

# BOOK REVIEWS

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## Falling in Love Again

*The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg, Volume III. Political Writings 1. On Revolution 1897-1905.*

Edited by Peter Hudis, Axel Fair-Schulz, and William A Pelz (Verso, 2019), £70/€80

John Molyneux

It was impossible to read even a few pages of this marvellous book without falling in love with the magnificent Rosa Luxemburg all over again. It is a collection of Luxemburg's journalism mainly devoted to reports from, and analyses of, the revolution in Russia (and Poland) in 1905.

She is the most superb writer who stands in the annals of revolutionary journalism alongside Marat, Trotsky, and Marx himself. What makes her writing so wonderful is not just its stylistic brilliance—though her style is brilliant—but the extraordinary spirit,

simultaneously deeply humanitarian and irreconcilably revolutionary, that suffuses every line. What shines through, above all, is her profound commitment to, and faith in, the international working class.

Quite often socialist journalism, for reasons that are both understandable and forgivable, has a rather wooden character, either with facts shoehorned into a pre-established, mechanical political schema or a mere narrative of events with the 'correct' political conclusion tacked on at the end. But Luxemburg is the opposite of this. To every 'event' and new development she responds with a personal passion, be it sadness, sympathy, or elation, but the emotion is always fused with clear-headed Marxist analysis of the situation which arises out of her grasp of the dialectics of the class struggle. The best way to demonstrate this is simply by quotation, but we are spoilt for choice and it would be easy to

fill the whole review with quotes. Anyway, here are some excerpts:

### *The Russian Volcano*

A nightmarish feeling is steadily taking possession of Russia's ruling clique, a feeling that one is moving across the crater of a rumbling volcano, that although the pulsating crust has not yet been blown open, this terrible eruption could happen any second now. The rumour that the Tsar is considering fleeing proves resilient. Apparently his yacht lies at anchor ready to sail, its steam engine ticking over, ready to bring the foremost of the accused to safety, if catastrophe should break out. The situation in all centres of the revolution has intensified since yesterday. The strike has become even more general and the bitterness

is boiling ever hotter...

The railroad workers strike has stretched out beyond the European rail network to take in the large Asian lines. Employees on the Trans-Baikal Railroad and on the Central Asian Railroad have joined their European brothers' strike movement! Proof indeed of the all-encompassing manner in which the idea of revolutionary struggle has taken hold of the masses. [p.242]

*The New Constitutional Manifesto of Nicholas the Last*

From the tsarist empire, the telegraph brings news that yesterday the tsar signed a manifesto offering the prospect of a new constitution.... According to assurances by correspondents working for the privately owned bourgeois press... the population of the tsarist empire broke out into loud rejoicing and shed bright tears of joy in response to these magnanimous promises made by the supposedly beloved Father of his People to his 'loyal subjects' (that phrase, 'loyal subjects' was actually used in Bloody Nicholas's manifesto!)...

Thus far, what has come

from the blood smeared hands of the absolutist Angel of Death [Nicholas II] is not freedom but mere promises, not yet any deeds but only words. There are no grounds at hand for rejoicing or for trumpeting fanfares of victory. In all previous revolutions, in fact, the road from the liberal words to liberal deeds has always passed over mountains of corpses, through further battles and terrible sacrifices—with the final outcome always remaining in doubt. [p.256]

Four main political points stand out from the book as a whole.

The first is simply the level of violence and repression which is a constant feature of all the events and struggles Luxemburg is reporting on. From the original Bloody Sunday on 22 January 1905, when the Tsar's troops opened fire on a peaceful demonstration of St Petersburg workers, led by Father Gapon, killing hundreds, through massacres in Warsaw and Lodz (in Russian-occupied Poland), to regular anti-Jewish pogroms, to countless street battles between workers and the authorities, usually with fatalities, ('Meanwhile in Lodz today the Cossacks killed six', [p.302]) the brutality is relentless. Again and again Rosa reacts with a combination of sadness, dismay, fierce indignation, hard-headed analysis, and indomitable commitment to the revolution.

Her martyrdom in 1919, at the hands of the proto-fascist Freikorps, at the behest of the new Social Democrat government, was the culmination of many years living with imminent threats to her liberty and life.

The second is the way in which, throughout these articles, she develops, quite independently, an analysis of the class dynamics of the revolution which very much parallels those of Lenin and Trotsky. Against the position taken by the Menshevik wing of Russian Social Democracy that the Russian Revolution was to be a rerun of the French Revolution and therefore led by the bourgeois liberals, which also imagined itself to be the 'orthodox Marxist' view, she argues from the very outset that 'contrary to the generally accepted opinion, the Russian revolution of today has the pronounced working-class character of any modern revolution up to now' [p.55]. And although she accepts that the immediate outcome of the revolution *may* only be 'some miserable [bourgeois-democratic] constitutional arrangement' [p.56], which at that stage Lenin thought too, she maintains that 'the main duty of the conscious proletariat must be to maintain a state of perpetual revolution' [p.194] and 'that the struggle of the proletariat must be at the same time a struggle against absolutism and a class struggle against the bourgeoisie' [p.219]. This is a clear anticipation of the theory of permanent revolution later associated with Leon Trotsky, and she even refers to the true task of Social Democracy as being 'to

keep the revolutionary situation going *in permanence*' [p.49].<sup>1</sup>

A third thread running through this book is Luxemburg's assembling, on the basis of daily events in Russia, the building blocks for her 1906 booklet on *The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions*. It is a surprising fact, but a fact nonetheless, that up to this time the concept of mass or general strikes had played very little role in the thinking of Marxists, who tended to dismiss them as an anarchist fantasy. In contrast, Luxemburg immediately grasps the immense significance of the strikes in Russia. Already on 3 March 1905, she writes, 'The recent, and still ongoing, general strike in Russia is in its scope and duration the most powerful example of this form of struggle that has ever been seen' [p.108]. She understands, a major theme of *The Mass Strike*, the dynamic interaction of political and economic demands and struggles. 'Simultaneously this giant movement is played out with every nuance from purely political revolutionary demonstrations to purely economic wage struggles, and yet the basic tone is being set by the political demand for freedom and the demand for the eight hour day, that is to say, the most important socioeconomic demand' [p.108]. It should be stressed how path-breaking were Luxemburg's writings on this issue, and the enduring value they retain.

The fourth major and recurring theme in these articles is the relationship between spontaneity

and organisation/leadership. Luxemburg has often been presented as a 'spontaneist', i.e. as lauding the virtues of a spontaneous working class in opposition to the role of leadership or the party, and is thus counterposed to Lenin who, it is said, downplayed spontaneity in favour of the party. This collection makes it abundantly clear that this is a caricature of her position (as, by the way, it is of Lenin's) and that in fact, while insisting that the party cannot simply order or command the struggle of the class from above, she actually saw a dialectical relation between spontaneity from below and political education and leadership. Mass strikes and revolutions begin spontaneously, but

to win the leading position in the country where the revolution is going on...that is the task of Social Democracy in revolutionary epochs. Not the *beginning* but the *conclusion* is what matters, and to directly affect the outcome of the revolutionary upsurge—that is the only goal that a political party can set for itself. The extent to which this task of the party is successful, however, the extent to which the party *rises to the occasion*—that depends in the greatest degree on how widely Social Democracy has known how to make its influence felt among the masses in the *prerevolutionary* period, the extent to which it

was already successful in putting together a solid central core of politically well-trained worker activists with clear goals. [p.75]<sup>2</sup>

However I must conclude this enthusiastic review on a note of dissent—not with Rosa Luxemburg herself but with the editors. As many others have done before them, they present Luxemburg as representing a fundamentally different strand of Marxism—democratic and libertarian—from the authoritarian Lenin who paved the way for Stalinism. I disagree with this interpretation.<sup>3</sup> Yes, she argued with Lenin about organisation in 1903-04 (as did Trotsky), and was less hands-on than Lenin in party building, leaving it late to break with Social Democracy, but she saw through Kautsky before Lenin did. Yes, she differed from Lenin on the national question (Lenin was right on this) and she made certain criticisms of the Bolsheviks in power—some valid, some not, in my view. But these are the kind of disagreements we should expect among genuine revolutionaries, and the fact is that fundamentally they were united by far more than separated them. That a fortnight before her murder, Rosa was engaged in founding the German Communist Party, as part of the Communist International, testifies to the truth of this judgment.

But of course, this note of dissent in no way detracts from the gratitude we should all feel to these same editors for performing the great service of bringing

Luxemburg's *Collected Works* to an English-speaking audience.

John Molyneux

<sup>1</sup> This is a reference to the same phrase used by Marx in 1850, which when quoted by Trotsky in *Results and Prospects*, led to his theory being known as the Theory of Permanent Revolution.

<sup>2</sup> Luxemburg's formulations here prefigure similar statements by both Lenin and Gramsci.

<sup>3</sup> Obviously the full grounds for this difference in interpretation cannot be set out here in a shortish book review. However, I thought the disagreement should at least be flagged up.

## The International Brigades

Andy Durgan

Review of Giles Tremlett, *The International Brigades. Fascism, Freedom and the Spanish Civil War* (Bloomsbury, 2020), £21/€25

The participation of the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War of 1936–1939 is the stuff of legend. Thirty-two thousand volunteers, from sixty-five different nations, went to Spain to fight for the Popular Front government of the republic against the fascist army of General Franco. Serving as shock troops, they would fight in all the major battles of the war, sustaining terrible losses as a result. An estimated 30 percent of the brigades' volunteers would

lose their lives. Around 50 percent would be wounded.

*Guardian* journalist Giles Tremlett has produced what is, to date, the most exhaustive study available in English of the history of the brigades. Based on a plethora of primary and secondary sources, including material from the brigades' archive in Moscow, Tremlett's book provides a great starting point for anyone wishing to delve into their history.

The brigades were formed after the USSR decided to break with the policy of 'non-Intervention' in Spain; a policy which allowed the fascist powers to arm their allies unhindered, and to send tens of thousands of troops in the case of Italy, while the legitimate government of the republic was starved of military supplies. As part of this change in policy, the Communist International (Comintern) decided in September 1936 to organise volunteers to go and fight.

Both at the time, and retrospectively, the International Brigades have been presented as a potent example of the Popular Front in action: a broad alliance of democratic forces committed solely to the defeat of fascism. In reality, the brigades were always tightly under communist control. Only the communist movement had the logistical apparatus and committed, disciplined membership capable of setting up such an impressive corps of volunteers. Despite the presence of socialists and non-aligned anti-fascists, around 70 percent of the volunteers were members of their

respective communist parties. In some cases this was higher. Among German combatants, up to 90 percent were members of the party. The overwhelming majority of officers, especially of higher rank, and political commissars were also communists. Most significantly, nearly six hundred Soviet citizens with military experience, nearly all of them foreigners who were resident in the USSR, were sent to organise and lead the brigades. Known as the 'Mexicans', they dominated the brigades' general staff. Another two thousand Soviet military advisors, pilots, and tank operatives were sent to help the republican army.

The brigades have also been depicted as having been made up predominantly of artists, writers, and poets. But the vast majority of volunteers were workers. Most were young, in their late twenties. Many were refugees who were now at last offered the chance to fight directly against fascism. For German fighters, 'the way back to Berlin, was through Madrid'. Volunteers of Jewish origin were disproportionately represented in the brigades' ranks; their presence undermining any suggestion that Jews were somehow passive in the face of the rise of fascism.

The brigades were part the Popular Army, formed during the autumn of 1936 with the militarisation of the workers' militias. This was in every sense an orthodox army, with a clear distinction between ranks and strict military discipline. Thus women, who had fought with the militias at the beginning of the

war, were only accepted in the brigades as part of the medical service or as secretaries or translators.

Apart from facing a superiorly armed enemy, the brigades were beset with logistical and technical problems. Training, especially at first, was inadequate. Most volunteers had no military experience beyond, in some cases, street fighting against fascists. Only some of the older volunteers had fought in the First World War. Some of the first volunteers would not fire a rifle until they arrived at the front. Likewise, arms were often poor, even allowing for the arrival of soviet arms during the first months of 1937. For instance, there was not only a shortage of machine guns, but initially those available often worked badly or lacked the correct ammunition. Linguistic problems—the main languages used in the chain of command were French, German, and Russian—often led to breakdowns in communication in the heat of battle. The brigades' task was further complicated by the lack of capable officers, or the appointment of commanders for political reasons.

The political commitment of these foreign volunteers would help them overcome such unfavourable conditions. And despite their never consisting of more than 18,000 troops at any one time, out of an army of over 400,000, the brigades would play an important role in helping the republic survive. In particular, their courage and sacrifice would serve as an example for the whole republican army.

By mid-1937, however, it was becoming increasingly difficult to attract new recruits. News of the terrible casualties deterred many a potential volunteer. There were also increasing problems of discipline and morale among troops who had spent too long at the front. Desertions, although never widespread, began to increase. In the absence of foreign volunteers, the brigades' depleted ranks were made up with Spanish conscripts.

Another factor leading to demoralisation was the growing atmosphere of suspicion and paranoia, with the arrest of volunteers accused of 'sabotage' or of being spies. Although the extent of this persecution has been exaggerated by the brigades' critics, their commander André Marty, as well as the security organisations of the different communist parties and the Soviet secret police (the NKVD), would report regularly on the pernicious behaviour of 'spies, provocateurs, alcoholics, cowards and Trotskyists'. Such persecution of the brigades' enemies, real or otherwise, has to be seen in the context of the rise of Stalinism and the mass purges under way in the USSR.

The republic had not only to face the full might of the fascist powers, but was divided internally between supporters of the Popular Front, who saw the war as one between democracy and fascism, and a radical left which saw this as a revolutionary war against capitalism. The division inside the republican

zone between revolutionaries and the defenders of bourgeois democracy—including, most notably, the communists—would come to a head with street fighting in Barcelona in May 1937. This would result in the consolidation of the communists' influence and the suppression of the revolutionary socialist POUM. Most brigade members had only a vague idea about the nature of the internal struggles in the republican zone, believing in general the propaganda in their own press about the actions of 'Trotskyist fascists'. Unfortunately, Tremlett's book does not help clarify this aspect of the history of the civil war.

During 1938, the USSR's commitment to supporting the republic began to wane as it became increasingly clear that the war was lost and that the democracies were not prepared to form an alliance to oppose fascism. Faced with this unfavourable international situation, the republican government, in a last forlorn attempt to convince these same democracies of the 'national' character of their war against fascism, agreed in September 1938 to withdraw the twelve thousand or so foreign fighters still present in the territory it controlled.

Seven thousand of these combatants had crossed the Ebro river in July 1938, in the republic's last great offensive, and would fight once more with enormous courage, sustaining heavy casualties. Many left Spain during the following

weeks. But around six thousand foreign volunteers, in particular Germans, Italians, and Poles, remained behind, unable to return to their homelands. With the last desperate retreat towards the French border in February 1939, many of them re-enlisted.

During the Second World War, former members of the International Brigades would be at the forefront in organising armed resistance to fascism throughout Europe. Others would perish in the Nazi camps. After the war, some of them would play a prominent role in the new Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe. Many others would be purged by these same regimes—their having been in Spain coming to be seen as a cause for suspicion. In the West, many former brigade members would remain active in the workers' movement; some were also persecuted by their respective governments, as was the case in the USA, where they were among the victims of McCarthyism.

The story of the International Brigades remains one the most dramatic episodes in the struggle against fascism and should serve to inspire all those still fighting the far right throughout the world.

Andy Durgan is author of *The Spanish Civil War* (Palgrave, 2007).

**James Loughlin,**  
*Fascism and  
Constitutional Conflict:  
The British Extreme-  
Right and Ulster in  
the Twentieth Century*  
(Liverpool University Press,  
2019)

Peter Bothwell

The extreme right have been on the rise across the globe, painfully demonstrated by the racist, homophobic, anti-Semitic, and Islamophobic attacks in the past decade which have claimed countless lives. This too has been the case in Ireland, with reported racist crimes now outnumbering sectarian crimes in the North. It is paramount for any opposition and resistance to the extreme right to understand the origins and continuities of its contemporary formations. Loughlin's book provides a detailed historical account of the extreme right in Ulster and, although this is not explicitly stated as a goal, allows us to understand and thus effectively oppose contemporary reincarnations. He is a reader emeritus in history at Ulster University, focusing on the relationship between Britain and Ireland in the modern era, and has been one of only a few authors (Lyndsey Harris, 2012; Martin Durham, 2012) to engage with Ulster and the extreme right in the past decade.

The book argues that while, at separate periods in the twentieth century, 'crisis conditions cultivated a loyalist population characterised by ultra-patriotism, a sense of national threat and a

commitment to British institutions and national symbols... comparable to that of the extreme-right', extreme-right politics and organisations ultimately failed in Ulster. It is argued that this was due to a number of factors: the entrenchment of traditional sectarian political identities; the Protestant political elite already providing an outlet for extreme right-wing views; the extreme right being too focused on race for a society which, until recently, experienced minimal immigration; and Loyalists being too religiously sectarian for extreme-right organisations with large Catholic memberships.

Part I deals with the appearance of fascism in Ulster, with the Ulster Command of Rotha Lintorn-Orman's British Fascists set up in 1926 and dominated by the South Down Protestant gentry. This group pointed to a crisis brought on by threat from Irish Republicans, communist agitation after the 1926 general strike, and a government in Westminster unwilling to do anything about it, which was to pave the way for the 'rebirth' of the British nation (including a unified Ireland) inspired by Mussolini's movement in Italy. However, the Unionist elite's monopolisation of power in Ulster and the purging of Catholics and communists from industry ensured that 'by the time the movement began to organise in Northern Ireland the worst of the region's contemporary crisis was over'.

The book then focuses on the rise of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists in the early 1930s. It shows that Mosley used

an appeal to Carson's Ulster loyalism to justify fascist agitation and violence against the British state. Loughlin also maintains that he had a broader appeal than the British Fascists in Ireland, as he had been a leading critic of British policy during the War of Independence (mostly as it damaged the Empire's reputation). The Ulster offshoot (the Ulster Fascists) ultimately failed to garner support, with Unionists being sceptical of its relationship with O'Duffy's Blueshirt movement and its critique of the sectarian Northern government. The anti-fascist turn in Britain meant that the fascist movement had all but disappeared in Ulster by 1935.

Loughlin's succinct Part II deals with Mosley and his Union Movement's post-war relationship with Ulster. As it began to focus on promoting an extreme-right version of European integration, it became increasingly pro-nationalist in its Ulster politics in order to garner support from the immigrant Irish/Catholic population in Britain, with little success. While this period was a failure for the extreme right, Loughlin argues, their response to the beginning of commonwealth immigration to Britain would shape later right-wing movements.

This theme is continued in Part III, which analyses the relationship between neo-fascism and the Troubles. The start of the conflict coincided with the rise of Enoch Powell's 'rivers of blood' warnings about immigration to Britain. At the same time, Powell saw the 'Marxist' Northern

Ireland Civil Rights Association, and later the IRA, as being part of a wider conspiracy linked with foreign immigration. After his ostracisation from mainstream British politics, Powell would take up the Unionist cause and become MP for South Down in 1974. However, as Loughlin shows, his racial arguments fell on deaf ears in a racially homogeneous society focused on a sectarian-orientated conflict.

The final three chapters of the book deal with the relationship between the neo-fascist National Front (and its surrounding organisations) and Loyalist paramilitaries throughout the conflict. The book argues that, similar to earlier fascism in Ulster, the National Front took the Troubles as the crisis that would herald the rebirth of the British nation; and unlike Mosley they would take the Loyalist cause as their own. Loughlin shows this through supportive extreme-right publications, joint demonstrations between Loyalist groups and the National Front, and even joint violent action, exemplified by the killing of solicitor Rosemary Nelson in 1999 by the Loyalist Volunteer Force with the aid of the violent National Front/British National Party offshoot Combat 18. However, it is argued that this relationship was ultimately a failure. The National Front remained too Catholic for organisations like the UVF, and its ideas surrounding an independent Ulster also did not sit well with Loyalists. The engagement of Loyalists with the peace process, along with the extreme right's shift to the more electorally minded British National Party, ensured that Ulster became less of

a focus of the extreme right in the early twenty-first century.

This book is impressively researched, as demonstrated throughout by Loughlin's comprehensive knowledge of both extreme-right and Loyalist primary sources and publications. However, some readers uninterested in the intricacies of the interpersonal relationships discussed in the book, or the minutia of every magazine published by the extreme right and Loyalists, may find certain sections long-winded and hard to navigate. Alongside this, while in the conclusion Loughlin briefly alludes to the working-class appeal of extreme-right and Loyalist organisations, this is never fully explored in the book, with an analysis of individuals taking precedence over any class analysis.

However, *Fascism and Constitutional Conflict* demonstrates Ulster's potential to form the *crisis* which neo-fascists may use to justify and launch their campaigns of hate—as we have seen in recent years with Britain First's involvement in the Belfast Flag Protests. Loughlin ends with a reminder that fascism has not disappeared in Ulster, with Nazi flags appearing alongside Loyalist insignias in Carrickfergus in 2017, and the shaky constitutional grounds of the Northern state providing ample opportunity for the extreme right to exploit any future crisis. Loughlin fills in a gap in the academic work which is essential for anyone opposing or trying to understand the complicated theoretical underpinnings of the extreme right in Ireland and Britain.

## Black Spartacus

Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Black Spartacus: The Epic Life of Toussaint Louverture* (Allen Lane, 2020) £25/€30.

### Joe Moore

Last year saw the publication of three important books on slave revolts in the Caribbean. Each deal with separate revolts and are histories from below that situate these slave revolts not as independent isolated events but as integral components of wider global conflicts.

The books referred to are: *Black Spartacus: The Epic Life of Toussaint Louverture* by Sudhir Hazareesingh; *Tacky's Revolt: The Story of an Atlantic Slave War* by Vincent Brown; and *Island on Fire: The Revolt That Ended Slavery in the British Empire* by Tom Zoellner. The latter two take as their subject matter revolts in Jamaica, Britain's wealthiest Caribbean colony. The former covers the revolt of 1760–1761, while the latter focuses on Sam Sharpe's rebellion of 1831.

This review will focus on *Black Spartacus*. It will probably be regarded as the definitive biography of Toussaint Louverture for some time to come. Toussaint was the leader of the only successful slave rebellion in history which led to the establishment of the world's first independent Black state, Haiti. The revolt took place on France's wealthiest colony, Saint-Domingue, the most profitable slave colony in history.

Many readers of the Irish Marxist Review will have read the classic Marxist text on the Saint-Domingue rebellion, C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins* published in 1938. James said of resistance to slavery by its victims, 'Black history is rich, inspiring, and unknown. Black people revolted against the slave raiders in Africa; they revolted against the slave traders on the Atlantic passage. They revolted on the plantations...the only place where black people did not revolt is in the pages of capitalist historians.' *The Black Jacobins* addressed that airbrushing.

What makes Hazareesingh's work the tour de force that it is, is that he had access to the majority of Toussaint's correspondence held in libraries and archives in France, Britain, Spain, and the US. While the Haitian rebellion had tens of thousands of participants, Toussaint stands head and shoulders above the other leaders. He was literate and was greatly influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment. The single most important work to shape his world view was *Histoire philosophique des Deux Indes* by Guillaume-Thomas Raynal and Denis Diderot. This was a sweeping indictment of European colonisation and the barbarity of slavery. The other main influences on Toussaint's thinking were Catholicism and African religions which manifested themselves as vodou in Saint-Domingue.

He was a brilliant military strategist and led an army of freed slaves to defeat three of the main imperial armies of the

late eighteenth century: France, Britain, and Spain. As a diplomat he was a master Machiavellian, playing these powers off against each other. He used similar strategies against internal enemies. There are, however, questions about Toussaint's long-term ambitions for himself and Haiti, but evidence does not exist to answer many of these. What can be said definitely is that Toussaint was an implacable enemy of slavery and racism and fully supported the concepts of liberté, égalité, and fraternité.

Hazareesingh places the Saint Domingue Revolution firmly within the context of world events of the day, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the slave trade, Anglo-French wars, and the growing influence of the US. The great historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century Atlantic revolts Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker include Ireland within this orbit. So does Hazareesingh. He references the work of historian Kevin Whelan, who chronicled the influence Toussaint had on the United Irishmen. Many United Irishmen exiled to Jamaica, for example, deserted from the British army and joined the maroon colonies. Napper Tandy, living in exile in France, opposed the attempted French suppression of Toussaint's revolt: 'We are all the same family, black and white, the work of the same creator.' James Orr wrote three anti-slavery poems including 'Toussaint's Farewell to St. Domingo'. The Haitian influence on the United Irishmen is also covered in *Toussaint Louverture: A Black Jacobin in*



*the Age of Revolutions* by Charles Forsdick and Christian Hogsbjerg, another book worth reading.

Toussaint's end came in France. He was taken prisoner while negotiating with the French, brought to France, and imprisoned in an isolated fortress in the Jura mountains. He died within a few months. However, the rebellion he began continued, and in 1804 Haiti became a free country. Hazareesingh's book is a masterpiece and should be read in conjunction with *The Black Jacobins*. He rescues Toussaint from obscurity and places him at the beginning of a long list of Black freedom fighters: Nat Turner, Sam Sharpe, Frederick Douglas, Harriet Tubman, Ida B. Wells, WEB DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Ella Baker, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Fred Hampton, Patrice Lumumba, Angela Davis, Nelson Mandela, Assata Shakur, and on to today's Black Lives Matter movement. I highly recommend *Black Spartacus*.

Joe Moore

### TOUSSAINT'S FAREWELL TO ST. DOMINGO

Farewell, my poor country! the  
chief of your legions

Fall'n far, far from glory, by  
dreadful mischance;

Foul treachery drags from these  
beautiful regions

A Captive, to pine in some  
dungeon of France.

The heart-soothing voice of a

friend or relation,

Shall charm me no more with  
their kind conversation;

No more shall I breathe an  
impassion'd oration

In front of the line, nor to vict'ry  
advance.

A wretched inheritance—sorrow  
and slav'ry,

I leave ye, my comrades: for you  
who remain,

Let private affection promote  
public brav'ry—

While friends fall around ye,  
strike home for the slain!

Can ye look, without grief, on  
your land's devastation?

Can ye think, without rage, on  
your foe's usurpation?

Are ye men? Are ye soldiers? And  
shall the great nation

Enslave this, our small one?—No!  
curs'd be her chain!

My brethren, we're sunk by unjust  
degradation,

Beneath the base brute, in the  
yoke of the cart;

Proud Christians, who boast of  
their civilization,

Go far beyond Pagans in cruelty's  
art!

A slave, in a cage, they hung days  
more than seven,

Till the poor mangl'd flesh from  
his cheek-bones was riven,

And his eyes were scoop'd out by  
the wild fowls of heaven,

While famine and thirst gnaw'd  
his sad sickly heart.

Heav'n help the poor negroes! In  
times that were peaceful,

'Twas death to run off, and  
starvation to stay:

The dames swoon'd through toil,  
on whose shoulders so graceful,

Their babes wail'd and broil'd in  
the hot vertic ray:

When war rose, 'twas worse; then  
our rude huts they fired;

On the point of the bayonet what  
thousands expired,

Or in boatfuls were drown'd—O!  
if life be desired,

To arms, men of colour!—'tis  
death to delay!

Yet, since wrongs rouse the  
feelings, once more let me urge  
you,

To give unto all men, the  
treatment you'd gain;

Though tyranny's satellites stab,  
shoot, and scourge you,

Make no excuse to retaliate the  
pain.

In war, be as fierce as the dragons  
of fable;

Mild as doves, when the white  
man submits to the sable;

Whate're clime or colour, the  
minds of the rabble

Are savage and rude; and of  
heroes, humane.

Farewell, my poor country! The  
white man may harass

Thy natives awhile, but their  
wrongs I'll not see:

If dragg'd in mock pomp, through  
the throng'd streets of Paris—

If tortur'd at midnight—I'll think  
upon thee.

How long must thy sons feel the  
sharp thong of slav'ry,

And their blood stain the stems of  
the sugar cane sav'ry!

Oh! These plagues of the nations,  
ambition and knavery,

They've thinn'd poor mankind,  
and brought ruin on me!

James Orr (1770–1816) Weaver,  
poet, and United Irishman.

## **Routledge Handbook of Marxism and Post-Marxism,**

edited by Alex Callinicos, Stathis  
Kouvelakis, Lucia Pradella,  
(Routledge, 2021), £190/€224

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This handbook is a massive 575-page collection of fifty-seven essays by diverse authors ranging from Lucia Pradella, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Paul le Blanc to People Before Profit's Kieran Allen (on James Connolly). The sheer scale of the work makes it impossible for a short review to cover or assess its contents, but doubtless it will provide a useful point of reference and resource for those with access to university libraries.

There is one rather obvious

problem. At the online launch of the book, the host stated that it should be read widely and outside of academia. The price of the book on the Routledge website is £190. This sums up the contradiction of Marxism within the academy; it wishes to hold supreme theoretical authority without a meaningful attempt to be in real dialogue with the agents of struggle. This is not to say such publications are useless, or should not be undertaken; but rather that the presentation of such work should be more humbly considered when the majority of people can't even access it.

There is not so much to criticize in the book itself, which offers a useful selection of studies of specific theorists along the trajectory of Marxist and post-Marxist thought. The attempt by the editors to historicise the journey of Marxist thought is welcome. It is refreshing to see such a diverse and acclaimed international group of theorists coalesce in writing on Marxism, as often academic publications on Marxism shy away from any kind of universalising output and focus on theoretical minutiae within the literature.

At the book launch, one of the editors, Alex Callinicos, outlined his 'self-criticisms' regarding the publication, suggesting that it did not go far enough in diversifying Marxism, and citing the unfortunate omission of W.E.B. Dubois in the line-up of accounts of theorists in the book. However, he did not acknowledge the inaccessibility of the book (mentioned previously) and the ontological problems present in the afterword.

Trevor Ngwane argued at the launch for 'theories that support the development of hope in the masses'. He also stated that the pandemic provides an exceptional opportunity for us to think about what a new society could look like. These theories of hope are not high-level academic notions, but ways in which we can make the dialogue of Marxist thought and practice accessible to the potentially revolutionary agents in society.

The nature of my argument here is not to advocate that Marxism be absolved from academic consideration, but that the afterword that concludes the book is centred on how we think about things, arguing that Marxism is an essential analytical tool, without considering how we *do* them. I fear that, in attempting to pave the way forward for Marxism to make grand narratives about the coming catastrophes of the world without strategically considering the material opportunities at hand, the idea of Marxism as a defanged academic mode of analysis can become reinforced.