions of his work, but rather the reverse, the conditions of work employ the worker. However, it is only with the coming of machinery that this inversion first acquires a technical and palpable reality. Owing to its conversion into an automaton, the instrument of labour confronts the worker during the labour process in the shape of capital, dead labour, which dominates and soaks up living labour-power. The separation of the intellectual faculties of the production process from manual labour, and the transformation of those faculties into powers exercised by capital over labour, is, as we have already shown, finally completed by **large-scale** industry erected on the foundation of machinery. The special skill of each individual **machine-operator**, who has now been deprived of all significance, vanishes as an infinitesimal quantity in the face of the science, the gigantic natural forces, and the mass of social labour embodied in the system of machinery, which, together with those three forces, constitutes the power of the 'master'.

Marx assumed that workers were *bound* to rise up against such denial of their humanity. One might suspect that his image of the revolutionary proletarian was coloured by the qualities of those activists with whom he collaborated: Parisian communists, survivors of Chartism, delegates to the First International, German social-democrats. Did he regard these 'organic intellectuals'—no doubt disproportionately drawn from an artisan stratum—as typical, or at least prototypical, of the proletariat in general? This may in part explain his view of the working class. But probably more important was the fundamental principle of Marx's epistemology: the educative power of experience and action. *Struggle* was the yeast in the

development of consciousness; revolutionary confidence and commitment would be fostered by a perhaps lengthy learning process based on collective action. And here, indeed, is one possible line of explanation of the failure of revolutionary expectations: that workers learned the *wrong* lessons! Gains could be made piecemeal, positions defended, areas of relative autonomy secured; many workers, and particularly those with enduring records of collective struggle, did have more than their chains to lose. In other words: against Gorz's thesis that full proletarianisation made revolutionary consciousness impossible, it could be argued that it was the partial and uneven character of proletarianisation which had this effect. In was *Marx's* prognosis of complete homogenisation of labour which proved inaccurate; and thus his prediction of the revolutionary outcome of such homogenisation was never put to the test.

Why does Gorz invent this allegedly Marxist concept of the neo-artisan? The cynic might reply: as a foil for his own notion of the neo-proletarian. The thesis that advanced capitalism gave birth to a new category of polytechnic workers was not *Marx's*, but rather the enthusiasm of a number of left-wing French sociologists in the 1960s.<sup>21</sup> Gorz himself was clearly influenced by this tendency, though more sceptical than some of his contemporaries.<sup>22</sup> But his treatment of the 'non-class of non-workers' is no more satisfactory than the account of the 'new working class' presented by Mallet and others two decades ago. Indeed, Gorz replicates many of the weaknesses which he claims to have discovered in *Marx's* theory of the traditional proletariat.

The Gorzian analysis is unconvincing at a number of different levels. First, contemporary workers are contrasted with the stereotype of a traditional skilled craftsman: the bearer of class consciousness, anti-capitalist assertiveness, and aspirations for workers' control. This model clearly owes a great deal to the specifically French context, in which many features of artisan production were an enduring element in capitalist development and made their mark on the character of the labour movement. Nevertheless, Gorz's socialist (or anarcho-syndicalist) craftsman is a highly romanticised stereotype; while his account of the transition from occupationally conscious artisan to alienated mass worker is absurdly simplistic. The dynamics of capitalist production relations, with their complex patterns of division of labour and hierarchies of control, have always involved elaborate trajectories of skill, de-skilling, and at times re-skilling. Ever since the early nineteenth century, socialists and capitalists alike have repeatedly discerned the final abolition of skill and associated job controls. From *Marx's* notion of 'real subsumption' within the 'modern industry' of the mid-nineteenth century, to Braverman's account of the 'degradation of work' in the twentieth,<sup>23</sup> to Gorz's present work, the story is remarkably the same. Yet the question seems unavoidable:

how is it that any skills or worker autonomy are left to be degraded?

The answer is of course that trends within the capitalist labour process are always contradictory and uneven, and mediated by class struggle. Transformation is rarely as abrupt and decisive as the most highly dramatised accounts suppose. To establish his argument that a new epoch has arisen, Gorz should pay far more heed to the criticisms he himself directs against Marx. What is needed, in short, is less *a priori* assertion and far more detailed evidence.

Even were Gorz's general diagnosis of the trends within the labour force accepted, there is a second problem: the very notion of a 'non-class of non-workers'. In employing this term, he neatly contradicts his own prior arguments: for if work is *defined* as heteronomous and alienated labour, then those in the 'secondary labour market' performing the most degrading tasks in the most uncongenial conditions are surely *quintessential* workers. It would appear that Gorz is here entangled in his own rhetorical devices: not the best posture for analytical illumination.

More substantively, the whole treatment of the 'neo-proletariat' follows French sociological tradition in fusing actuality with aspiration. Who *are* the 'marginalised majority'? What do the situations of the jobless school-leaver, the under-employed graduate, the de-skilled professional, the unemployed industrial worker, or the redundant executive have in common? And what do their *perceptions* of these situations, and their responses to them, have in common either? What evidence is there that, as Gorz insists, such groups typically reject work, and with it authority in general? Like so many French theorists of 'post-industrialism', the grandiose vision overwhelms critical perception. Indeed Gorz blithely contradicts his own thesis with the argument (pp. 39–40) that unskilled and alienated workers, far from rejecting work and management control, commonly embrace passivity, eschew initiative, and seek to extend commodity relations. Nor is it evident that the unemployed customarily turn against work. 'Gis-a-job' is not the cry of those who have abandoned the work ethic; there is by now extensive evidence that many unemployed experience guilt and psychic deprivation; that possession of even an oppressive and damaging job is an essential part of their social identity and self-esteem.

There is little evidence, either, that hierarchy and authority have lost their legitimacy in the eyes of the 'neo-proletariat'. Would that it were so! Today in Britain, the notion of 'de-subordination' seems a little less convincing than a decade ago. Unemployment, economic crisis and insecurity have evoked an authoritarian rather than a libertarian response. Thatcher's appeal to the Victorian virtues of hard work and law and order has clearly won substantial backing within the working class—as, of course, did the imperialist pomp and blood-letting in the South Atlantic. Nor did the ranks of the un- and under-employed strike an obviously

discordant posture on either occasion. In short, the anarchic neo-proletariat seems a rather less plausible construct than Marx's original notion of the revolutionary working class.

I have devoted some space to Gorz's treatment of the working class in Marx and in contemporary society, since his title indicates this as his central concern. But I suspect that many readers might consider more important the issues indicated in his subtitle: *An Essay on Post-Industrial Socialism*.

The dominant conceptions of socialism for the past century have defined a pivotal function for the state, as owner/controller of the means of production and as provider of collective services. The reform/revolution debate has centred primarily on whether the state's strategic functions should be enhanced by constitutional gradualism, by a radical seizure of its apparatus, or by its destruction and replacement by a new, workers' state. For Fabians and social-democrats, the consolidation of the state as general social representative may be the ultimate goal; for Marxists, merely a transitional stage to the suppression of class antagonisms which permits its own 'withering away'. Uniting these diverse conceptions is an acceptance—whether enthusiastic or apologetic—of a bureaucratic model of socialism.

Implicit in these traditions is an 'objectivist' view of the state: a set of institutions, positions and officials with prescribed functions, their powers underwritten by 'special bodies of armed men, etc.'. This is a perspective increasingly under question, as the traditional equation of socialism with state control is itself challenged. Both doubts were well articulated in a study published after Thatcher's first electoral victory:<sup>34</sup>

For as long as we can remember, the question of the transition to socialism has been polarised between two positions: on the one hand gradualism, on the other 'the seizure of state power'. But recently there seems to have been an increasing recognition that this debate is sterile. The obvious lack of possibilities for reform, coupled with our eye-opening experiences of 'participation', have disabused us of hopes in gradualism. There is no way that society can be transformed through institutions that have been developed precisely to take away our power.

On the other hand, a politics which pins everything on 'the seizure of state power' leaves many socialists feeling uncomfortable. They are sceptical about the possibility of overnight change, knowing it will be difficult to generate popular support for socialism when the question of just what it is we are fighting for is left so unreal. Neither capital nor the state can be seized, because they are not *things*. They are *relations* which cannot be grasped and held down, they have to be unmade. In a strange way our critique of the 'seizure of state power' line shares much with our doubts about gradualism: 'capturing power' by either means is not the same thing as taking control.

It is today a familiar argument that, within capitalism, the state form

replicates the pattern of social relations of production; while under 'actually existing socialism' the similarities are more notable than the differences. Whether this is explained in terms of the dictates of accumulation, the pervasive influence of commodity relations, or the distinctive interests and perspectives and relative autonomy of the state bureaucracy, it is evident that socialist strategy requires a more detached and critical attitude to the state.

The problem of the state is directly reflected in the constituency to which socialism should appeal. For British socialists and labour movement activists, 'public enterprise' and the 'welfare state' are typically regarded with pride and without question as signals of socialist advance. Arguments to the contrary have normally been associated with attacks by right-wing social-democrats on the nationalisation commitment in the Labour Party constitution. The whole tenor of the debate indicates however that the mainstream of labour movement thought is out of touch with popular opinion. Almost certainly, for most members of the working class the welfare state is not their welfare state. The services provided are typically inadequate, hemmed in by bureaucratic regulation, subject to inexplicable delay. The manner of delivery is often grudging, patronising, humiliating. Nationalisation is rarely seen as advantageous either to employees or to consumers. State officialdom is widely regarded as arrogant, incompetent, unaccountable. The whole apparatus of state activity is generally perceived as an ever-increasing burden on the incomes of ordinary workers.

Of course some of these arguments and attitudes represent popular mythology, fanned by political misinformation and media hostility. But the stereotypes have proved so powerful because they resonate with people's real experiences. There can be no prospect of mobilising popular support for an extension of state activity, or even to defend what already exists, if the state is popularly viewed as impoverishing and oppressive rather than liberating and enriching. This point, too, has been well made before:<sup>25</sup>

Our daily contact with the state is a crucial arena of class struggle. In the past, however, if as socialists we have concerned ourselves with struggles with the welfare state at all, we have tended to concentrate on questions of resource provision: more and better housing, more hospitals, better teacher-pupil ratios and higher pensions. Increasingly, however, we are coming to realise that it is not enough to fight to keep hospitals open if we do not also challenge the oppressive social relations they embody; that it is insufficient to press for better student-teacher ratios in schools if we do not also challenge what is taught or how it is taught. Socialists involved in struggles over resources are realising that many people choose precisely not to give their support to 'fighting the cuts', defending or extending the state apparatus, because they quite reasonably have mixed feelings about the social relations which state institutions embody.

The question of quantity, one might say, is subsidiary to that of the

quality of state activity.

Hence it is not surprising that Labour manifestoes and Alternative Economic Strategies based essentially on a policy of more—more nationalisation, more state services, more controls over private economic activity—have failed to win enthusiastic backing. On the contrary: Tory deployment of the rhetoric of individual choice and personal freedom suggests a far more sensitive understanding of working-class aspirations.

Against this background, Gorz's discussion of the interrelationship between state, socialism and individualism is of urgent import. Some of his arguments on the themes of self-determination in personal life and in grass-roots collective relations have become familiar through the women's movement and libertarian socialist currents. His distinctive contribution is to link these concerns to a more abstract analysis of the spheres of individual autonomy and collective control, and to a critical assessment of the nature and limits of state activity under socialism.

The propositions which Gorz develops stand or fall independently of his prior analysis of the 'neo-proletariat'. In my view, his emphasis on the inevitable space between individual and social being is wholly persuasive. The necessity of macro-social determination of many aspects of collective life does not entail that individuals will experience true freedom in submission to such control. Nor should socialism imply the socialisation of all aspects of everyday life: diversity and creativity require the preservation of private social space. Also persuasive is Gorz's insistence that state power *is* necessary within any form of socialism, but that equally essential are autonomous collectivities to sustain the maximum possible self-determination and also to curb any tendencies to state aggrandisement.

Gorz's argument on this score is clear and convincing, and particularly relevant in Britain today. The traditional programme of state socialism repels more than it attracts, and for reasons which socialists should consider legitimate. The model of 'actually existing socialism' is rejected by most workers themselves as drab, monolithic and oppressive. It is not enough to insist that socialism here would be different; it is a question of demonstrating how and why this should be so. To do this, we on the Left must agree ourselves where we are going; must redefine for our own day a social vision which recaptures from the right the appeal to individual freedom while sustaining the traditional principles of conscious collective determination of social existence.

Marxists, as Bahro has commented, 'have a defensive attitude towards utopias. It was so laborious to escape from them in the past. But today utopian thought has a new **necessity**'.<sup>26</sup> How many of us have found it easy to dismiss those questions which occur to anyone but passionate believers in socialism as an abstract ideal: how would the major practical problems of social and economic organisation be resolved under socialism?

Of course we can't offer detailed blueprints; of course it is absurd to speak of releasing collective creativity and then lay down the lines which must be followed. But is it unreasonable to expect some sort of answer to such questions as: what will happen to the motor industry? Will the private car survive? What about motorways? How will a national road network be determined, and who will build it? With this, as with a myriad other areas of possible enquiry, the ritual response that the workers will decide for themselves when the time comes sounds suspiciously like a lack of vision or of honesty. The case for socialism carries little conviction unless at least some plausible *options* can be spelled out.

Bahro, it will be recalled, outlined what he termed 'the economics of the cultural revolution' according to five central principles: 'the goal of production as rich individuality'; 'a new determination of the need for material goods and the availability of living labour from the standpoint of the optimization of conditions of development for fully socialized individuals'; 'a more harmonious form of reproduction'; 'accounting for a new economy of time'; and 'individual initiative and genuine *communality*'.<sup>27</sup> Gorz develops his utopia along parallel lines, popularising many of the themes from Bahro's weightier tome, and adding a distinctively 'green' complexion to the argument: a reflection of his previous insistence that 'the ecological movement is. . . a stage in the larger *struggle*'.<sup>28</sup>

As has been seen, Gorz seeks to eschew *both* those forms of economic strategy which merely aim to 'socialise' (and manage more 'efficiently') the large-scale high-technology apparatus of contemporary capitalism; *and* the diametrically opposed conception of a return to 'primitive communism', with material life restricted to production with rudimentary equipment in small communities. His notion of a 'dual society' is more than a simple compromise; it is an imaginative synthesis which demands close critical consideration by socialists.

There are four problems in his analysis which I would wish to emphasise. The first is a highly diffuse perspective of the obstacles and enemies confronting a struggle for the type of society proposed. 'In modern societies, power does not have a subject' (p. 63): Gorz's thesis is scarcely *novel*.<sup>29</sup> But does this mean that socialists have merely to dismantle an impersonal 'system'? And in the short term, does it make *no* difference who occupies positions of 'functional power'? Capitalism indeed sets oppressive limits to the options available within its framework; but precisely because its operation is internally contradictory, those who exert political and economic management and direction can and must choose among alternatives. And if the discretion of *individual* rulers is limited (though given the supermarketed ersatz charisma of contemporary political leaders, and the extensive patronage at their disposal, surely far from insignificant), the power of the *ruling class* may be far more *momentous*.<sup>30</sup> Gorz's abstract and elusive references to

'domination' hint at this, but he nowhere confronts the problems inherent in a socialist challenge to the mechanisms and vested interests of class rule.

This issue connects with a second: Gorz oscillates between a highly determinist model of the 'juggernaut of capital', and (no doubt reflecting his existentialist background) a tendency to voluntarism and idealism. The sway of capital is at times attributed, not to material relations but to the 'rationality of productivism'; its abolition thus demands a transformation in social philosophies, 'the rejection of the accumulation ethic'. Correspondingly, freedom is to be achieved 'by a constitutive act which, aware of its free subjectivity, asserts itself as an absolute end in itself within each individual' (p. 74). This is sheer mysticism. It is right to insist that the abolition of capitalism must be a cultural as much as a material revolution; but Gorz here seemingly proposes that socialism will be established through spiritual conversion alone.

The third problem is also related: like Bahro, Gorz is very imprecise in locating the *agency* of socialist advance. Given his stress on the individualism, the non-class identity of the 'neo-proletariat', what is it that can give their gratuitous subjective acts a common direction and purpose? He speaks of 'the movement formed by all those who refuse to be nothing but workers' (p. 11), and insists portentously that 'only the movement itself, through its own practice, can create and extend the sphere of autonomy' (p. 116); but this is the sum total of Gorz's guide to strategy. Implicit in such remarks is an assumption of spontaneous collectivism, akin to that which Gorz derides in Marx's treatment of the working class, but far less grounded in evidence and analysis. A century of debate on socialist political strategy—the party, parliamentarism, *reform/revolution*—is not engaged or contested; it is simply ignored.

The fourth problem is of a different order. In discussing the integration of different systems of production, and the relationship between state and civil society, Gorz appears to assume a specifically national context. Despite the attention in many of his previous writings to issues of internationalism, this dimension is absent here. How would the movement towards socialist production relations and a 'dual society' confront the problems of the world market, the sway of multinational capital, the policies of domination of the superpowers? Is *world* revolution a necessary condition of transformation in individual societies—and if so, does this not multiply the problems of strategy and organisation among socialists? And on a global scale, is the conquest of the sphere of necessity as close to our grasp as Gorz's discussion assumes?

On issues such as these, *Farewell to the Working Class* provokes far more questions than it resolves. In what is not designed as a fully-fashioned manifesto, this is not necessarily a weakness. 'There is no wealth but life': Ruskin's maxim, the inspiration of so many early British social-

ists, was expunged from the consciousness of later generations of bureaucratic and technocratic social-democrats. Even radical currents within the labour movement are typically marked by the philistine priorities of capitalist production. Campaigns for the right to work, demands for workers' control, implicitly accept the segmentation of life into a (dominant) sphere of full-time wage labour and a (subordinate, devalued) sphere of activity outside the bounds of commodity production.

There have of course been challenges to this dominant 'workerism', not least under the impact of feminism. On the Left, declining faith in Leninist orthodoxies has been associated with renewed discussion of strategies for humanistic/libertarian socialism; but attention has been mainly concentrated in narrow intellectual coteries; in particular it is hard to detect more than a token influence within the organised labour movement.<sup>31</sup> Symptomatic is the fate of *A Life to Live*, written by Clemitson and Rodgers in response to mass unemployment and the 1979 election defeat, an eloquent plea for a right to a fuller life as an alternative to both unemployment and employment.<sup>32</sup> Specifically addressed to the unions and the Labour Party, their case for a worthier demand than the 'right to work' has seemingly passed unnoticed.

Institutionalised within the sclerotic structures of the labour movement, British socialism has become modest and banal in its long-term vision even when superficially radical in its short-term programme. Utopian imagination—the tradition of William Morris—is more often an embarrassment than an inspiration. As 1983 has brutally demonstrated, official socialism, with its 'combination of narrow trade unionism and failed state intervention',<sup>33</sup> no longer has a popular constituency. No more do the industrial and political organisations of labour possess a language with which to relate to those they supposedly represent. Will the current crisis stimulate an effort to rediscover the essence of socialism, in a form appropriate to the closing years of the twentieth century, and in terms which can inspire more than a dedicated minority? Gorz's utopia provides a valuable contribution to such a quest.

#### NOTES

1. André Gorz, *Farewell to the Working Class: an Essay on Post-Industrial Socialism* (Pluto Press, 1982). Quotations in this review are followed by a page reference in the text.
2. For example M. Abrams and R. Rose, *Must Labour Lose?* (Penguin, 1960). The notion that 'affluence' and 'embourgeoisement' had destroyed workers' readiness to support Labour was confronted in a massive research study, the results of which appeared only after Wilson's two election victories had already given a practical refutation; see J.H. Goldthorpe et al., *The Affluent Worker: Political Attitudes and Behaviour* (Cambridge University Press, 1968).
3. Such revisionism (in some respects the linear antecedent of the SDP breakaway from Labour) was most elegantly proposed in the writings of C.A.R. Crosland;

- in particular *The Future of Socialism* and *The Conservative Enemy* (Cape, 1956 and 1962)
4. For instance E.J. Hobsbawm's 1978 lecture and the subsequent debate, published in *The Forward March of Labour Halted?* (Verso, 1981); and Tony Lane, 'The Unions: Caught on the Ebb Tide', *Marxism Today*, September 1982 (and the ensuing controversy).
  5. For the first fifteen years of *Les Temps Modernes*, Sartre had been sole editor.
  6. Examples are *Strategy for Labour: a Radical Proposal* (Beacon Press, 1964); *Socialism and Revolution* (Anchor Press, 1973); *The Division of Labour: the Labour Process and Class-Struggle in Modern Capitalism* (Harvester Press, 1978); *Ecology as Politics* (South End Press, 1980).
  7. Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality* (Calder and Boyars, 1973).
  8. *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 4, (Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), p. 37.
  9. Gorz makes no explicit reference here to the more bucolic utopian vision outlined in *The German Ideology*, but it surely lies behind this passage.
  10. *Capital*, Vol. 3 (Lawrence and Wishart, 1959), p. 820.
  11. The parallel with Durkheim's discussion of 'mechanical solidarity' is presumably not accidental.
  12. Presumably this is a deliberate allusion to *The German Ideology*, in which Marx and Engels refer to 'Saint Max' Stirner.
  13. One of the first popular assertions of this theme was in R.C. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (Cambridge University Press, 1961).
  14. Rudolf Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* (NLB, 1978), p. 195.
  15. Hal Draper, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*, Vol. 1 (Monthly Review, 1977), pp. 136-7.
  16. Notably in Marx's peroration to the penultimate chapter of volume 1 of *Capital*, reproducing two decades later the revolutionary scenario of the *Communist Manifesto*.
  17. Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 144.
  18. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* (Merlin Press, 1971), p. 79.
  19. Gorz gives several references to the *Grundrisse*, the only other text specifically mentioned is the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. In neither work, as far as I can see, does Marx posit the emergence of a polytechnic worker within capitalism. What he does argue in the *Grundrisse* (Penguin, 1973), p. 701, is that the productivity resulting from advanced technology 'will redound to the benefit of emancipated labour, and is the condition of its emancipation'; that is, after the abolition of capitalist production relations. For a similar argument see *Capital*, Vol. 1 (Penguin, 1976), p. 618.
  20. *Capital*, Vol. 1, pp. 548-9. For additional examples of the same argument see *Grundrisse*, pp. 692-4, 700-9; *Capital*, Vol. 1, pp. 483, 526-7, 544-5, 559, 619, 667; *Inaugural Address and Critique of the Gotha Programme* in *The First International and After* (Penguin, 1974), pp. 77-8, 352.
  21. Notably Serge Mallet, with his notion of the 'new working class' of technically qualified workers. For critical discussions of this approach see Michael Mann, *Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working Class* (Macmillan, 1973); Michael Rose, *Servants of Post-Industrial Power?* (Macmillan, 1979); Richard Hyman and Robert Price, *The New Working Class?* (Macmillan, 1983).
  22. See for example his essay 'Technology, Technicians and Class Struggle' in *The Division of Labour*.
  23. Harry Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capital. the Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (Monthly Review, 1974).
  24. London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group, *In and Against the State* (Pluto

Press, 1980), p. 130.

25. Ibid., pp. 76-7.
26. The Alternative, p. 253.
27. Ibid., pp. 405-7.
28. Ecology as Politics, p. 3.
29. 'Capital is, therefore, not a personal, it is a social power', (Manifesto of the Communist Party in *Marx-Engels* Collected Works, Vol. 6, 1976, p. 499). 'competition subordinates every individual capitalist to the immanent laws of capitalist production, as external and coercive laws' (Capital, Vol. 1, p. 739).
30. See, for example, Göran Therborn's discussion of 'Finding the Ruling Class' in *What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?* (NLB, 1978).
31. I do not mean to overlook the involvement of many union activists in both the practical and the theoretical aspects of 'workers' alternative plans' or the initiatives of some left-wing Labour councils; here, one suspects, is a source of some of the cadres of the 'movement' to which Gorz refers. At the same time, it is necessary to recognise the extent to which such activities are patronised, ignored or opposed by the official union hierarchies.
32. Ivor Clemitson and George Rodgers, *A Life to Live: Beyond Full Employment* (Junction Books, 1981). The book carries a **Foreward** by Neil Kinnock; it will be interesting to see what becomes of his endorsement of a 'life ethic' rather than a work ethic.
33. Hilary Wainwright in *The Forward March of Labour Halted?*, p. 132.