

relation to the broader social imaginary: "... the micromapping of social and political space through which we perceive, judge, and act in the world ..." (p. 118). In similar fashion, the "war imaginary can be seen as a chameleon skin of the US security dispositif as it is a constantly shifting image meant to perpetuate and maintain US militarism" (p. 118). Service thus becomes a vector to citizenship and the illusive "American Dream." Schrader carefully considers the role privilege plays here, however, by counterpoising sketches of a Mexican, a third-generation Filipino American, and an American whose roots extend back to the Revolutionary War.

Finally, Schrader bookends his study by returning to the personal. He recounts additional portions of his reintegration by way of humanistic learning, specifically, poetry through the Warrior Writers Project and Combat Paper workshop. At stake for him is the need to promote emotional outlets to veterans suffering from the scourge of mental trauma associated with their service. Poetry, for Schrader, helped to "deprogram the hypermasculinity, the dehumanization, and trauma, as it shifted the way in which we looked at our time and experience in the military" (p. 138). The process by which the "militarized mind" is demilitarized, he concedes, is not a quick and easily fix and does not connote a complete demilitarization. "One misconception of this line of thought may be the idea that demilitarization means an absolute void of militarization ... we should look at as a 'step-by-step process where we no longer are controlled by or dependent upon the military'" (p. 141).

Schrader's study is an especially welcome contribution in an American landscape punctuated by integral nationalism, rank xenophobia, and unquestionable patriotism ushered in by right-wing populist forces across the "homeland." It effectively disrupts the dominant ideology surrounding America's warriors. In doing so, it casts new light not only on the reconstitution of veterans into civilian life but also the ways in which that taxing journey can be directed toward a progressive political commitment. This unique study should, undoubtedly, remain a timely work that will offer a useful foundation for future studies.

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***The Marxist Conception of the State: A Contribution to the Differentiation of the Sociological and the Juristic Method***, by Max Adler, Leiden, Brill, 2019, 243 pp., \$139 (hardback), ISBN: 978-90-04-29782-1

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the Austro-Marxist school with which Max Adler was associated made important contributions to philosophy, law, political economy, and the study of nationalism. Politically suppressed during the rise of fascism in the mid-1930s, Austro-Marxism is mainly remembered today for offering an unrealized theoretical middle course between social democracy and Marxism-Leninism. Originally appearing in 1922, in a moment of revolutionary

ferment, this newly-translated work is an intriguing attempt to provide a comprehensive sociological foundation for a Marxist account of politics, democracy, and the state.

Adler elaborates this theory by a meticulous engagement with the arguments made by Hans Kelsen in his little-known work *Sozialismus und Staat, Eine Untersuchung der politischen Theorie des Marxismus*, which appeared two years earlier. Kelsen, the main drafter of the 1920 Austrian Constitution, advanced a legal positivist understanding of the state as a universal “authoritative association” (43) equivalent to a compulsive legal order. His critique of Marxism honed in on a central contradiction: the state would not wither away in a post-revolutionary order but instead persist because any future society still required such a compulsory institution to coordinate its production and distribution.

As a rebuttal of Kelsen’s “juristic approach,” Adler developed an original, if not entirely convincing, reconstruction of a revolutionary socialist theory of the state. At the center of Adler’s self-described “sociological” approach – which he saw as identical to a Marxist one – is the claim that the state is an expression of societal life. The truly distinctive part of Adler’s account was his notion of “sociation” [*Vergesellschaftung*], a transcendental principle undergirding all historical forms of human cooperation and interdependence. As a form of social praxis, this “daily human sociation” (16) took on innumerable specific forms of social, political, and legal consciousness, in accordance with the stages of production. Therefore, unlike Kelsen’s formalism, the state could not be abstracted from society and its history.

For Adler, the state is “only a historical form of manifestation of societal life itself ... a determinant form of human sociation that occurs in the course of historical development” and is consciously recognized as such by sociated individuals (32). However, what distinguishes the Marxist conception is its ability to grasp that the state’s claim to represent the general will “reflects only a part of the society, who will through it articulate its own will and interests in the name of the whole” (36). Thus, in response to Kelsen’s conception of the state as a juridical abstraction, Adler insisted on the specificity of the *bourgeois* state as a socially and historically situated form of class domination. In this, he pointed to Lenin’s major theoretical contribution of returning the focus to the class character of the state, which, even in its democratic form, remained a machine of subjugation.

Lacking a true conception of community, modern liberalism necessarily conceived of the bourgeois state as an authoritative organization tasked with holding together otherwise atomized individuals. In this condition, the democratic parliamentary majority was the “will to power of the commanding majority classes, which, by means of this authority, subject the minority to its laws and compels their observation” (142). In contrast to the liberal approach, Adler maintained that genuine (social) democracy meant a solidaristic society characterized by equality and the freedom of the whole, in which each individual consciously partook in a process of thinking and willing against the background of other willing subjects. A truly democratic form of sociated human existence would be characterized by self-determination and the “development of a unified, universal will of the people” (87). Yet this solidarity and self-determination was only possible in a classless society that made possible an equality of life interests and the common recognition of the societal whole. Positioning himself against both Kelsen and contemporary anarchists, Adler suggested that some form of compulsory authority would remain – but that under the conditions of common ownership and production, it would lose its character of political domination and instead be congruent with the mutual recognition of common life interests.

To facilitate this transition, Adler invoked social revolution, understood as a “creative societal *will* based upon transformative theoretical *knowledge*” (112). Although the bourgeois-democratic state made the development of the working class possible, it also circumscribed its development into the sphere of bourgeois legality. In the sociological sense, the revolutionary

character of the proletariat thus lay in its *opposition* to political democracy. Revolutionary means, from struggles within the state to mass demonstrations and general strikes, would be deployed to overthrow the existing social system. The result would be the proletariat replacing the private ownership of the means of production with truly democratic societal ownership, in a “goal-oriented consciousness of the change of society into a new economic order” (114).

It is noteworthy that this work was written in a period where the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat had a real, contemporary actuality. In his defense of this principle, Adler maintained that it was a majoritarian form of political democracy, which assumed a governmental form as a transitional proletarian state engaged in a permanent war against the bourgeoisie. Although the length of this period could not be determined in advance, it was a passing condition insofar as the task was “the deconstruction of class power in itself, even the proletariat’s own, by the transferring of life in the class-state to that of the classless society, in which dominion loses its subjugating character” (113).

However, Adler also saw by then that the Bolshevik regime had become a dictatorship *over* the proletariat by a party of workers’ elites because it had taken place in a society which had not reached a stage of development where the industrial working class had truly become the deciding class in the state. Rejecting the Bolshevik interpretation of revolutionary dictatorship, he instead reserved the notion for a situation where the proletariat *itself*, rather than a vanguard party acting in its name, had become the “deciding class in the state” (108). Despite this “fatal contradiction in Bolshevik theory and praxis” (146), Adler nevertheless remained fairly close to Lenin’s contemporary positions on the tasks of revolutionary transitional government. These included the institutionalization of the proletarian state through the unification of the legislative and executive branches; the replacement of the entrenched bureaucracy with administration by the proletariat; and the communalization of the state by the creation of self-administering bodies (communes, economic councils, guilds).

With this intervention, Adler sought to provide a social scientific and philosophical justification for a revolutionary Marxist theory of the state. However, Adler’s neo-Kantian foundation led him to ground his theory of society and the state in social consciousness or the “transcendental-social experience” (27). As such, despite his emphasis on the sociological-scientific basis of Marxism, both society and socialism were conceived first and foremost in ethical terms, whether those of the solidaristic community, its “homogeneity of life-interests” (152), or the future classless society as imbued with a general will. This is nowhere clearer than in Adler’s explanation of social classes and economic processes, which he called a form of social ideology – but understood as *conscious, mental formulations* based on the experience of a “transcendental-social apperception.” This led him to conclude that “the economy is always an abstraction of a mental element that cannot be separated from its material existence” (61). In other words, here economic conditions were relations between persons, first and foremost products of the mind formulated in judgment. The result is a historical materialism that conceived of economic conditions and processes as emanations of historical forms of social consciousness and thereby remained within an idealist problematic.

This epistemology, along with Adler not having yet fully seen the consequences of the Soviet dictatorship of the proletariat as domination in a new form, remains the most dated parts of the book. Naturally, the latter may be understood as a limit of Adler’s vantage point – indeed, the book was written at a time when the “final capitulation of communism” (146) seemed imminent to him. As history would have it, 12 years after the publication of this work, the revolutionary regime had not only survived but had consolidated into its Stalinist phase, while it was Adler’s Austrian Social Democratic Workers’ Party that succumbed to reactionary forces. Adler himself died in 1937. In our time, removed from those conflicts but facing equally daunting prospects, this work’s reappearance promises to contribute to recent debates about

critical theories of the state and potential roads to socialism. In doing so, it will bring more attention to this unfairly neglected strand of Marxist thought.

## Notes on contributor

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**Ecology and Revolution: Herbert Marcuse and the Challenge of a New World System Today**, by Charles Reitz, New York, NY, Routledge, 2019, 194 pp., \$44.95 (softcover), ISBN 978-1-1383-4187-6

Within the last 15 years, there has been a veritable renaissance in scholarship on Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979), a central figure associated with the critical theory of the first generation of the Frankfurt School, not to mention a towering public intellectual who engaged the developments and possibilities of radical transformation in the 1960s and 1970s. Not only are there now international conferences devoted to the themes and ideas associated with Marcuse's work (and sponsored by the International Herbert Marcuse Society), but there are an increasing amount of books, articles, and essays that are creatively engaging Marcuse's ideas for a new millennium, taking stock of the relevance of his theory in an age of aggressive neoliberal capitalist development, devastating ecological destruction, and the internal and external consequences of the US warfare state, to name a few of the most salient facets of our contemporary social life to which a Marcuse can speak.<sup>1</sup> For a theorist who was almost a persona non grata in the 1980s and 1990s in academic circles – seemingly cutting a rather outdated figure next to the “postmodern” dialectical engagements seen in the work of his theoretical cohorts Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, for example – Marcuse has roared back, and is becoming increasingly celebrated for his searing analyses of our always mutating, though ceaselessly exploitative and instrumentalizing, “one-dimensional society,” not to mention his unwavering commitment to radical transformation. With all due respect to Michel

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, the special issue on Marcuse, entitled, “Marcuse in the Twenty-First Century: Radical Politics, Critical Theory, and Revolutionary Praxis,” in *New Political Science*, Sarah Surak and Robert Kirsch, Guest Co-Editors, Vol. 38, no. 4, December 2016. Importantly, we must recognize the tireless work of Douglas Kellner to keep the theoretical and political spirit of Marcuse alive and well, not only in his scholarly work [see, for example, his now classic, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984)], but also in his unflagging editorial work on the six volumes of Marcuse's collected writings (published between 1998–2014).

<sup>2</sup>This is, of course, in reference to Foucault's famous declaration that possibly the twentieth century might be known as “Deleuzian.” See Michel Foucault, “Theatrum Philosophicum,” in Donald F. Bouchard, ed. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 165.

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