

Abstract submitted by Metin Guven

Title:

Do We Need a Theory of State?

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The world is going through an interesting transformation period. The US is losing her leadership position in many areas and China is becoming the largest economy. While the ecological crisis is becoming deeper, the future of liberal capitalism is becoming more uncertain than ever. It seems that the state will play a stronger role in the future as authoritarianism is becoming more common.

Even though social ecology has a new definition of the state and its concept of "the legacy of domination" includes how states emerged in the past, it doesn't explain the differences among these processes in different regions and how they evolved differently later. States emerged in India and China at least one thousand years after they emerged in the Middle East even though the Indus Valley civilization was a more advanced one and there were four-thousand-year-old irrigation projects in China.

Karl Marx developed his theories during the 19th century when most of the current social struggles could be explained by class domination. However, all other types of social domination and the idea of domination over nature became critical to understanding social contradictions in 20th century. Social ecology provided a strong framework to explain how the legacy of domination and the legacy of freedom played their roles throughout history and brought humanity into the current social and ecological crisis. Nevertheless, today we need a deeper understanding of the cultural differences and their roots in social evolution to foresee possibilities ahead in the 21st century. This will be critical, especially to understand how the state will play its role in different countries and how this will shape a new world system. Then we will need to develop our strategies to tackle them accordingly.

CV:

Metin Guven has, since the 1980s, been involved in social ecology groups and other libertarian organizations in Turkey, Australia, New Zealand, and the US. Guven was on the editorial board of the Turkish social ecology journal "Toplumsal Ekoloji", and has also written for newspapers, magazines and other journals.