

BOOK REVIEWS

Renaissance of Marxism in the Twenty-first Century, A review of the book series *Marx, Engels, and Marxisms* edited by Marcello Musto and Terrell Carver (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan)

Modern history sees it that at several points, the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were regarded as no longer relevant to human life. Each of these historical periods was followed by a resurgence of interest in the rediscovery of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. As history steps into the twenty-first century, Marxism returned! Those who think that nothing is left of Marxism will be surprised to hear that “the Marx renaissance is underway on a global scale,” a claim made in the Foreword of the book series *Marx, Engels, and Marxisms*. This book series is a giant, continuous project, starting in 2014. So far, forty-six volumes have been published, forty more are forthcoming, and sixteen more are under review. It evidences the revival of Marxism in the twenty-first century. Those who are curious about the contemporary relevance of Marxism will find this book series highly informative, inspirational, and resourceful. The publication of this book series is a timely contribution and an effective response to a new trend of intellectual movement. Literature on Marxism appears weekly, even daily, in various media across the world. The number of Marxism conferences, workshops, and festivals is growing. There is increasing demand for learning Marxism in higher education worldwide. As the publisher and the editors have observed, “wherever the critique to capitalism is reemerging, there is an intellectual and political demand for a new critical encounter with Marxism” (p. vii).

Marxism has been systematically misinterpreted and misunderstood by politicians, intellectuals, and laypeople in the East and the West. Laypeople’s misunderstanding may cause them to elect the wrong leader or agree to the wrong policy. Intellectuals’ misunderstandings may cause them to misdirect their academic projects. However, political actions with a misguided understanding of Marxism are fatal to society. Some politicians launch social movements, build social structures, and conduct social experiments in the name of Marxism by tailoring it to fit their political needs and interest. Some politicians have never carefully studied Marxism yet attack Marxism based on their understanding of Marxism ultimately derived from their limited observations of the political actions claimed in the name of Marxism. The consequences of both cases described above are clear—a distorted picture of Marxism is disseminated, and people’s minds are misguided. The book series *Marx, Engels, and Marxisms* does not cure the political and ideological disease, but it awakens intellectuals. “This series bring together reflections on Marx, Engels and Marxisms from perspectives that are varied in terms of political outlook, geographical base, academic methodologies and subject-matter, thus challenging many preconceptions as to what ‘Marxist’ thought can be like, as opposed to what it has been” (p. vii).

The over hundred volumes collected in the series *Marx, Engels, and Marxisms* cover many topics, significant aspects of Marxism, and diverse perspectives. According to the editors, they fall into the following three main categories: (1) Studies on Marx and Engels, (2) Critical Studies on Marxisms, and (3) Reception Studies and Marxist National Traditions.

The published volumes that fall in Studies on Marx and Engels renew and deepen the study of Marx and Engels' original works. Some of them reflect recent studies on Marx and Engels, "focusing on the oeuvre of Marx and Engels which utilize the scholarly achievements of the on-going Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe, a project that has strongly revived the research on these two authors in the past decade" (p. viii). Some provide new research on the lives of Marx and Engels. A significant number of the titles are devoted to reexamining Marx and Engels' thoughts and theories from legal, political, economic, financial, ethical, and scientific perspectives. Some interesting introductory books provide an updated overview of Marxism and Marxist studies.

The published volumes that fall in the category of Critical Studies on Marxisms "will awaken readers to the overarching issues and world-changing encounters that shelter within the broad categorization 'Marxist'" (p. viii). The label "Marxisms" reveals editors' belief that there are various versions of Marxism or that many isms are self-styled or labeled Marxism. It refers to Classical Marxism, Hegelian Marxism, the Frankfurt School, Structural Marxism, Analytical Marxism, Critical Theory, Post-Marxism, etc. Most of these volumes deliver recent research on Marxist authors and traditions of the 19th and 20th centuries, including those popular and widely translated worldwide and those less known in English-speaking countries. Some volumes are the representative works of contemporary Marxists, which are translated into English for the first time.

The published volumes that fall in the category of Reception Studies and Marxist National Traditions take a national perspective on "reception" and "will enable the worldwide Anglophone community to understand the variety of intellectual and political traditions through which Marx and Engels have been received in local contexts" (p. viii). These books present Marxist analyses of contemporary issues, discuss labor and/or social movements under the influence of some Marxism, evaluate Marxist political projects, describe the Rise and Fall of Communist Parties, and deliberate on Marxist/socialist practice reforms.

Although the book series *Marx, Engels, and Marxisms* is resourceful for academic studies of Marxism, it is not merely an academic effort to rethink the past. However, instead, it places great emphasis on the contemporary relevancy of Marxism. While most of the volumes exhibit this feature, a significant number of volumes directly deal with the question of whether or not Marxism is relevant to the contemporary world, and they encompass such topics as Development, Artificial Intelligence, Modernity, Globalization, Hegemony, Social Classes, Democracy, Capitalism, and so on.

Another prominent feature of the book series *Marx, Engels, and Marxisms* is genuinely international collaboration. Of the two chief editors, one is from Canada and the other from the United Kingdom. Of the four assistant editors, one is from the United Kingdom, one from Germany, one from Finland, and one from Japan. The sixty-one authors and editors of the forty-six published volumes are internationally diverse. They are scholars from fourteen countries, with five from Argentina, four from Brazil, ten from Canada, two from China, six from France, three from Germany, two from India, one from Ireland, nine from Italy, two from Japan, one from the Netherland, two from Sweden, nine from the United Kingdom, and five from the United States of America. Some of the books are co-authored by scholars from different cultural backgrounds.

Marx, Engels, and Marxisms is an ongoing project. It will be observed as inviting and will attract more scholarly work. We anticipate that forthcoming titles will bring Marxism closer to the might-dominating, economic, financially unjust, and politically unstable world. We now inhabit and sharpen the issues about how Marxism is to be applied in the twenty-first century and how capitalism and socialism are getting blended. As an intellectual movement and a social project, Marxism has been one of the most influential and fertile contributions to human life. It divides people into those who live their lives based on share-living characterizing human commonalities and those who live their lives on the belief in fair competition characterizing human individualities. As it continues its tradition into the twenty-first century, it sees a new world in which people can no longer think globally but inevitably act globally. Would it be more comfortable or more embarrassed with this new world? We expect that forthcoming volumes of the book series *Marx, Engels, and Marxisms* provide a clearer and better answer to this question.

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