Eukariot
Firm Statements (Soon To Be Proven Wrong)

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V.

- As long as the only events we can create remain attached to the bourgeois order's umbilical cord and the ECG of our enjoyment is busy registering the spasms of this order, we have lost our ability to increase our strength. No doubt, I've made some grand statements, but they steer clear of the Messianic fantasy that keep our actions within the existing structures. And performing under such difficult conditions can always yield interesting results: our practices might have accidental effects that prove more interesting than the initial battle plan; our failures can open paths that were not visible from the flatness of the carefully planned road. Politics as a sum of accidents within a shifting constellation of insurrectional collectives and liberated spaces, connecting and disconnecting in manners that allow our experiments to take place without being so easily put out. Scattered fragments of geography and fantasy that do not try to approximate the dead and deadly mass of the Nation-State, society, population, community or individual.

- Our convoy might soon disappear behind the gloomy hills of lassitude, meaninglessness and fear; left open for too long, our spells and potions might lose their power; our spaces might be invaded by the State guards or, even worse, by our own loops of bourgeois enjoyment; or maybe, somewhere along the curls of lethargic bourgeois time, we will find some exhilarating moments of devastation. This trajectory is not that important. What is important right now is to twirl in a cheerful *danse macabre* on the grave of bourgeois enjoyment.

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- If performed so as to enrich institutional archives, "knowledge production" is not a threat to a dominant form of government that, since Enlightenment, specialised precisely in governing knowledge and through knowledge. The liberal ideology's insistence that knowledge per se represents an indisputable good. The problem is not to produce more knowledge, as if this is the pure fountain from which liberation will stem forth; but to understand how to block governing dispositifs.

- How does the academic dispositif function, though, what is its main operation? Behind the glitzy and grotesque spectacle of the academe, its purpose is to arrange bodies and souls in easily identifiable hierarchies of value and to teach every single person passing through academic training how to obey, envy and desire those placed above them in these hierarchies. Erudition, exegesis, academic critique and so on are rituals through which one internalises the most important injunctions of the educational apparatus: love authority! Once within the disciplinary assemblage of the university, each one of us will learn to love and obey the professor, the author, the discourse, the text, the discipline, the canon, the framework, the credential, the title. Will learn to enjoy obeying and quoting scriptures, holy books, laws, sacerdotes and prophets. Will learn to enjoy engaging in endless debate, critique, controversy and polemics. And so, us "educated radicals" still get all excited about how warmly our hand was shaken after our PhD defence; how much our supervisor or this or that professor liked our work; how attentively this or that journal or conference crowd followed what we said; how passionate was our encounter with this academic celebrity; how convincingly we showed everyone who's the smartest or the most radical; how often our work was taken up or quoted or published…

is self-reproduction: conserving and extending the privileges and prestige they were granted by State and corporate leaders in exchange for gilding liberal-capitalist governing apparatuses with a ”free thought” and ”free speech” aura.

- Since their spectators project on them a radical – or, at least, paternal - aura, certain “radical” academics are able to play a complex game. On one hand, they are the model liberal citizen: they display to the masses, with the purpose of seducing them, the rewards they have received from authorities (stability, comfort, recognition, wages, travels, prestige) in exchange for building a career on severe work ethic, strict discipline and submission to inflexible hierarchies and managerial dictates. On the other hand, besides their daily toil to produce management charts for their administrators – dissemination and market/corporate/governmental relevance of research; recruitment and retention of clients; grade curves and learning outcomes; research assessment exercises; under/graduate programme advertising; grant securing; curriculum development; departmental goal setting; integration of educational outcomes with the market; graduate employability; publication and research records and rankings; (corporate) event organising and so on - the ”radical” academics also present themselves to the masses as a relevant antibourgeois force (farce?). So, they hurl their itinerant circus, with its convoy of panels, plenary speakers, ordinary speakers, respondents, chairs, time slots, tea breaks, catering, book promotions, networking, business cards, research networks, professional institutional membership and festive diners, at whatever location is hot right now in the capitalist war zone. They justify their relevance to antibourgeois struggle through grand remarks about the revolution; as well as by applying the “outreach and dissemination of research” tactics learned from their managers: “our workshop had three representatives of the refugees speaking to us about their toil; their interventions will be included in the workshop’s publications, making heard their hitherto silenced voices etc. etc. etc.”

I.

- There are, perhaps, two initial challenges that an anti-bourgeois experiment faces: first, the participants need to learn how to enjoy failing in the bourgeois Olympics and to stop running after the tin medals that, once pinned into our flesh by various authorities, promise us their eternal respect and love. This failure involves learning how to enjoy the discomfort of being a disappointment to mom and dad, teachers, sergeants and bosses, to God, the superego, the prime minister, to “people” and the laws of Nature. The bourgeois world makes a lot of seductive offers – protection, recognition, tenderness, copulation, uniqueness, the status of rebel, a pat on the back, a diploma to hang around our necks or therapy. But bourgeois comfort comes at a price too high to pay; we need to cut its throat.

- Second, and potentially harder, is acknowledging that our great political aims, our fantasies of truth, fullness, peace and harmony, of the revolution that will purify and perfect us, of the harmonious collective, will fail. These fantasies are as impossible to fulfill as they are to abandon. As modern Western subjects we have limited resources, abilities and potentialities. We are a checker board of anxiety nodes; our lifelines are attached to a complex of governing apparatuses that we are unprepared and reluctant to disturb. Consequently, we accept that we might need a political fantasy that verges on the metaphysical in order to engage in risky activities. This fantasy functions as a shining light that might be a lure, but still gives us some direction. Or as an amulet, offering us the illusion of protection while we de-occupy spaces, build collectives and stick pieces of scrap iron in the mechanisms that provide us with being, comfort and enjoyment.

- Currently most of our political inventions follow rules laid down by a few European men and women from past centuries; the only thing that these tired rules can stimulate is the compulsive pleasure of the political ritual. Following these rituals makes

easy our attentive policing by a bourgeois order that has long ago learned how to re-signify our games, how to make them irrelevant or impracticable. We might still be ahead of our adversary at the level of structural analysis (are we?), but the bourgeois order, despite its rudimentary logic, prevails at the level of tactical and strategic struggle.

- Alarmingly, it seems that today the survival of many of our groups and practices depends on the enemy's ability – what we generically call the State, capitalism, bourgeois order, colonialism, patriarchy, heterosexism, fascism and so on – to keep up its brutal practices. By this I mean that most of our resistances come from a reactionary position, reacting to the events created by liberal-capitalism. We engage in struggles that have already been lost several times in the past so that we can shout truths from the cross to an absent public. And we ignore that stubbornly repeating these customary practices makes us points of support and vessels of power, a part of the system of pipes through which bourgeois enjoyment circulates.

- We have stopped experimenting with assembling and disassembling different life-forms and economies of enjoyment, away from the lurid semantics of bourgeois pleasure. We do not work towards inventing and building our own fantasies and worlds. We sit tight in the lairs that we've dug for ourselves within the bourgeois world, scavenging leftovers from the libidinal forage they feed their flock with: a concentrated spec(tac)ular mix of submission to authority, (self) humiliation, terror, war, revenge, jealousy, camps, murder, torture and death, packaged in the multi-coloured tin foil of "entertainment", "education", "success" or "progress". At the light of organic wax candles we obsessively scan the news, gorging on the latest disaster, commenting, critiquing, shouting outrage, calling for justice, organising protests or aid missions. It is this placidity that we nowadays call "activism". I have come to the strange conclusion that I am really bored with critique. Wow, what a devastating point for a "radical", isn't it, since what we enjoy most is

sure in the defense of capitalism, because it interferes with the system's full development, its modernization and rationalization.

The actual movement of modern capitalism is not towards fascism, but towards a qualitatively new mode of social domination: the Cybernetic Welfare State … With the advance of the Cybernetic Welfare State, the various previous modes of domination become reduced to a consistent, smoothly running, all-pervading abstract control.

The Movement, since it does not make a radical critique of the *existing* system, is even more incapable of understanding the development of that system in the direction of greater subtlety. And so it happens that while it busies itself with things it *can* understand — super-exploitation, the cop's club — it unknowingly enters into the service of the emerging cybernetic organization of life. Precisely because the Movement's is only a surface critique, its struggles for "participatory democracy," "quality of life," and "the end of alienation" remain within the old world as agitation for its humanized modification. The "vanguard" movement joins with the advance guard of bourgeois society in an unconscious Alliance for Progress for the rationalization of the system."

[from *Critique of the New Left Movement* by *Contradictions*, 1972]

IV.

- What are the effects of the intimate merging of the antibourgeois framework with the academic framework? The post-WWII technique of imposing the academic institutions as the only legitimate site of knowledge production and of antibourgeois political activity was so successful that today the left takes most of its inspiration from the offices, lecture theatres and conference rooms of this State apparatus. And, irrespective of the intellectuals merit of some of those that seek asylum in the university, as a social group academics are bureaucrats, meaning that their main preoccupation

Confining the discussion of capitalism's or fascism's appeal to the field of rational choice, as if the population's love for this regime springs from some objective calculations of personal/communitarian wellbeing, is a liberal ideological technique; and its purpose is to hide where the most intimate governing happens, in the field of pleasure.

- It is in the field of enjoyment that the overlap between liberalism and fascism is most visible and most efficient - this field contains no fundamental divisions but rather some smooth gradations between the liberal left and the liberal right or the progressive bourgeois and the fascist bourgeois. Every bourgeois worthy of the name has a libidinal core built on fascist enjoyments and pleasures.

Side Note [This is an excerpt from a text from the 1970s that inevitably has some shortcomings but also some interesting moments, especially when its "vintage" nature highlights the resilience of left dilemmas:]

"The Movement adopted for itself an appropriate opponent in fascism. This convenient straw man enabled the Left to avoid defining itself positively; it provided a cover for the fact that the Movement failed to embody a radical critique of the system itself — of commodity production, wage labor, hierarchy. The daily misery produced everywhere by capitalism was made to seem normal — if not progressive — in the light of the barbaric excesses paraded before our eyes. Is the revolution ebbing? That new escalation of the war will give it some life. Or police atrocities, a repressive law, a new martyr, scandal in high places… The people will get so pissed off ("radicalized") they'll be ready for *anything* different. In the same way that war is the health of the State, atrocities are the health of a parasitic movement.

… Fascism is an extreme development of capitalism, but it is also a *retrograde* one. It revives and relies upon outmoded institutions which the revolutionary bourgeoisie was originally obliged to attack: myth, family, the Leader, overly crude nationalism and racism … Fascism can at best be only a temporary, stop-gap mea-

critiquing, assiduously looking for the next disaster so that we can indulge in this sado-narcissistic pleasure? But critiquing is now irrelevant: we have all the critiques we need. Critique keeps us attached to the world of the enemy, glued to the window of fantasy through which we watch its exploits, seduced by the governing dispositifs we so carefully survey from behind our twitchy curtains; it keeps us in a libidinal relationship with the bourgeois world, often one where our spite hides desire and admiration. We need to start something else, start demolishing, start building, in all registers of reality. A much more daunting and serious matter, one that will get our hands dirty with the contradictions and compromises of each other's enjoyment; one that can aspire to no purity or resolution, no bird's eye view; and all this without guaranteeing the enjoyment that critique provides.

- The pleasure that we take in these reactionary politics signals our dependence on the recognition of bourgeois authorities: we still place ourselves on a stage for the gaze of the Father, we still enjoy transgressing his prohibitions so as to get a reaction from him, so that he notices us. How many of us would lose their reason to be if these prohibitions were lifted? But the point is not simply to transgress or to critique; the point is not simply to lift the prohibition. The point is to stop enjoying that which the prohibition prohibits, since the purpose of prohibition is just that: to stimulate our desire for the bourgeois law, even if it is the desire to break it. As long as we critique the bourgeois world rather than inventing our own we are still in love with it

II.

- Does love of cricket in the ex-British colonies signify emancipation? Or is it a symptom of how much the subaltern's enjoyment depends on imperial patterns, even when England is systematically defeated at cricket? When the child's conducts depend on the par-

ent's interdiction, approval or, simply, on their presence ("Look, mom/dad!!"), even when the child contests the parents ("Fuck you, mom/dad!") the child's pleasure, including the pleasure of revolting, is still dancing in the circle fenced by the Father's gaze.

- Can any anti-bourgeois force develop alternative fantasies and practices when its gatherings are exclusively prompted by and dedicated to capitalism's events? Can we desire a different order when we act as the moral sentinel of the present one? Are we happy to define our role as being that of witnesses, writing the chronicles of capitalist destruction in a damning tone? Aren't such chronicles a symptom of our continuing trust in the present order, to which we reproach not living up to its self-description? Are we going to continue using the Enlightenment narrative of universalism, freedom, democracy, solidarity, justice or progress as the ethical-political standard against which to judge the departure of Europe from its own ideals?

- How can we take time to experiment with producing other worlds when we act as a perpetually under-resourced and thus doomed to fail first-aid service for bourgeois disasters? What types of enjoyment are we deriving from these forms of humanitarianism, what fake reassurance about our own goodness?

- To the extent that anti-bourgeois struggle focuses on assisting the marginalised and excluded, on improving the life conditions of the groups deprived of rights or of financial resources, the implicit horizon of this struggle remains bourgeois life. Its aim is that of correcting the faults of the system and of bringing the "part of no part" back into the bosom of society: of assisting their integration into the bourgeois order. Antibourgeois work should be about short-circuiting the debt and need-based capitalist economy, rather than about assisting people in entering it. We should start considering the idea that such work could aim for the opposite: encourage all of us to join with the "marginal" and the "excluded" until the bourgeois majority from which they are supposedly cast out becomes irrelevant and undesirable.

- *All* forms of modern governing violently appropriate resources (land, labour, gold, enjoyment etc.) from selected populations, if necessary through genocide; and operate through mass fetishism (for commodities, celebrities, flags, borders, uniforms, State or privately-run mega-shows, supreme Father figures and so on); through fantasies of the Golden Age of the Nation, a paradise of full enjoyment and purity that we can retrieve if only we get rid of the degenerate *other*; through a permanent "state of exception"; and through various forms of camps (work, concentration, extermination).

- In reverse, the Keynesian interventions of the New Deal "public works" type, the expansion of "modernising" public infrastructures, from medical dispensaries to educational institutions, dams, railroads and motorways or the building of a corporate-style welfare State, all associated with the more progressive moments of liberalism, are central elements of fascist governing.

Summary of the differences between Pepsi and Coca [retrieved from a hilariously serious wesbite]:

1.Pepsi uses blue color for branding and Coke uses red.

2.Pepsi is sweeter than coke.

3.The carbonization level is higher in Coke than Pepsi.

4.The branding techniques are used more by Pepsi Company than the Coke.

5. Pepsi: carbonated water, sugar, fructose, corn syrup, caffeine, colourings, citric acid, and other natural flavors. Coca: carbonated water, sugar, caffeine, colourings, phosphoric acid, and other natural flavours.

- The continuity between liberalism-capitalism and fascist-capitalism, however, goes deeper, since despite the pretence of appealing to reason, both appeal to the libidinal field: to desire and enjoyment, to guilt and paranoia, to identification, recognition and narcissistic aggressiveness. The mass appeal of Western capitalism's or fascism's ludicrous promises needs to be understood as a libidinal choice and not as a rational or cost-benefit choice.

- It's not difficult to argue that liberal democracy and fascism are governmental formulations of the same modern fantasy and thus share foundational premises. Of course, calling the liberal-capitalist regime "fascist" in the radical milieux has become a slightly comic cliché mobilised, for example, in the parodies of anarchism that pepper mainstream British TV from a 1980's low-brow comedy like "The Young Ones" to the more intelligent but also more resolutely conservative "That Mitchell and Webb Look". We shouldn't let such liberal caricaturing blind us to what it tries to blind us: the rather plain realisation that liberalism and fascism are two complementary, symbiotic even, formulations of the same bourgeois power regime:

- Racism, eugenics, Arianism and the fantasy of destroying the *other* are not defining elements of fascism but of bourgeois modernity. European modernity creates myths of homogeneous national/natural communities - the "race", the "Nation", the "civilisation" - defined by immutable biology (blood, character, etc.), origins, history, way of life, values or traditions (we all should know by now that the contemporary concepts of "culture" or "ethnicity" are but a re-signification of the modern concept of "race"); and arranges these communities in grandiose hierarchies of value from "primitive" to "civilised". It buffs up these myths with the discourse of science. And then shapes modern governing, first in the colonies and then in the metropolis, around what we today call racism. From the invasion of the Americas and until now, the governing of the European flock's happiness, health and wealth is premised on racialised taxonomies that encourage the extermination of the internal and external *other*.

- Mundane violence, the deployment of the megalomaniac - usually military - spectacle of the Nation, the sanctification of the family and of sex/gender roles or the desire for the messianic Leader are not fascist characteristics either, but remain part of the arsenal of "normal" modern governing.

- Shouldn't anticapitalism make un-enjoyable the forms of enjoyment typical of the most successful supporters of bourgeois society, expose the stink at the core of "good bourgeois life"? Shouldn't it spoil or, better, discard the forms of enjoyment of the well-off and happy, hipster and artsy, crafty, blogging creative classes; of the well-educated and well-travelled bourgeoisie collecting exotic artefacts, Bauhaus furniture and constructionist posters in their chic apartments; of the sophisticated consumers of fair trade, local designers, family restaurants, trendy philosophers, top-shelf pop culture and avant-garde art; of the poster girls and boys of capitalism? If we have no serious grounds for attacking these ego-ideals; if we find that we are ourselves seduced, secretly or not, by theses models of enjoyment and the good life and aspire to emulate them; if we find nothing pernicious in the jouissance and habitus of the successful bourgeoisie; then obviously we have no grounds for attacking capitalism. We are left with attempts to improve and spread it, not replace it.

- What happens to the goals of inventing new life-forms when we cannot survive unless paid, fed, clothed, lodged, appeased and entertained by official institutions and funding organisations, by capitalist wages and petty bourgeois financial practices, by the identities instituted by modern authorities? When we place demands on institutions that, irrespective of the anticapitalist or anticolonial discourses they put forward, are structurally integrated in the colonial and neoliberal dispositifs? Have we really forgot how to survive unless through obeying the contractual obligations of the bourgeois order? We do not know how to extract what we need from this over-productive order unless using its own financial exchange ethics?

- I convinced myself to abandon this irritating habit of trying to "raise awareness", to convince the bourgeois public of the nature of bourgeois reality – the bourgeois subject is defined by a commitment to not knowing anything that might disturb their enjoyment; on top of which, making offerings to the bourgeois is

not a good idea, since it places them in the position of judge, curator, referent and revolutionary agent. I try to forget ”dialogue”, “education”, ”communication” and ”information”, they are the self-congratulating behaviours of bourgeois narcissists; I’d rather focus on tactics that increase our strength, not theirs.

- And could we also forget once and for all the fantasy of a “revolution” that seizes power only in order to redirect capitalist production and subjectivities towards more egalitarian but equally productivist forms of governing? Can we forget these conceptions of a future society founded on ”order”, ”work”, ”progress”, ”family”, “duty” or ”success”? Easier said than done, it seems. Many “activists” still try to reach that mythical “revolutionary condition”, as laid out by the above-mentioned mythical European men and women, usually by ploughing through the customary tactics: holding authorities to task for not keeping their promises; passionately taking part in electoral politics; assistentialism (supplementing or replacing State help and governing with activist help and governing); organising the workers in various capitalist settings and within various capitalist dispositifs that are never themselves seriously challenged; profit-making in co-ops or self-managed enterprises; rehabilitation (enhancing the ”social value” of people, institutions or spaces); summer schools, workshops and conferences; knowledge production, knowledge dissemination or awareness raising; trying to resurrect the liberal-capitalist Lazarus of welfarism; ceremoniously displaying the desiccated liberal-capitalist relic of ”social justice”; protests; or social media campaigns.

- Is it a surprise, then, that the contemporary activist is stuck walking on a rope between unwarranted but enjoyable despair (”all is lost!!!”) and unwarranted but joyless elation (”revolution is imminent!!!”)? This is a sterile, paranoid walk that cannot produce the ruptures, dislocations and innovations we need in order to starve and kill the bourgeois economy of enjoyment. On the contrary, it places the activist in that carceral, fetid but strangely comfortable space between, on one side, the ”duty” to react to an ever-expanding network of liberal-capitalist governing devices and on the other side, the ”duty” to mobilise a Western population that, whenever its binging is interrupted by an economic indigestion, rediscovers the pleasures of fascist stridency.

III.

- The bourgeois governing dispositifs are so confidently creating a permanent state of hysterical panic (“crisis”) in their flock that they can sell impoverishment, surveillance, brutality, warfare and the concentration camp as tools of democracy; or, at least, as instruments for insuring the flock’s comfort, which does the trick. And in times when fascist discourses do not need to hide under the liberal covers of “tolerance” and “democracy”, which is whenever there is a symbolic crisis of capitalism thus these days permanently, the general public’s reactions to antibourgeois acts display the true enjoyment of this ”peace-loving”, ”violence-hating” liberal subject. In 2015, the dominant regime wheeled out yet another World Exhibit - the International Milan Expo - to reassure the members of the bourgeois public that their obedience still guarantees them enjoyment by using the dummy of technology, progress, growth, prosperity and ecology. During the spring of that year, militant groups from Milano organised a symbolic attack on the Expo, more or less the only critique of this flatulent bourgeois do. The reactions from Italian respectable citizens were characteristic: the mayor and groups of well-meaning citizens ”reclaimed” the soiled city by volunteering to wash the streets and clean the anticapitalist graffiti (the same tactic was repeated, with the same success, after the No G20 actions in Hamburg, 2017); while the on-line responses to the event reached hysteria: “Shoot them!” “Bring in the army!” or “Well, I don’t say kill them, but at least shoot them in the legs!”