Birth of Biopolitics

Chapters 1-4

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Lecture 1: 10 January 1979

I) Aim of lectures: continue retracing history of art of governmentality
   A) Object: "government's 'consciousness' of itself"
      1) How government practice was conceptualized
      2) Object, rules and objectives of "domain of practice of government"
      3) "Study of rationalization of government practice in exercise of political sovereignty"
   B) Method: (nominalist) eschewing of universals; focus on concrete practices
      1) Not "historicism," which assumes universals which change in history
      2) But assumption that universals do not exist and thus tracing of concrete practices "apparently
         organized around something that is supposed to be" X (e.g., "madness")

II) Recap of last year's lectures
   A) Raison d'Etat defined state as autonomous reality
      1) Mundane (i.e., not concerned w/ afterlife salvation)
      2) Existing in plurality of other states (no horizon of integration in restored Empire)
   B) Means of governing (all aiming at European equilibrium)
      1) Mercantilism
      2) Police
      3) Permanent army and diplomacy
   C) Against reified "state phobia": it's not a "cold monster," but a "correlate of a way of governing"
   D) Important factors in raison d'Etat for what comes after (= "liberalism")
      1) Limitations:
         a) Foreign policy aiming at equilibrium means states must limit their external objectives
         b) Internal policy on the other hand is "unlimited" (all the better to compete w/ other states)
      2) Internal self-limitation or at least opposition now comes in form of law
         a) Medieval royal power grows not just by military, but also by judicial institutions
         b) In era of raison d'Etat
            i) Law is now "extrinsic" to raison d'Etat
            ii) Jurists argue that sovereign may not contravene
               (a) Basic laws of the realm
               (b) Natural law
               (c) Social contract

III) Forecast of this year's lectures: liberalism as "internal regulation of governmental rationality"
   A) Five internal limitations producing "critical governmental reason" (Kantian echo)
      1) De facto limitation: government ignoring its self-limits is not illegitimate, but inadequate
      2) General limitation
      3) Internal to state, so that this limitation is itself the means to realizing objective of government
      4) Non-juridical
a) Does not create zone of freedom w/in men as subjects (i.e., "rights")
b) But limits what government does: what it should and shouldn't do

5) Transactional: government is no longer imposed, but "transacted"

B) Political economy is "intellectual instrument" that permits liberalism as government self-limiting

1) Ambiguity of term
   a) Analysis of production and circulation of wealth (i.e., the "politics" of economy)
   b) Reflection on powers in a society (i.e., the "economy" of politics)

2) Key points in considering political economy
   a) Formed from within raison d'Etat (as opposed to "extrinsic" judicial thought)
   b) Physiocrats (first form of political economy) concluded a despotic state was needed
   c) Reflects on governmental practice in terms of effects, not origins (question of legitimacy)
   d) Discovers "natural" / intelligible mechanisms, not natural rights
   e) Utility (success or failure) is now only criterion of governmental action
      i) This means governments can be mistaken / ignorant (rather than wicked)
      ii) Thus the questions of limitation and of truth are introduced
         a) This is not Prince's wisdom (based on "equitable equilibrium")
         b) But maximum / minimum: govt never knows too well how to govern just enough

C) A new regime of truth is established

1) No longer a question of exercise of sovereign rights
2) But political economy enables a judgment of government action in terms of truth (did this action act on a false understanding of intelligible economic mechanisms?)
3) Thus reconfiguring of self-questioning of government
   a) Medieval: conformity to moral / natural / divine law?
   b) Absolutism: conformity to raison d'Etat so that state is strongest?
   c) Liberalism: conformity to maxi min posed by nature of economic reality?
4) Analyzing relation of practices and regime of truth is same as for F's previous work
   a) How does a "conjunction" of practices and regime of truth make what "does not exist" (madness, etc.) "become something" even as that "something" "continues not to exist"?
   b) Thus he's not after exposing past "errors" or "illusions"
   c) But he's after a dispositif of knowledge-power which
      i) Effectively marks out in reality that which does not exist
      ii) And legitimately submits it to division between true and false
5) So here he is after the "birth of dissymmetrical polarity of politics and the economy"
   a) This happens between Walpole's prudent wisdom of prince ("let sleeping dogs lie")
   b) And the "laissez-nous faire" that is the principle of liberalism

IV) Conclusion: relation of biopower / population / liberalism

A) Can only understand biopower in terms of liberalism's treatment of the population
B) But in treating liberalism we treat our "immediate and concrete reality"

Lecture 2: 17 January 1979

I) Liberalism as regime of truth / market as site of veridiction
   A) Liberalism and raison d'Etat
      1) Liberalism does not overcome raison d'Etat, but is "intensification / internal refinement" of it
      2) "Frugal" government is the question of liberalism
   B) Liberalism as regime of truth: connecting raison d'Etat w/ political economy
      1) Market as site of justice for Middle Ages
         a) Regulated
         b) Sale price seen as a just price
         c) Site of distributive justice
         d) Ensuring absence of fraud / protection of buyer
2) The liberal market is now a site of truth, of "veridiction"
   a) Natural / spontaneous mechanisms
   b) Prices are now "natural" / good / normal / "true" (fluctuates around value of product)
   c) The natural price is now a criterion for judging correctness of government action

C) Methodological remark: Foucault's complex historiography
   1) F is non-idealist (market doesn't become site of veridiction bcs of theoretical impact of economic science)
   2) But he also eschews search for single cause; there is instead a complex relation among
      a) Monetary situation
      b) Economic and demographic growth
      c) Intensification of agricultural production
      d) New methods of reflection on economic practice
      e) Theorization of economic problems
   3) IOW, establishing intelligibility of historical change = "simply showing it was possible"
      a) Not that it was "necessary"
      b) Nor that is was "one possibility in a determinate field of possibilities"
      i) [JP: I don't know what to make of this given the Deleuze / Bergson critique]

D) Examples of other investigations into intersection of jurisdiction and veridiction
   1) Psychiatry as truth regime connected to juridical institutions of confinement
   2) Human sciences as truth regime connected to juridical institutions of penal practice
   3) Sexuality at intersection of "jurisdiction of sexual relations" and "veridiction of desire"

E) So what F is after is "history of truth" as a "genealogy of regimes of veridiction"
   1) Object = history of "set of rules enabling one to establish which statements in a given discourse can be described as true or false" [cf. OT and AK]
   2) Not to be confused with critique of excesses of European rationality
      a) From Romanticism to Frankfurt School it's been the same
      b) F is not after denunciation
      i) Of the oppression of reason (bcs. madness is also oppressive)
      ii) Of the presumption of power in affirmation of truth (lies and error abuse power too)
      c) But after "conditions" and "effects" of veridiction: what are conditions of "discourse"
   3) The "political significance" of this genealogy is not
      a) Denunciation of errors of the past
      b) But establishing how what we now know to be error was considered to be true

II) Liberalism and law as limiting power of public authorities
A) Police state
   1) Unlimited government: police state = government merged with administration
   2) Extrinsic legal limits focused on sovereign rights
B) Liberal / "frugal" government
   1) Internal / self-limitation
   2) Political economy and public law as limiting government in name of truth of market
      a) Two means of approaching this question
      i) Axiomatic / juridico-deductive / revolutionary approach: Rousseau
         (a) Natural rights
         (b) Those rights one agrees to cede
         (c) Deduction of bounds of government competence w/in framework of sovereignty
      ii) Radical / utilitarian approach
         (a) Starting not from question of legitimacy, but from governmental practice itself
         (b) Find the limits of acceptable government action in terms of utility
      b) Two conceptions of the law
         i) Revolutionary / axiomatic approach: law as expression of a will
         ii) Radical / utilitarian approach: law as effect of a transaction
c) Two conceptions of freedom
   i) Juridical: freedom as possession to be divided into ceded and kept portions
   ii) Independence: freedom not as exercise of a basic right, but independence from govt.

C) Methodological remark: need for "strategic" / "non-dialectical" logic to connect two approaches
   1) Dialectical logic "puts to work contradictory terms w/in the homogeneous"
   2) Strategic logic "establish possible connections btw disparate terms" "remain heterogeneous"

D) We see heterogeneous connections, but dominance of utility as principle of govt self-limitation
   1) With the market we see exchange and value
   2) And we have utility as criterion for judging govt action

E) Interest is now the general term linking these two
   1) Not interest of the state as in raison d'Etat (sovereign hold on land / things)
   2) But plural interests: "complex interplay btw individual and collective interests"
      a) Example in penal system shift
         i) From sovereign punishment as physical torture
         ii) To "thin phenomenal theme of interests" as only thing govt has a hold on
            a) Here the questions are ones of utility / interest
            b) So govt no longer exercised on subjects, but on interests
   3) "What is utility value of govt … where exchange determines true value of things?"

Lecture 3: 24 January 2009

I) Europe and the international space in liberalism
   A) Raison d'Etat aimed to maintain European equilibrium
      1) Internally, no limits to police state, but externally there had to be limits to maintain balance
      2) Zero sum game implied with mercantilism (monetarism / finite gold supply)
   B) Liberalism shows dual profit and mutual enrichment, hence no zero-sum game
      1) Hence we have a "Europe of collective enrichment" / unlimited economic progress
      2) But this requires "permanent and continuous inputs" from "extended market"
         a) Translated term "globalization" = French mondialisation
         b) Avoiding intra-European conflict by expanding outward
         c) F distinguishes this from both colonization and 19th C imperialism
      3) Rather we have "a new type of global calculation in European governmental practice"
      4) Examples of this new calculation of a globally active Europe of commerce
         a) Maritime law
         b) Projects for international peace (e.g., Kant and "Perpetual Peace")
   C) Now the appearance of this new calculation does not mean other rationalities disappear
      1) There's always going to be overlap of forms of rationality
      2) For example, let's analyze the Congress of Vienna
         a) Napoleon's imperial idea had three objectives
            i) Empire will internally guarantee freedom (is less interventionist than absolutism)
            ii) Empire will give a "European form" to "unlimited revolutionary project"
            iii) Empire will reconstitute the Carolingian / Holy Roman Empire
         b) Austrians want to reconstitute old-fashioned European equilibrium of police states
         c) English want equilibrium on basis of being economic mediator btw Europe / rest of world

II) Fundamental features of liberalism:
   A) Recap of the three features:
      1) Market veridiction
      2) Limitation by calculating government utility
      3) Europe as unlimited economic development in a world market
   B) Why call this "liberalism"? Isn't that too restrictive term?
1) There is a governmental naturalism in physiocratic doctrine, but this entailed despotism, even if that despotism was limited by the clear "evidence" based knowledge of economic practice.

2) There is a concern with freedom at heart of new govt reason, but this is not quantitative.
   a) Factual: how can you compare the quantity of freedom?
      i) Absolutist administration / police state
      ii) Liberal conducting of conduct in every detail of daily life
   b) Methodologically: (F’s nominalism here once again)
      i) Freedom is not a universal that is particularized in space and time (and can vary)
      ii) Freedom is the "actual relation btw governors and governed"
         (a) Measure of "too little" existing freedom
         (b) Comes from the demand for "even more" freedom

III) What does F mean by "freedom" in liberal government?
   A) General relation of freedom and liberal government: "productive / destructive"
      1) It is a "consumer" / "producer" / "manager" of freedom (of market, property rights, etc.)
      2) "Manager of the conditions in which one can be free"
      3) Liberalism = a "productive / destructive relation" with freedom
         a) Free trade / protectionism
         b) Create buyers for internal market to work (resist impoverishment of workers)
         c) Anti-monopoly interventions
         d) Free labor market / reserve army of unemployed
   B) Principle of calculation for cost of manufacturing freedom = "security"
      1) Weighing relation of individual and collective interests
      2) Security / freedom as ensuring the "least exposure to danger"
         a) Motto of liberalism = "live dangerously" ("political culture of danger")
            i) Savings banks (elicit fear of danger of old-age impoverishment)
            ii) Detective fiction / faits divers (elicit fear of danger of crime)
            iii) Campaigns against disease
         b) Attention to sexuality and "degenerescence"
      b) Extension of disciplines as counterweights to freedom
         i) Panopticon starts as regional mechanism
         ii) But ends as "very formula of liberal government"
      c) Mechanisms that introduce additional freedom through additional control / intervention
         i) Control is no longer just counterweight to freedom but its mainspring
         ii) E.g., Roosevelt's welfare policy
            (a) Produces freedom to work / consume
            (b) At cost of economic interventions (seen as "road to serfdom")
      3) Liberal "crises of governmentality" = concern w/ economic cost of exercise of freedom
         a) "Liberogenic" compensatory mechanisms = producing / threatening freedom
         b) Present (1979) crisis of liberalism traces itself to
            i) Keynesian interventions / New Deal social programs deployed to prevent loss of freedom through fascism / communism
            ii) But such "big government" also destroys freedom, say the liberals!
         c) These crises of liberalism are related to but not identical to crises of capitalism

Lecture 4: 31 January 1979

I) Introduction
   A) Contemporary state phobia
      1) Many sources: Soviet Union / Nazi Germany / even Beveridge Plan
      2) Sign of contemporary crisis of governmentality
   B) Doing w/o a theory of the state
1) F does not ignore the "statification" of governmental practices
2) But he does refrain from starting with analyzing nature / function / essence of state and then trying to deduce current practices of state governmentality from that essence
   a) History is not a deductive science
   b) State does not have an essence
      i) It is not a universal, nor is it an autonomous source of power
      ii) It is only the "effect" of a "perpetual statification" of multiple practices
         (a) Finance
         (b) Investment
         (c) Decision-making
         (d) Control
         (e) Relations of local / central authorities
      iii) It is the "mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities"
      iv) IOW, "moving outside" to see state via analysis of practices of governmentality
C) Forecast of lectures:
   1) Three topics: law and order / civil society / biopolitics as current liberal governmentality
   2) Two forms of neoliberalism:
      a) German Ordoliberalism (contra Nazism and post-war planning)
      b) American anarcho-capitalism (Chicago School, contra New Deal)
   3) Connections:
      a) Common enemy = Keynes
      b) Common objects of repulsion = state control / planning / intervention in economy
      c) Common theories / figures: Mises, Hayek
II) German neo-liberalism
A) Requirements for European economic policies in 1948 (= Keynesianism)
   1) Reconstruction
   2) Planning as instrument of reconstruction
   3) Social objectives of avoiding relapse into fascism
B) German Scientific Council in 1948 proposes use of "price mechanism" as much as possible
   1) No price controls and immediate deregulation of market
   2) Raised question of legitimacy of the state
      a) Trivial sense: state abuse of power in economic realm
         i) Violates basic rights of citizens
         ii) And thus loses its own right to be consider representative
            (a) Thus the Nazis did not lose legitimate sovereignty and individual Germans as citizens are not responsible for Nazi crimes
            (b) But they did lose right to be considered as representatives of German people, so Nazis did not act in the name of the German people
      b) Profound sense:
         i) There is now no claim to juridical legitimacy for a new German state
         ii) But economic freedom can create "point of attraction" for new political sovereignty
C) So Germans want to found state on economic freedom
   1) Immediate tactical move
      a) Attracts support from American business / industry
      b) Assuages fears of a German strong state
   2) Fundamental feature of contemporary German governmentality
      a) Economic success creates legitimacy for the state that creates / protects economy
      b) This is a "permanent genesis" of state from the economy
         i) More than a mere legal legitimization
         ii) "Permanent consensus" of all economic agents (workers / investors / unions)
(a) Not as Weber analyzed individual enrichment as sign of God's favor
(b) But general enrichment as sign of adherence of individuals to state

3) How did German liberalism become accepted?
   a) Supported by Americans, though mistrusted by Germans
   b) Resistance by German socialists
   c) Support by German groups
      i) Christian Democrats
      ii) Christian theorists of the "social economy"
      iii) Labor unions
      iv) Socialist party: as long as an "equitable social order" resulted

D) Discussion of the socialist adherence to new program
   1) Level of doctrine:
      a) For Marxists, this is betrayal of orthodoxy
      b) But for others, this is adherence to a new form of governmentality
   2) Reasons why
      a) Political calculation: neoliberalism was only game in town
      b) Lack of a socialist governmentality
         i) So what if Marx doesn't have a theory of the state?
            (a) No one needs a theory of the state to engage with liberalism
            (b) Locke doesn't have a theory of the state but a theory of government
            ii) Socialism lacks its own form of governmental rationality
               (a) Socialism has several rationalities (knows how to operate in these realms)
                  1. Historical
                  2. Economic
                  3. Administrative
               (b) But it has only operated in connection with other governmentalities
                  1. As opposition to liberal governmentality
                  2. Within police state / hyper-administrative states
         3) In relation to truth
            a) Temptation to ask this nonsensical question of socialism (but not of liberalism)
            b) Bcs it has to supplement its lack of government rationality by fidelity to a text
   4) We would have to invent a socialist governmental rationality (Mitterand on horizon)