

# Birth of Biopolitics

## Chapters 5-8

Outline by John Protevi

LSU French Studies

[www.protevi.com/john/Foucault/biopolitics5-8.pdf](http://www.protevi.com/john/Foucault/biopolitics5-8.pdf)

[protevi@lsu.edu](mailto:protevi@lsu.edu)

Permission granted to copy and distribute for academic use with proper attribution.

Lecture 5: 7 February 1979

- I) Post-war German neoliberalism: how can economic freedom found & limit the state?
  - A) A different question from liberalism vs the police state of 18<sup>th</sup> C absolutism
  - B) Biographies of leading German figures: Eucken, Böhm, et al.
    - 1) They had been dealing with this issue since the 1930s
    - 2) Closeness of Freiburg School (Ordoliberalism) and Frankfurt School (Critical Theory)
      - a) Both start with problematic laid out by Max Weber, displacing Marx
        - i) Marx: contradictory logic of capitalism
        - ii) Weber: irrational rationality of capitalist society
      - b) Two different directions
        - i) Frankfurt School: find new social rationality to nullify economic irrationality
        - ii) Freiburg School: find new economic rationality to nullify social irrationality
    - 3) Nazism as the "field of adversity" for neo-liberals
      - a) Define an objective: found legitimacy of state via economic freedom
      - b) Define "field of adversity" = "whole set of obstacles and enemies" to this project
      - c) Redistribution of technical resources available to them
- II) Field of adversity for the neo-liberals
  - A) Historical sequence of adversaries (actually forms a network rather than sequence)
    - 1) Theoretical objections in 1840s (List): national econ policy and liberalism are incompatible
      - a) Liberalism is suited to a maritime nation (e.g., England)
      - b) Germany needs protectionism
    - 2) Bismarckian state socialism
    - 3) WWI state planning of wartime economy
    - 4) Keynesian interventionism
    - 5) Nazis then contributed a "strict coalescence of these elements"
  - B) Theoretical *coup de force* of German neo-liberals
    - 1) The truth of Nazism / Nazism as truth, as "economic-political invariant"
      - a) Nazism is not a "monstrosity" putting together incommensurate elements
      - b) Nazism is instead truth of system, revealing necessary connection of elements
        - i) Any way you enter on this path, you end up with Nazism
        - ii) "Economic-political invariant":
          - (a) Not constitution of state
          - (b) But any kind of econ intervention
    - 2) Nazism as result of "unlimited growth of state power"
      - a) This is odd, as Nazism can be seen as "withering away of state"
        - i) State is only instrument of the people, the Volk