Between Periodical Studies and Intellectual History: KAPITALISTATE (1973-1983) at the Dawn of Neoliberalism

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Abstract

Launched in 1973, the transnational leftist journal KAPITALISTATE set out to grapple with a growing reconciliation between state power and corporate capitalism, a set of sweeping changes in the global political economy that would eventually come to be called “neoliberalism.” This essay explores KAPITALISTATE’s guiding commitments to the theoretical debate about the state, case studies on American governance, and international collaboration. In the process, it identifies certain methodological tensions between Intellectual History and Periodical Studies. For the intellectual historian, KAPITALISTATE primarily deserves note as a platform for debates in Marxist state theory during the 1970s, an archive providing a synoptic view of problems in political economy preoccupying many left writers at the time. Reading the journal as Periodical Studies demands, however, with an emphasis upon the social materiality of its object of study, requires attention to the granular detail: to the journal’s visual rhetoric, its typography, its advertisements, even its errata. This essay argues that the propensities of Intellectual History and Periodical Studies, while potentially divergent, can clarify meaningful gaps in their respective practices, and that each is required to understand the role that periodicals like KAPITALISTATE served in fostering a left intellectual community during the 1970s.

For left intellectuals in the United States, “1973” rings with infamy. This year marks the beginning of what economic historian Robert Brenner has dubbed the “long downturn,” a secular decline in profit rates among Western economies (4). In the decades after World War II, the United States had enjoyed historic levels of profitability, which had supported Keynesian deficit policies, expansive welfare state programs, and a military-industrial empire. But, as Brenner relates in The Boom and the Bubble, by the mid-1960s, German and Japanese manufacturers caught up to American production techniques; entering a market with dampened wages, these competitors exposed American manufacturers to overinvestment by preventing them from decreasing prices (16-17). “Between 1965 and 1973,” Brenner observes, “the US manufacturing sector experienced a fall in the rate of profit on its capital stock of 43.5 percent” (17), ending “an amazing thirty-five years” (23). As manufacturing profits collapsed, the sprawling War in Vietnam was also creating enormous national deficits, drawing currency reserves abroad by the mil-
1 On two occasions, KAPITALISTATE released double issues: 4/5 and 10/11. As a (near) yearly release, the journal had a seriality less pronounced (or reliable) for readers than quarterly, monthly, or weekly periodicals. Still, those interested in the relationship between seriality and modern periodicals might consult Murphy; Mussell; and, for some historical groundwork, Turner. In some cases, citations from KAPITALISTATE will be abbreviated following this format: K, issue number: page number, as in K1: 13.

1973, in other words, marks the coming of a sweeping set of changes in the global political economy: austerity politics, privatization, “supply-side” reasoning, and eventually the global financial crisis of 2008—the coming, in short, of neoliberalism, whose disastrous first experiments were being overseen by Milton Friedman in Chile, soon after a U.S.-sponsored coup d’état in 1973. Historians, economists, and critical theorists have continued to spill barrels of ink describing this era’s origins and consequences. Giovanni Arrighi’s Long Twentieth Century, for instance, identifies the financialization of the American economy since the 1970s as the characteristic “late” phase of a capitalist epoch. In a pattern he dubs “cycles of accumulation,” Arrighi explains how the nineteenth-century British, the eighteenth-century Dutch, and the sixteenth-century Spanish each experienced a crisis in overaccumulation similar to that facing the United States in the twentieth century, episodes which likewise led these hegemonic powers to abandon commerce for finance, serving as bankers to the world (373). In The Condition of Postmodernity, David Harvey had earlier described the American economy as shifting from Fordism-Keynesianism to “flexible accumulation”; more recently, Harvey has joined a chorus of critical voices decrying neoliberal governance and its disastrous effects around the world, a group ranging from Wendy Brown in Undoing the Demos, to Naomi Klein in The Shock Doctrine, to Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe in their capacious collection, The Road from Mont Pèlerin. All these studies of neoliberalism identify 1973 as a pivotal year in the alliance between corporate capitalism and interventionist states, which has reshaped the global political economy over the last half-century.

Understanding this transformative new relationship between capitalism and the state was also the guiding mandate of KAPITALISTATE, or “Working Papers on the Capitalist State,” a transnational journal launched in 1973. For a decade after its notorious year of founding, this periodical served as a yearly forum for left intellectuals to grapple with a new phase of state capitalism as it emerged in real time. To capture these changing contemporary conditions, while avoiding problems that had befallen prior generations of leftist magazines, KAPITALISTATE took on a uniquely flexible organizational structure. First, as its inaugural issue explains, the journal would have no “explicit and coherent ‘red line’ connecting all the different themes and lines of analysis” from its various contributors; if inspired by a Marxian tradition, the editors would not require “the use of one particular method or the adoption of
of one particular perspective on the capitalist state and state theory” (“An Introduction” 3). This openness to intellectual disagreement and debate enabled the magazine to feature numerous reviews and rebuttals of the group’s own work, while also engaging thinkers such as Jürgen Habermas, Louis Althusser, and Immanuel Wallerstein and the varied theoretical schools they represented. Second, while the journal was focused on developing a Marxist theory of the state, it would by no means dwell only in abstraction; the editors insisted on a need to understand the workings of the state from the inside, and would indeed regularly feature contributors embedded in American state institutions, exploring how concrete changes in local practices of governance—such as the creation of California’s Bay Area Regional Transit system—were manifesting underlying tensions in the nation’s political economy. Finally, and most distinctively, KAPITALISTATE was “not meant to be another journal with a small, more or less permanent editorial board […] and a large number of subscriber-readers” from one nation (“An Introduction” 2). Instead, it would be published by an international network of collaborative leftist collectives, which could record continuities as well as differences in their national experiences of state power. KAPITALISTATE had founding groups in the United States, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Japan, later joined by less stable clusters in Scandinavia, Spain, France, Canada, and the Netherlands. The front cover for later issues reflected this geographic scope by repeating the journal’s subtitle in several languages, as illustrated by Figure 1.

![Figure 1 & 2: Front Cover KAPITALISTATE 4/5 (1976); Rear Cover KAPITALISTATE 1 (1973).](image)

After a “costly technical failure which occurred during the typesetting process in Germany” for volume 3, the Bay Area group took over

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2 The first issue was jointly published in “San Jose (Cal.), Tokyo, Milano, West-Berlin” (K1: Table of Contents). About 1,000 copies were sent to the United States and Germany, and roughly 200 to Japan, Great Britain, Italy, and Scandinavia (Editorial, K2:1).
The quote contains internal quotations from Zukin and di Maggio’s “Introduction” to *Structures of Capital* (18, 20). La Penna argues that the concept of “embeddedness,” drawn from work by Clifford Geertz and Karl Polanyi, can help enrich and complicate the “cultural field” theory that scholars in periodical studies often draw from Pierre Bourdieu by bringing “into sharper focus the type of relationship that intellectuals establish with institutions” (129).

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Keio University. Most major contributors to the journal were likewise academic sociologists or social theorists, such as Manuel Castells, Nicos Poulantzas, Alan Wolfe, and Ralph Miliband. This journal’s effort to critique state capitalism from within its institutional contours created an intellectual tension that recurs throughout the following pages.

This essay examines how *KAPITALISTATE*’s guiding commitments to theoretical dispute, case studies on local American governance, and transnational collaboration shaped its printed run; in three sections, I explore the state debates with which the journal grappled, its most striking studies on urban American life, and finally the materiality of the magazine and its larger periodical network. As I move through these analytic frames, I also take this unusual and largely forgotten Anglo-German journal as an exemplary archive for unpacking certain methodological tensions involved in reconciling two modes of interpretive practice: Intellectual History and Periodical Studies. Reading this left journal for its position in Intellectual History prompts an inductive argument, extracting a guiding narrative, informed by structuring conceptual problems, from its hundreds of aggregate pages. For the intellectual historian, *KAPITALISTATE* primarily deserves note for its synoptic and critical relationship to debates in Marxist state theory during the 1970s. Yet reading the journal as Periodical Studies demands, with an emphasis upon its social materiality, instead requires attention to surface and detail, to the journal’s visual rhetoric, its typography, its advertisements, even its errata. This essay argues that the methodological propensities of Intellectual History and Periodical Studies, while potentially divergent, can reinforce one another’s interpretive practices, and that each are required to understand the role that periodicals like *KAPITALISTATE* served in fostering a left intellectual community in the 1970s. By moving from abstract / theoretical to material / practical concerns, this essay examines the contributions one journal made to understanding corporate capitalism in the United States, while also exploring the broader interpretive challenges posed by this kind of archive, emphasizing how Periodical Studies and Intellectual History might complement one another by calling attention to the ineluctably rhetorical structure of political life.

### The Great State Debates

As intellectual histories of the radical left have often noted, Karl Marx never offered a full account of the state’s relationship to capitalism. In his earlier writings like *The German Ideology*, Marx affirms that “the State is the form in which the individuals of a ruling class assert their common interests, and in which the whole civil society of an epoch is epitomized” (187). But Marx’s later work, focused on *Das Kapital*, never elaborated these ideas. As one *KAPITALISTATE* contributor remarks, “the only mature example of the way in which Marx approached the
state” was his *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), a historical case study rather than a systematic analysis, and the absence of any such analysis of the modern state and its relationship to class struggle “has had a profoundly deleterious influence on Marxism and on the left in general” (The Bay Area *KAPITALISTATE* Group 108). Whereas some Marxist thinkers sidestepped this issue by focusing on the working class, imperialism, or global revolution, the 1960s saw the undeniable rise of a strong state in the United States and Western Europe, which had to be theorized if this new capitalist era was to be tethered to classical Marxist thought. In this first section, I revisit these state debates of the 1970s and explain how *KAPITALISTATE* engaged a field of conflicting intellectual positions through its collaborative and transnational structure, linking critical schools in the United States, Great Britain, and Germany. As I do so, I also call attention to the methodological presumptions behind my reading practice: how situating one periodical within a longer problematic in Intellectual History requires synthesizing disparate textual materials and competing actors into legible coordinates within a narrative that emphasizes the continuity of concepts and questions at the potential expense of deviations and inconsistencies.

Marxist state theory obtained a framing debate for the 1970s when Nicos Poulantzas reviewed Ralph Miliband’s *The State in Capitalist Society* (1969) in *The New Left Review*, which ranked among the leading radical periodicals of the Anglophone world. These two thinkers soon came to be associated with “instrumentalist” and “structuralist” conceptions of the state, positions at once informing, and constraining, the discourse of emerging leftist groups like *KAPITALISTATE*. In his review of Miliband’s book, Poulantzas explains how the Second and Third Communist Internationals had limited earlier Marxist treatments of the state to mere “economism,” the orthodox belief that “other levels of social reality, including the State, are simple epiphenomena reducible to the economic ‘base’” (68). Poulantzas praises Miliband for pushing beyond this vulgar tradition and exposing the absence of a genuine theory of the state it concealed, and yet Poulantzas rejects the method by which Miliband identifies ties between the state and class domination: “Miliband constantly gives the impression that for him social classes or ‘groups’ are in some way reducible to inter-personal relations,” and he seems to assume “that the State is reducible to inter-personal relations of the members of the diverse ‘groups’ that constitute the State apparatus” (70). Miliband, in short, conceptualizes the state as an instrument whose role in class domination derives from the individual actors in power, the “economic elites” (Miliband 23) and “servants of the State” (119), who by virtue of their class privilege currently control Western democratic states. But this implies that actors with different class values might take power over the state and direct its institutions to different ends. Against this “instrumentalist” viewpoint, Poulantzas insists upon treating the ties between “social classes and the State as

4 Antonio Gramsci and his analysis of hegemony represent, as usual, something of an exception, but his work was only beginning to gain recognition by Anglophone scholars during these years.

5 By associating this narrative need with intellectual history, I do not mean to make a claim upon intellectual history as a distinct professional subfield with its own ongoing methodological debates, but rather to echo Hayden White’s broader point in *Metahistory* that writing history necessarily means offering “a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse,” defined by a structural arrangement of some materials and by the exclusion of others (2).
objective structures” rather than personal relationships, as a set of material institutions whose singular and determinate function lies in preserving bourgeois property and class domination (70; emphasis in original). He identifies the state as being a constitutively “repressive apparatus” fused to several “ideological apparatuses” (77), a distinction that would later be made famous by Louis Althusser’s essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” published in French the following year and then translated as part of Lenin and Philosophy in 1971. For Poulantzas, as for Althusser, the state was defined by its repressive and ideological roles in reproducing the social relations of production—that is, in reproducing class domination.

The instrumentalist / structuralist debate represented by figures like Miliband and Poulantzas pushed Marxist theory beyond a vulgar economism, but, as commentators were already noting by the late 1970s, it also created “an illusory polarity between the approaches of these two authors” (Holloway and Picciotto, “Introduction” 3). KAPITALISTATE exemplifies why critics must employ a dialectical reading practice to navigate such influential illusions. Although the journal continually engaged in these contemporary debates about state theory—and must be situated in this intellectual history—it never settled upon one position nor fully accepted the instrumentalist / structuralist binary. Because of its transnational and multilingual editorship, the magazine’s early issues were notably informed not only by position-papers appearing in Anglophone periodicals like the New Left Review, but also by German social scientists taking up their own Staatsableitungsdébatte, or “state derivation debate,” at this time. After the so-called “economic miracle” of the 1950s and 1960s, leftist thinkers in West Germany turned their attention from working-class revolt to a new theory of the state; whereas Miliband and Poulantzas each sought to define the political as a sphere with some relative autonomy from the economy, these German thinkers, such as Rudolf Wolfgang Müller, Christel Neusüß, and Joachim Hirsch, set about “deriving” the bourgeois state directly from Marx’s analysis of the commodity form in Das Kapital.6 These divergent Anglo and German schools—some of the latter not yet available in English—are cited regularly in KAPITALISTATE, and several essays attempt to synthesize from this growing network of publications a grounding framework for Marxist state theory. In their piece, “Modes of Class Struggle and the Capitalist State,” for instance, Gøsta Esping-Andersen, Roger Friedland, and Erik Olin Wright offer a balanced response to competing theoretical models. Although the “internal structures of the state permit it to pursue the interests of capital as a whole,” they propose, individual agencies and institutions act “with a degree of ‘relative autonomy’ from direct class domination,” which insures “the legitimacy of [state] intervention” into the economy for the public, while also allowing meaningful class struggle to take place over the content of state policy (190; emphasis in original).

6 See the essays collected in Holloway and Picciotto, State and Capital.
Hegel writes that "state power is the simple substance […] in which individuals find their essential nature expressed, and where their separate individuality is merely a consciousness of their universality" (301; emphasis in original).

As Chris O'Kane shows, this methodological tension from the 1970s reappeared in the wake of the 2008 financial collapse. O'Kane notes that Chris Harman proffered a "Classical Marxist" view of the state in Zombie Capitalism: Global Crisis and the Relevance of Marx, where he does not consider the State structurally but merely as an instrument for class domination, with only "a limited degree of freedom as to how it enforces the needs of national capital accumulation" (Harman 155; qtd. in O'Kane n. pag.). For O'Kane, the reductive view of global neoliberalism offered by this approach illustrates "the general theoretical paucity of state theory in much of the Marxian tradition, where the State is often treated as a formless instrument or a supra individual form that merely reflects a given characterization of the dynamic of valorization." O'Kane addresses this paucity by returning to John Hollooway, Sol Picciotto, and Louis Althusser, all names circulating throughout KAPITALISTATE in the 1970s.

Rejecting any doctrinaire position, KAPITALISTATE offered a space for learning from competing leftist state theories in the 1970s. Margaret Fay—who received her Ph.D. with a dissertation on Adam Smith's influence upon Marx posthumously from the University of California, Berkeley after her sudden death in 1979—summarized this debate's extremes in a pair of review essays (Fay, Hengstenberg, and Stuckey 129). At one end, she proposed, lay Hegel, Marx's great philosophical forebear. In "Hegel and the State," Fay and her collaborators explain how Hegel theorized "the state as inherently rational and […] necessary for the realization of universality, freedom, and rationality both on the planes of social totality and individual consciousness" (Boulder Colorado KAPITALISTATE Group and Fay 168), the vehicle through which his idea of the good (and of God) would be actualized.

At the opposing end lay the West German Staatsableitung thinkers, who saw the state as strictly determined by its role in class domination; examining a volume of their papers, Fay notes how this group "refuses to take the political as an 'autonomous and specific object of science' and rejects the invention of new concepts such as 'hegemony,'" viewing "the separation between the political and the economic" as only "a fiction of bourgeois science" (134). In mapping these opposed positions, and circumscribing some space in between, Fay's work clarifies a governing methodological tension within the state debates of the 1970s: whether to reduce this problem to one determining variable (class domination) or allow for differentiation and conflict (and so potentially resistance within the state). This tension, as scholars familiar with the internecine debates of the American Left during the 1930s or 1960s will know well, has recurred among generations of Marxist intellectuals struggling to reconcile the diagnostic power of Marx's writings against the urge to qualify and complicate his work.

KAPITALISTATE's catholic editorial policy also allowed the periodical to dialogue with liberal intellectuals, who had likewise come to see state power as an urgent question in the 1970s and begun to form U.S.-German academic ties. As Esping-Andersen, Friedland, and Wright note in "Modes of Class Struggle," liberal social science had traditionally approached the state "as a pluralist, aggregating mechanism in which agencies, programs and legislation are substantive responses to the demands and interests of competing groups" (187). Postwar liberals like Jürgen Habermas, however, were now arguing that the "capitalist state is caught between the twin imperatives of accumulation and legitimation" (Bay Area KAPITALISTATE Group 111), a concern Habermas expressed in his 1973 study Legitimationsprobleme im Spätkapitalismus, "the legitimation problem in late capitalism," shortened in 1975 to the more palatable English title Legitimation Crisis. In a long review essay, KAPITALISTATE writers link Habermas's ideas to Alan Wolfe's The Limits of Legitimacy (1977), a work that draws upon Marx and Gramsci to reexamine the history of liberal democracy. Refusing instrumental-
ism and structuralism alike, Wolfe emphasizes a fundamentally political tension between liberalism’s protection of the marketplace and democracy’s urge for egalitarian recognition, a tension later echoed by so-called “post-Marxist” thinkers like Chantal Mouffe (Bay Area Kapitalistate Group 116). \(^9\) Here, then, lies a familiar problem for the intellectual historian: although one might aspire to relate a tidy linear narrative, focused upon one conceptual domain like “Marxist state theory in the 1970s,” its contours cannot be neatly circumscribed. As storing-houses for textual materials, periodicals crystallize in their very form the inevitably contested field of intellectual exchange within any given historical conjuncture—not only the divided rhetoric of Marxian theory, but its relationship to other political rhetorics and their values. Whatever coherence exists in a critical narrative about Marxist state debates of the 1970s, including the one I traced above, necessarily comes at a cost of trimming away dissent and difference in how other actors struggled over these questions at the same moment.

Wolfe’s later career as a centrist American liberal provides a useful illustration of this principle, and the difficulty of tying a periodical like KAPITALISTATE to one linear narrative or intellectual community. Although identified as a member of the journal’s Bay Area group through the 1970s, Wolfe eventually began contributing to The New Republic, The Washington Post, and Harper’s, and publishing books on moral freedom and political evil. He now serves as Professor of Political Science at Boston College, where he “has twice conducted programs under the auspices of the U.S. State Department that bring Muslim scholars to the United States to learn about separation of church and state.” KAPITALISTATE may have been broadly committed to grappling with Marxist state theory, in other words, yet behind these abstract engagements lay individuals with concrete—and changing—relationships to state power. As noted, many American contributors to KAPITALISTATE were sociologists at public universities, including Erik Olin Wright at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Pat Ashton at Michigan State, Mike Brown at CUNY Queens, and Martin Murray at SUNY Binghamton. Even a cosmopolitan contributor like Immanuel Wallerstein, who began publishing his landmark Modern World-System in 1974 while teaching at McGill, exemplifies how the intellectuals drawn to KAPITALISTATE were linked not simply by theoretical debates but by their lived experience with state institutions. It is to the credit of the journal’s editors, then, that they engaged with “state capitalism” not only as an abstract intellectual problem, but also through case studies emphasizing the local, practical realities of this new era.

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\(^9\) See Mouffe for her take on the “two different traditions” of liberalism and democracy (2).
From Theory to Praxis: Wild Cities and Regional Governance in the United States

In a piece entitled “The Study of Studies: A Marxist View of Research Conducted by the State,” the KAPITALISTATE collective from Washington, D.C., took on a collaborative and reflexive project: to examine quantitative research practices within the government agencies that make up their day jobs. Due to its increased intervention in the economy, they propose, “the state has begun to study itself,” as agencies seek to evaluate their internal efficiency and their relationship to the economy at large through “the widespread use of government research” (Capitol KAPITALISTATE Collective 164). Unlike other American clusters, such as the Bay Area group, which was deeply embedded in local academic institutions, the D.C. group was rooted in federal and international agencies scattered throughout the Beltway area, and their case studies reflect this expansive network: from the Army Corps of Engineers evaluating flood responses, to the World Health Organization examining child health services in Algeria, to the short-lived Office of Economic Opportunity’s pilot program in building neighborhood centers. As the group’s eleven members admit, “no simple theory can account for the variety of these experiences” (163). Offering some generalized conclusions, they note how state research can serve an ideological function, allowing elected officials to temper “angry unemployed workers or family farmers or welfare recipients with promises that their grievances will be studied” (190); echoing the notion introduced by the journal’s theoretical contributors that state agencies might possess a “relative autonomy,” the group also helpfully differentiates between “the endogenous interests of an agency, which relate to conflicts within the state apparatus, and its exogenous interests, which derive from its relation to the capitalist mode of production,” internal and external pressures that allow for competing class interests to play out within any given agency (165; emphasis in original). Beneath all this, however, this “Study of Studies” also offers an instructive glimpse at the lived experience of these left intellectuals: their bills paid by various agencies of state power, the writers concede that this project “raised a difficult question for us. How can professionals who are so deeply involved in this process develop both an oppositional analysis, ‘after hours’ as it were, and an oppositional practice?” (163).

Moving one magnitude closer towards KAPITALISTATE than the more abstract debates surveyed above, this section focuses upon two major practical concerns explored repeatedly in the journal: the declining American city and the concomitant rise of regional governance. I focus on these examples because, as I have noted, the journal’s American clusters, especially the D.C. and Bay Area Groups, were deeply embedded in local institutions, and this embeddedness produced fascinating takes on a rapidly changing urban American environment in the 1970s.
As sociologist Manuel Castells explains in his *KAPITALISTATE* essay “The Wild City,” discourse about an “urban crisis” in the United States shifted dramatically from the 1960s to the early 1970s. During the 1960s, the phrase “urban crisis” had chiefly been invoked to index the twin aims of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Great Society programs, combating poverty and racial discrimination, an effort sustained by the last years of productivity in American manufacturing (Castells, “Wild City” 3). But as the economy sank into recession in the 1970s, talk of an “urban crisis” began to signal a broader dissolution of basic public services, such as education, healthcare, and housing, evoking concern about a “fiscal crisis” spreading among American cities (3). One of the most iconic images from this era was of course the 1975 *New York Daily News* headline “Ford to City: Drop Dead,” a phrase misattributed to the president yet nonetheless capturing the near-bankruptcy of an iconic American city and the new austerity being instituted at the federal level. New York’s blight, argues Castells, symptomatizes a far broader “abandonment and physical destruction of large sectors of the [nation’s] central cities,” driven by collapsing profit rates, rising unemployment, and other symptoms of de-industrialization. Landlords in New York, he notes, had finally turned to arson to try and reclaim value from their property through insurance claims: among the “12,300 fires in South Bronx in 1974” alone, “more than one-third proved intentional” (“Wild City” 19).

By 1970, these “wild” American cities were also widely recognized as powder-barrels for racial conflict. Back in 1966, Abraham Ribicoff and the Senate Committee on Government Organization had opened up hearings on “the crisis in American cities,” which featured testimony from members of Los Angeles’s Watts Writers Workshop, a predominantly African American group formed after the riots of 1965. This gesture towards dialogue and reform, however, was short-lived. Despite similar conflagrations erupting in Harlem in 1964, and throughout the “hot summer of 1967,” notes Castells, officials in the Johnson administration kept denying any structural problems in American cities (“Wild City” 2). Furthermore, Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s study *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, often called “The Moynihan Report,” infamously blamed Black poverty and urban violence upon a lack of reliable father figures among African American families, which Moynihan saw as reinforcing a pathological culture of Black male criminality. Richard Child Hill, another *KAPITALISTATE* contributor, noted that, for better or worse, Black leadership in the United States was by the late 1960s increasingly centered (and isolated) in urban communities: a “massive migration of blacks to central cities over the past three decades has shifted the locus of black liberation struggles from regional and national civil rights strategies to political mobilization in the arena of central city government,” with groups like the Black Panthers rebuilding racial community in post-industrial cities like Oakland (40).
Yet this political reorganization threatened to cut off these Black communities from larger networks of power. In the near future, Hill prophesies, growing class inequality, racial unrest, and gentrification might lead to the rise of “Pariah Cities,” spaces of “geographical and political apartheid—a reservation for the economically disenfranchised labor force in a monopoly capitalist society” (42). Today, Detroit seems to be a child of this prophecy.

In his book-length study of these issues, The Urban Question, Castells offered a similarly prescient warning. His words, likely intended to be a caustic hypothetical, now capture in disturbing detail how cities like Atlanta and Chicago would transform over the next half century:

The suburbs will remain fragmented and isolated, the single-family homes closed off, the families keeping to themselves, the shopping centres [sic] more expensive, the highways less well-maintained but people forced to drive further to reach jobs and to obtain services, the central districts still crowded during the office hours but deserted and curfewed after 5 p.m., the city services increasingly crumbling, the public facilities less and less public, the surplus population more and more visible, the drug culture and individual violence necessarily expanding [...] urban movements repressed and discouraged and the urban planners eventually attending more international conferences in the outer, safer world. (426-27)

Along with David Harvey, who narrated his shift from liberal planning to Marxist geography in 1973’s Social Justice and the City, Castells helped to infuse “Urban Studies” and its related sociological fields with methods from the Marxian tradition. For such thinkers, an “advanced capitalist city in the United States is a more or less integrated space economy, a locus for surplus disposal and exploitation, and a mechanism for economic expansion through market penetration” (Hill 33). Cities organize labor exploitation, enabling collective production and consumption, and even progressive urban reform can serve to reinforce these structural relations. President Harry S. Truman’s 1949 Housing Act, for instance, was hailed as a major piece of reformist legislation, promising to secure “the general welfare and security of the Nation and the health and living standards of its people” by addressing “the serious housing shortage,” renovating “slums and blighted areas,” and contributing to “the redevelopment of communities” (U.S. Congress 413). As the Housing Act was “carried out in cities like Boston, Newark, Baltimore, and Los Angeles,” however, Castells notes that it did not create public housing but rather “aimed at attracting commercial and corporate interests,” creating “business districts” through government subsidized takeovers of large swaths of urban property (“Wild City” 10). This corporate control over American cities, facilitated by the federal government, exemplifies at a practical level the reconciliation between capitalism and the state that preoccupied KAPITALISTATE contributors, their writings on the “Wild City” and “Pariah City” capturing how problems in state theory reflect material changes in everyday American life.
In “Corporate Regionalism in the United States,” Dan Feshbach and Les Shipnuck identify another force reconciling state power and corporate capitalism—regional planning authorities—that had grown concomitant with the decline of American cities. In order “to receive funds under the Highway Act of 1962,” President John F. Kennedy had made a decisive first step towards reorganizing the geography of American governance when he “required that metropolitan areas undertake regional transportation planning,” creating oversight for the distribution of funds for public services (Feshbach and Shipnuck 16). Then, in 1969, President Richard Nixon turned this logic into a guiding model for reshaping the federal government at large: his administration “quietly divided the fifty states into ten regions,” establishing “home cities,’ such as San Francisco, Denver, and Dallas,” which were to serve as regional offices for branches of every federal department concerned with public services, including Commerce, Labor, Health-Education Welfare, Housing and Urban Development, and Agriculture (16). Building this “highly centralized metropolitan regional government,” of course, required dismantling smaller, local agencies of governance (15). Replacing “fractionalized local government” with more efficient regional planning, emphasize Feshbach and Shipnuck, can be an entirely rational choice; in practice, however, these regional planning units allowed “America’s monopoly corporations […] to consolidate their power and undercut their growing grass roots opposition as well as ‘parochial small business’” (15).

California’s “Bay Area Council” (BAC) illustrates this ambivalent dynamic. Bay Area citizens—living in cities like San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley—sought to address shared concerns, such as pollution and traffic, which arise from urban growth. These problems, affirm Feshbach and Shipnuck, “can only be solved regionally” (23). From the outset, however, the Bay Area Council removed power from local citizens and redirected it to a set of powerful corporations. Founded in 1945 as a non-profit organization, the BAC was financed and staffed by six titanic firms: “Bank of America, American Trust, Standard Oil of California, Pacific Gas and Electric, U.S. Steel, and Bechtel Corporation” (Feshbach and Shipnuck 19). The 1957 campaign for Bay Area Rapid Transit, or BART, was directed not by the free market or by a shared communal interest in public transit, but by this small set of corporations, put in a privileged position through emphasis on regional governance. The firms that built BART, note Feshbach and Shipnuck, such as “Kaiser, Bechtel, Westinghouse, and Parsons Brinckerhoff—got millions of dollars in profitable contracts,” and “while all three big San Francisco banks built giant new corporate headquarters and office buildings adjacent to BART’s financial district terminals,” the post-industrial “ghettos of Oakland” were left to decay (20).

Regional planning, as these KAPITALISTATE writers repeatedly insist, must not be mistaken for the villain in the story of American urban growth—a point reinforced by more recent scholarship.\(^{12}\) An

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\(^{12}\) Powell notes the “progressive (if not radical) political stance” that characterized early urban activists like Lewis Mumford, who, envisioning “a transdisciplinary ethic that linked cultural criticism to material social change,” helped establish the Regional Planning Association of America (23). For other recent progressive efforts, respectively defending the merits of regional planning for urban development and ecological thinking, see Nelson and Lang; and Forman.
ecological effort like “Save the Bay” identifies real collective action problems that stretch beyond and across municipal purviews, and establishing the “Bay Area” as an entity proved “instrumental in the formation and operation of regional transportation agencies, an air pollution control district, and a bayshore planning commission” (Feshbach and Shipnuck 19). But the partnership between American state government and corporate power enabled by this regionalism did, in the process, diminish the ability of citizens to oversee their urban futures. If neoliberalism has come to signify a deep fusion of state and corporation, KAPITALISTATE’s case studies reveal how citizens facing collective action dilemmas in metropolitan areas, and feeling an understandable desire for organizational management, might have supported such an alliance—at least in the short term. Yet eventually, these citizens discover that their access to local forms of political power has been foreclosed: “the ideal” local government under state capitalism, note Feshbach and Shipnuck, has “an elected council, with no power of taxation or managing anything, but full power to get together and complain” (17). Like the promise of studies on homelessness, town halls and neighborhood councils in a neoliberal America offer a hollow shell for sounding out impotent protest, a channel made to circumvent rather than facilitate meaningful structural change.

Magazines, Materiality, and the Intellectual Marketplace

This essay has moved from theoretical concerns to practical case studies, examining how KAPITALISTATE responded to a growing reconciliation between corporations and state power in the 1970s. I have largely proceeded by citing individual articles, treating the journal as a series of argumentative claims. Scholars in Periodical Studies, however, have insisted upon the need to grapple with the materiality of magazines, with what George Bornstein called a periodical’s “bibliographic code,” the semantic meanings produced by editorship and funding, by page layout and type font (30). I have already noted how KAPITALISTATE featured many editors and contributors employed in the American academy; the Bay Area Group, for instance, had strong ties to the Sociology Departments at UC Berkeley, Davis, and Santa Cruz. Yet this section delves still deeper into the materiality of this magazine, in ways complicating the intellectual territory mapped so far. Across its decade of production, for instance, the journal always appeared with an almost aggressively banal design. Type fonts are uniformly roman, with sections and headings set off only by bolding or small caps. Layout and spacing choices are likewise austere, with essays appearing in clunky short paragraphs or as two left-aligned columns with ragged right ends, framed, in either case, by little white space. KAPITALISTATE, in short, seemed to reject any elegance in design—and yet this should by no means be mistaken for a “neutral” visual rhetoric. As Davis Jury explains, a “rhe-
torical approach to typography” must insist that “all design has social, moral, and political dimensions, that there is no sphere of ‘pure’ information” (77). Typography establishes and expresses the temperament of the text, and this insight—that one cannot divorce the substance of an argument from its style—offers a potential intersection between the materialist commitments of periodical studies and the conceptual problems that drive the intellectual historian. For, as William James once affirmed, the “history of philosophy is to a great extent that of a certain clash of human temperaments […] and [a thinker’s] temperament really gives him a stronger bias than any of his more strictly objective premises” (James, Pragmatism 11; qtd. in Anderson 115). Marxism, in its own discourse, represents an impartial, critical philosophy rooted in historical materialism; readers of Das Kapital can hardly fail to observe that Marx’s critique of political economy does not rest upon emotional oratory, moral appeals, or claims to shared values, but rather his rigorous archival work and analysis of the social relations of production. With its typographic austerity, KAPITALISTATE likewise assumes an aesthetic that rejects any ornamental style or dramatic framing, expressing through visual design a commitment to theoretical rigor and argumentative consistency wholly in Marx’s spirit.

Identifying this aesthetic stance, however, calls attention to a striking gap between the main body of text in KAPITALISTATE and its accompanying advertisements. Starkly juxtaposed against the magazine’s austere articles, an issue of KAPITALISTATE might feature ads for periodicals like Kriminalsoziologische Bibliographie, the Berkeley Jour-

15 Robert Bringhurst echoes this sentiment in his seminal guidebook to print-making, The Elements of Typographic Style: “Choose a typeface or a group of faces that will honor and elucidate the character of the text” (22).

16 Amanda Anderson notes how pragmatists like James and Richard Rorty “are accused of being, among other things, smug, complacent, cynical, blithe, and dismissive” (116).

17 Essays were always printed in English, yet ads in early issues were German in the main, a curious asymmetry between the magazine’s early sites of production and reception. I have noted above how Volume 3 marks a transition in the location of printing, from Berlin to the Bay Area, and that this likely accounts for a shift in advertisers.
nal of Sociology, and Critique, all featuring idiosyncratic font choices and eye-catching layouts, which collectively express, as James might put it, the divergent philosophical temperaments of these magazines: stern, gothic blackletter script for a new periodical studying criminal justice in Germany; psychedelic and rounded letters for a campus journal indelibly tied to the counter-culture of the 1960s; futuristic italics with sharp terminals for a new journal of Soviet Studies. Failing to feature these ads in a discussion of the intellectual field within which KAPITALISTATE operated would constitute something like a cardinal sin for Periodical Studies. As Sean Latham and Robert Scholes argue in “The Rise of Periodical Studies,” the removal of ads from magazine archives by librarians, and their subsequent scholarly neglect, has been perhaps the field’s single great obstacle, one reinforcing “a distinctly modern bias against the commercial aspects of aesthetic production” that risks distorting these magazines into mere containers for autonomous texts and ideas (521). Although Latham and Scholes have literary magazines in mind, the same tension applies to political periodicals like KAPITALISTATE. For as much as the journal’s aesthetic broadcasts its intellectual autonomy, the surrounding ads reveal it to be necessarily situated within commercial modernity, within a marketplace in which periodicals held not only collaborative but also competitive relationships.
Adapting Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of a “field of cultural production,” which names the space within which writers compete for distinction at a given historical juncture, we might conceptualize the complimentary and contested intellectual traditions manifest by a network of periodicals as a “field of intellectual production,” within which individual political journals had to position themselves by commercial self-promotion and visual rhetoric as well as by the argumentative rigor of their essays. As Figure 7 illustrates, KAPITALISTATE promoted an “advertisement exchange program” with The Guardian, a leftist journal in New York City that had shifted from supporting Henry Wallace’s Progressive Party in 1948 towards an independent radicalism during the years of the New Left. Many of the journals advertised in KAPITALISTATE, such as Crime and Social Justice and Latin American Perspectives, carry such reciprocal ads, suggesting that exchange programs were regularly employed by underfunded leftist magazines to help build a mutual readership. And yet these collaborative relationships could only stretch so far: these journals were also necessarily competing over the time and attention of a finite number of left intellectual readers, and indeed often represent competing theoretical traditions.

KAPITALISTATE, for instance, features several ads for Social Text; launched at Duke University in 1979, its inaugural issue contains essays by Frederic Jameson, Edward Said, and Stanley Aronowitz, who all stepped beyond classical Marxism to pursue leftist Cultural Studies, often mixed with an increasingly modish post-structuralism (“Ad for Social Text” 224).
Intellectual History and Periodical Studies can seem like fields with competing interests: if the intellectual historian’s urge to fashion a developmental narrative risks eliding difference and dissent, Periodical Studies and its archival relish for granular details can too easily slip into a narcissism of anecdotes, lacking a larger narrative to give them greater meaning. In the last analysis, however, these interpretive impulses are not antithetical but complimentary means of understanding one common lesson: the ineluctably rhetorical structure of all political life. Only working at the intersection of these two fields, so to speak, can we fully capture the full breadth of rhetorical choices that positioned *KAPITALISTATE* within its field of intellectual production. Consider, as one final example, the small errors in alignment displayed in Figures 8 and 9. Scholars in Periodical Studies, tuned to Bornstein’s “bibliographic code,” can hardly help noting the irony when, a few dozen pages after one of these errors, *KAPITALISTATE* features an advertisement for the leftist type-setting company that produced this issue (Figure 10). For a historian focused on Marxism’s state debates in the 1970s, these typographic errata can be of little interest. Yet, by drawing these fields together, this essay has modeled a rhetorical practice; it reconciles two impulses that can express the import of such slips. For these faults precisely mar the typographic austerity *KAPITALISTATE* studiously attempted to maintain, staking its position in the intellectual marketplace, as I have shown, upon a clinical analytical rigor. These errata, in short, expose the inevitably aesthetic engagement that all readers have with their political periodicals, and the political semantics at work behind “merely” aesthetic choices about visual design. Periodicals, in sum, demand a rhetorical reading practice at once strong and weak, inductive and deductive, constantly aware of the aesthetic organization of politics and the politics of aesthetics.

Figure 10: “What’s Your Line Graphics” Ad (*KAPITALISTATE* 4/5: 65).
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