

INTRODUCTION FROM:  
NEOFASCISM AND IDEOLOGY OF DESIRE  
THE ROLE OF SO-CALLED FREUDO-MARXISM WITHIN  
THE STRATEGY OF CAPITALISM

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1. WHY SHOULD WE POLEMICIZE AGAINST  
THE FASHIONABLE IDEOLOGISTS?

Condemning so-called Freudo-Marxism<sup>1</sup> could be a lost cause, a play into its hands and even a descent into its trap, since one advertises a fashionable ideology by criticizing it, just as one acknowledges or revives a provocation by taking it up. Yet it seems that the conditions for undertaking the good polemic—exemplified by Marx—have finally emerged before us. This polemic can be based upon three considerations.

Firstly, this polemic must focus on a delimited and finite ideological ensemble: Freudo-Marxism. The texts of Marcuse, Reich, Deleuze are here the binding sites of a discourse that, once deprived of its fashionable loopholes and prestige, will be revealed as the cultural terrorism of a neo-mandarinat. <sup>2</sup> This ideological movement has come full circle and

1. [Freudo-Marxism designates a movement of thought that seeks to combine Marxism with Freudian psychoanalytic theory. It can be said to originate in the works of German psychoanalysts Wilhelm Reich and Erich Fromm. For Clouscard, Herbert Marcuse but even more so Deleuze and Guattari radicalized this tradition by giving it a renewed political impetus in the event of May '68. (cf. *L'Homme et la société*, N. 11, 1969. *Freudo-marxisme et sociologie de l'aliénation.*)—Tr.]

2. [We find the same terminology in Noam Chomsky's *American Power and the New Mandarins* (1969), a comparable denunciation of the collaboration between intellectuals and scientists with the technocratic and military power enforced by the US government in its fight against communism during the Vietnam War.—Tr.]

can now be exemplified in two ways: as a cultural ensemble that develops its own logic and that culminates in deleuzophrenic perfection. Just as in *Capital*, Marx could study the bourgeoisie within its own achievement, we will be able to study neo-capitalist ideology in its perfect accomplishment: deleuzophrenia—neo-capitalism’s symptom of symptoms.

*Secondly*, the polemic gives us the possibility to see opportunism in action, to designate it. The opportunism of the neo-mandarinat (whose profound nature we will explore) exhibits the following characteristics: it attempts to rapidly co-opt Marxist research and imposes itself by means of advertising slogans. Marxism is being strategically utilized, manipulated, and recuperated in order to define a “new society” in line with Freudo-Marxism, in order to define the new socio-political situation produced by state monopoly capitalism. This empirical, fragmented ideology, devoid of any serious scientific foundation, profits from a network of distribution and commercialization of its commodities, which is in itself a quasi-monopoly (press, reviews, *Le Monde*<sup>3</sup>—a monopoly within the monopoly—universities, worldly salons, et cetera) that employs the

3. [The most widely read French daily newspaper, *Le Monde*, founded after the Liberation of Paris in 1944 at the initiative of Charles de Gaulle.—Tr.]

most advanced advertising techniques (while being itself the model for advertisement as such).

Hence, the polemic too has a strategic role, even a tactical one: it strikes blow for blow. It must step up before a new trend reinstates bourgeois ideology—just as Structuralism succeeded Existentialism, and Freudo-Marxism succeeded Structuralism—and before conceptual clarity is relegated to mere indifference. An ideology founded upon falsification can be promptly demarcated and countered. The mechanism operating at the heart of these advertising tricks and cultural schemes can be reconstructed.

*Thirdly*, not only will the polemic expose the new ideology (produced by an intelligentsia that has long since betrayed intellectuals to embrace a cultural practice that answers to the demands of new cultural markets), it will also expose the very site of this new Marxist theorization by exhaustively reading into its ideological falsifications. Thus we will construct a theory of neo-capitalism dialectically, on the basis of a negativity, by rectifying ideological models and defining the neo-mandarin, the new liberal bourgeoisie, the structure of state monopoly capitalism with its markets, its strategies, and its publicity. The polemic can thus serve as prolegomena to serious theoretical studies.

The discourse we are criticizing betrays itself through its own arrogance, which is the very source of its caricatural nature (deleuzophrenia). By carrying out a mirror-reading of this discourse, we will show that it merely reflects the debilitating situation that the new caste of mandarins finds itself in. The

polemic will allow us to identify the strategies, models, and themes of this ideological reformation, and to present the peculiar “nature” of this “new society.”

2. *THE FIELD OF STUDY INAUGURATED BY THE CRITIQUE OF FREUDO-MARXISM. THE LOGIC OF CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT.*

We can organize and systematize this critique of critiques. Thus we will be able to not only expose the perverse nature of Freudo-Marxism, but also reconstruct the logic of capitalist development as such. An entirely new field of study is made possible.

First, we will formalize this new inquiry by presenting a group of logical propositions subsumed under two grounding theses.

a) *Thesis on Freudo-Marxism*: it is an ideology produced by a new intelligentsia that reflects the sociocultural situation of the new social strata produced by neo-capitalism.

Freudo-Marxism serves first as the pretext for a strategy of diversion that culminates in a counter-revolutionary philosophy; it signals the beginning of a cloaked reformism, in its fullest achievement reveals itself as the strategy of neo-capitalism.

b) *As ideology of the “new society,” Freudo-Marxism* depends on a social practice specific to a system of relations already in place and is key for establishing the ideological system that corresponds to the logic of bourgeois behavior. It is the last and most essential link of the dialectical chain representing bour-

geois generations. With this essential element, the progression of the bourgeoisie's contradictory behavior can be rendered meaningful in its totality. Accordingly, the "revelation" that results from decoding an occultation, and even an inversion, will allow us to reconstruct the ideological ensemble and its complementary dualism.

c) Only two terms of this ensemble are well known: *liberalism and fascism*. National socialism can serve as a historical example for establishing the relation between these two terms and proposing a model of the transition from liberalism to fascism. However, we believe that certain characteristics proper to a third term still escape Marxist codification. It is true that neo-capitalism has already been doubly defined; as society of consumption according to the Freudo-Marxist falsification, and as "State monopoly capitalism"<sup>4</sup> by Orthodox Marxism. The latter has already provided numerous elements of analysis that demystify the idea of a "society of consumption." Yet we want to insist on the phenomenal ideological inversion that Freudo-Marxism enables, on its enormous strategic role, on the radical ideological mutation that it induces, and on the entire displacement of values authorized by the new mode of

4. Cf. *Le Capitalisme monopoliste d'État*, Éditions Sociales, 1971.

consumption. As a social practice, Freudo-Marxism projects itself onto an ideological model that will stand for the ideology of a new society (authorized by technocracy), namely the ideology of the third way (the decay of history).

Polemicalizing against Freudo-Marxism therefore gives us the possibility to establish the systematics of bourgeois ideology and its cultural practices.

d) *Thesis on the ideological ensemble of capitalism* as an attempt to define a dialectical model that would render the “essence” of capitalism.

*As the study of Freudo-Marxism reveals:*

- capitalism is an ensemble that consists of three dimensions,
- which are distributed according to the logic of its production,
- cyclically,
- and this is revealed by the study of Freudo-Marxism.

*Corollary:*

The capitalist strategy, that of the decay of history, consists in:

- reproducing this law of operation as the solution to its internal contradiction;
- occulting and even inverting this law by way of Freudo-Marxism (and the entire ideology that derives from it).

### 3. EXPLANATION.

a) The bourgeoisie must not be fixed, reified into a generic figure, a structural abstraction, a slogan, an etymological expression, an arbitrarily privileged moment. The bourgeoisie is objectified becoming, developed into strata of classes, hegemonic (or, on the contrary, decadent) periods, functions and

large ensembles (such as the Nation) that each express different moments in economy.

This internal mutation triggers the circulation of an *internal contradiction* by virtue of a pragmatic, empirical internal solution (yet to be theorized); it is the structure's variable, namely the constant extortion of surplus value. The function of this variable is to guarantee (overdetermine) the domination of the bourgeoisie throughout each and every technological transformation.

b) *Liberalism* (first term of the ensemble) is the ideology that ensures continuity by assimilating new productive forces into the bourgeois ensemble: it is an opportunistic strategy (camouflaged by a humanist apparatus).

The *problem*—the exclusion of the proletariat—is resolved by the solution of the internal contradiction, that is, by conciliating and readjusting the class strata, the functions of and the moments in which the bourgeoisie profits from various productive forces (overdetermination).

Liberalism therefore bears a double characteristic. It is, in the first place, the regulating model of bourgeois continuity throughout every economic mutation, and in the second place, the principle of exclusion—but also demagogic conciliation—of the proletariat.

Liberal humanism will be the ideological expression of the constant adaptation to economic expansion, as per the structural constant of the extortion of surplus value.

c) *Definition of the second dimension of the ensemble: National Socialism.*

This internal play, however, will be halted by a “fatal” characteristic of capitalist growth: the *Nation*—the essential superstructure which supports this economic expansion—authorizes both the greatest extension and the strongest restriction. On the one hand, we have the accession to State capitalism, and on the other, the delimitation of production by the superstructural authorities of the Nation. (This internal contradiction prohibits the transition to the “new society” of intensive *bourgeois* consumption—permissive society, which is the over-exploitation of the producer according to the new models of consumption dictated by the neo-capitalist mode of production.)

d) *National Socialism (fascism) as the model of this situation when it reaches its paroxysm. Characteristics of capitalism which serve nationalist expansion.*

This kind of capitalism is not only in continuity with the national unity of the 19th century but also represents its actual accomplishment.

We can distinguish two great moments:

- in the first moment, capitalism reinforces nationalism,
- in the second moment, nationalism restricts the expansion of capitalist industry.

*Its mode of production; implementation of the capitalist infrastructure:*

- energy produced by territories (autarkic energy policy) - concentration of production in trusts - heavy industry - large capital stock - infrastructures of the Nation (highways - public utilities) - mass production limited to capital goods (socialist alibi).

Nationalism, as a movement emanating from the provinces and rural areas (dignitaries and landowners), from the middle classes and the civil and public service class of the Nation (bureaucracy, government officials), sought *national unity* and a *strong State* capable of reconciling local antagonisms by means of an ideology driven by xenophobic and racist “values.”

*Hence the resulting double characteristic:*

- National Socialism has no interest in a light industry of mass production, overseen by a new specialized caste that would substitute traditional executives and produce a new distribution of power and class strata together with a new ideology for the “consumption” of consumer goods. Indeed, nationalism has no interest in a new liberal society that would create new needs.

- Strategic expansion will no longer pertain to Capital but to the Nation. The conquest of new markets and outlets will be occulted by the conquest of territory (vital space). War industry will divert from mass production (of capital and consumer goods) definitively.

*This structure, which defines the mode of production under National Socialism, can be verified by:*

- the geopolitical contradiction (Prussia, Ruhr Valley),
- the economic crisis of 1930 (fascism gives work to the unemployed),
- the history of National Socialism (internal political fluctuations: Night of the Long Knives, liquidation of the Nazi SA paramilitary),
- the confrontation with other modes of production:

- first stage: triumph of National Socialism over competitive liberalism (in France) as a result of its highly advanced industrialization.
- second stage: nationalism encounters its internal limitations (the money invested by the USA in the industrialization of the Ruhr Valley following WWI is lacking, oil resources are insufficient, absence of a colonial empire as a source of wealth and supply); consequently, National Socialism is crushed by the heavy industry of the USSR and the USA.

e) Victory over fascism unleashes the economic expansion of capitalism: *neoliberalism—radical liberalism (third term of the ensemble)*—announces the transition to a *mode of mass production* of capital and consumer goods as per the capitalist exploitation of new productive forces (techniques, sciences).

This capitalist mode of production is contradictory, since it sanctifies a technological and scientific progress that is merely caused by the expansion of productive forces. The infrastructural, techno-scientific acquisition that neo-capitalism mobilizes within bourgeois superstructures challenges the superstructures of traditional capitalism, and even those of neo-capitalism. As Lenin once said, “State monopoly capitalism is the anteroom of socialism.” The paradox, however, lies in the fact that State monopoly capitalism achieves the maximal extortion of surplus value from the progress in production that results from the productive forces.

*Freudo-Marxism* is the *ideology* with its multiple expressions and derivative uses, the strategy, and the gimmick that exploits this situation. It must legitimize the recuperation of

progress, resulting from the new mode of production, by the new liberal bourgeoisie who profits from it.

*Its task* is to reconcile emancipation and reformism under a unitary discourse.

It must *emancipate* from the authority of the old bourgeoisie (government officials, provincial dignitaries, administration, traditional middle classes) by instilling models of consumption proper to radical liberalism (libertarianism) that are authorized by the new production and the extortion of surplus value; and also by destroying the moralizing models (i.e. scarcity of goods) of the old bourgeois class.

*At the same time*, it seeks to exert a political influence on sectors of labor by way of a radically liberal (thus libertarian) ideology that claims to surpass “Marxist-Leninist dogmatism.” This opportunistic reformism is by no means opposed to Marxism (as dad’s ideology was); instead, it feigns to endorse the Marxist corpus only to inflect it tendentiously.

*Its solution* consists in unifying two approaches by manipulating the common opposition that both Marxism and Neoliberalism hold against a conservative, traditionalist and fascist capitalism. Such common ground of the bourgeois and the socialist oppositions authorizes an opposition to tradition, which serves to justify the “progressive” approach of Freudo-Marxism.

*Essential remark*: the antagonism between the two moments of the bourgeoisie’s development, which respond to two modalities of the mode of production, is already predetermined by the *internal contradiction*. This contradiction is merely

relative, since it is overcome by the constant and continuous extortion of surplus value. It is precisely this overdetermination, effected by the play of the internal contradiction, that occults their profound complementary nature (techno-hippy).

f) *The ideological operation at stake here is that of an occultation by means of an inversion or proper use of transference.*

The ideologists of Freudo-Marxism will conceal the profit and the parasitic nature of the new bourgeoisie (mainly of the service industry) by pretending to denounce the integration of the proletariat (into the system), when in fact no one but this new bourgeoisie is being integrated. They will substitute the “failed” revolutionary vocation of the proletariat with the “changer la vie”<sup>5</sup> emancipation from traditional bourgeois values. This inversion therefore consists in attributing the negativity of the new society to the producer (proletariat), and the revolutionary positivity to the libertarian consumer!

*The key notion introduced by this transference-inversion will be that of the “society of consumption.”* The ideological camouflage will consist in including the worker, producer, into the new society of state monopoly capitalism, and ex-

5. [Clouscard is here quoting from Rimbaud's *A Season in Hell*, "Did he, perhaps, have secrets that would remake life [changer la vie]?" This sheds light on the author's critical stance towards the figure of the "poète maudit," dear to the French literary tradition from Rimbaud to the Surrealists up to May '68, and towards the cultural aspect prevailing over the political in the general character of the revolt.—Tr.]

cluding...those who truly benefit from selective consumption.

The internal contradiction thus becomes the primary and determining one, while the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat secondary. These “revolutionaries” will say exactly what we now hear from employers, expressing themes of a technocratic regime and pathetic accents of the “new society” upheld by Chaban-Delmas<sup>6</sup>: workers and employers are two parties conglomerated in the techno-structure. They participate in one and the same universe, subjected to a fatal evolution; the initial antagonism is surpassed by the imperatives of post-industrial society (hence ecology) and by the shared consumption (already or soon-to-be realized) of manufactured goods.

Then, on the second panel of this “protest” diptych, these same people will deem (with the bad faith so well described by Sartre) the emancipatory *practices* of the new bourgeoisie spontaneous, revolutionary, creative, instinctual, authentically libidinal—those that are the very models of integration into the new selective and libertarian consumption. This will give rise to spatiotemporal *marginal groups* that will be organized and controlled by

6. [Serving as Prime Minister under Georges Pompidou from 1969 to 1972, Jacques Chaban-Delmas responded to the civil unrest of May '68 by promoting his project for a “new society” based on the decentralization and increased autonomy of public services, educational institutions and businesses from State authority. Chaban-Delmas' project inspired governmental policies initiated by partisans of the “Second Left” under François Mitterrand's socialist government (1981-1995).—Tr.]

neo-capitalism (permissive society). These *marginals* are nothing but the finest up-and-coming members of a new and hip bourgeoisie that succeeds the outmoded one. They know the “enjoyment” of living by the *signs* of an underground and very elitist culture that aptly expresses the anti-cultural culture of neo-capitalism. Spontaneous protest is here the overdetermination.

This strategic camouflage, this *transference-inversion*—a classical psychoanalytic procedure, and paradox that consists in ascribing one’s own negativity to the other while claiming its potential—is possible only because of the *class power* that serves as the support to cultural alibis (pop), sophistic tricks (such as the amalgamation of the schizo and the Vietnamese soldier), and ideological *cover-ups*.

Polemicalizing against Freudo-Marxism means exposing this *class power*, insofar as such an ideological discourse reveals the nature of the prestigious new intelligentsia that produced it; indeed, this new caste of mandarins represents nothing but the emanation of the new bourgeoisie that profits from neo-capitalism.

*Freudo-Marxism* thus allows us to reconstruct the mutation of bourgeois society following a basic outline, thereby substantiating our polemic. It is by localizing this crucial element that we can reveal the whole.

g) *The law of the three stages of capitalism and the cyclical reproduction of the whole.*

We can grasp the capitalist ensemble as a whole by considering the following three stages: classical liberalism, National

Socialism, neoliberalism (society of consumption). Classical liberalism generates growth, yet a crisis will challenge the very principle of this liberalism. National Socialism saves capitalism, but at the expense of a nationalist blockage of economic growth.

This situation generates an enormous potential for demand that the “society of consumption” satisfies. Then, yet again, the crisis...This cycle would be the model regulating every crisis through the opportunistic repetition of its stages. It is through this self-regulation of growth that capitalism would insure its perennial nature. In case of overproduction, we would return to a zero economic growth plan (i.e. Mansholt Plan), to an economy of scarcity organized by older nationalist executives who would finally seize this opportunity for revenge. Then, whenever demand authorizes an upturn, we will come back to a high rate of economic growth (Pinochet). This petty game of interplay (break-boost) has already become the standard procedure of the Finance Minister of France.

In conclusion, capitalism is an ensemble (of stages necessary to its economy) and the repetition of this ensemble: the eternal return and the decay of history.

This strategy of capitalism currently relies on Freud-Marxism, whose twofold ideological mission is to provide the model of consumption authorized by neo-capitalism, and to prepare the transition from radical liberalism to neofascism (on account of an entire ideological camouflage).

This is what our polemic seeks to establish.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Five years after May 1968, the Marxist philosopher and sociologist Michel Clouscard launched a polemic against the testament of the "soixante-huitards" generation, namely Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri's *Anti-Oedipe* (1972). Yet *Néofascisme et idéologie du désir* was more than a polemic, for it inaugurated an entire series of books that Clouscard devoted to the socio-economic analysis of what he called "libertarian liberalism," which he considered to be the next step of capitalist development that shaped French society anew after May '68.

*Néofascisme et idéologie du désir* was the first book Clouscard wrote shortly after he completed his dissertation *L'Être et le Code: le procès de production d'un ensemble précapitaliste* (1972, Éditions Mouton) under Henri Lefebvre, and defended it before Sartre amongst others. Although the ambitiousness of his work was praised by an older generation that included not only

Sartre, but also Lucien Goldmann and Vladimir Jankélévitch, his relentless criticism of and opposition to the work of his contemporaries—be it Althusser's Structural Marxism, Foucault's epistemology, or Deleuze's post-structuralist metaphysics—ultimately relegated his own work to relative obscurity.

Despite being sidelined, Clouscard was a prolific writer and taught sociology at the Université de Poitiers from 1975 to 1990. He remained supportive of the French Communist Party (PCF) throughout his life, without ever joining its ranks. Instead of condemning or defending the Communist regime in the Soviet Union, Clouscard focused on describing the peculiar discourse of emancipation that resulted from the marriage of psychoanalysis and Marxism, which was then termed Freudo-Marxism, and was gaining currency in the aftermath of May '68. For Clouscard, the emancipation of desire and productivity upheld by the Freudo-Marx-

ists went hand-in-hand with the emergence of new markets and their technostructures which defined the development of social democracy in France. In *Néofascisme et idéologie du désir*, he provides both a Marxian economic analysis of post-'68 France and a Marxist critique of the ideology promoted by those whom he considered its new intelligentsia.

By undermining the rupture of poststructuralism with structuralism and emphasizing the continuity of capitalism in its transition from classical to libertarian liberalism (or neoliberalism), Clouscard courted controversy. This alone might explain why his work has not yet been translated into English.

It is crucial to note that Clouscard does not simply equate libertarian liberalism with fascism, but warned against the investment of US capital in the reconstruction of post-war Europe (European Recovery Program or Marshall Plan), which marked the return to a radi-

cally liberal Weimar Republic model of social democracy dependent upon foreign investment (Dawes and Young Plan). European democracies therefore remained bound to international financial crises and chauvinist *ressentiment*. Not unlike Pasolini, who understood the protests of 1968 in Italy as the revolt of the children of the bourgeoisie, Clouscard debunked the revolutionary myth of May '68 by opposing the students who became media clerks or successful theoreticians of this "event" to the working classes. Workers were offered cars to drive to work as a concession made to a rising middle class, yet the root of class struggle was left unresolved. Now workers drive to protest around France in high-visibility vests, dissatisfied with the mutinous legacy of May '68.

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MICHEL CLOUSCARD (1928-2009) was a French philosopher and sociologist, whose published works include *L'Être et le Code* (1972), *Le Frivole et le Sérieux* (1978), *Le Capitalisme de la séduction - Critique de la social-démocratie* (1981), *Critique du libéralisme libertaire: Généalogie de la contre-révolution* (2005), all of which are available in French from Éditions Delga.

