

The Many-Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic

PETER LINEBAUGH AND MARCUS REDIKER

London: Verso, 2000

Reviewed by **BRYAN D. PALMER**

Hydra's Materialist History

Historical materialism: the past as unsettled prelude

What *is* a history that is historical-materialist? On the one hand, there is no shortage of examples. We have an abundance of writing, reaching back to the founding texts: Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*, for instance, or Engels's *Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*. It would be difficult to leave Rosa Luxemburg's classic study, *The Accumulation of Capital* off any list, with Lenin's exploration of capitalism in the Russian countryside and Trotsky's breathtaking narrative of the Russian Revolution equally meritorious. Closer to our times, the 'chosen' works would vary according to discipline, period, and taste. Works of historical materialism have been many and varied: G.E.M. de Ste. Croix's *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*; much of the writing of Perry Anderson, starting with *Lineages of the Absolutist State*; the entire corpus of the British Marxist historians, beginning with Maurice Dobb and Dona Torr; studies of the slave South by Eugene D. Genovese; David Harvey's materialist geographies such as *The Condition of Postmodernity*; Juliet Mitchell's early attempts to bring together Marx and Freud; and the literary and aesthetic studies of Raymond Williams, Terry Eagleton, and Fredric Jameson. On the other hand, the implosion of Marxist theory from the 1960s to the present and, in particular, the tendency of some theoretical positionings to assert confidently and polemically that much radical writing lacks materialist anchor and is hence adrift in varied currents, raises the spectre of suspect flows: idealism in the spirit of the Althusserian critique; culturalism, if we were to take Richard Johnson and the Birmingham Cultural Studies cohort at its word, circa 1979; or an ill-defined economism, posited by the subjectivity-attuned governmentality theorists of the 1990s. In short, what *is* or is not a historical-materialist text is something less than a settled matter.¹

¹ For broad comment on historical materialism see Cohen 1978; Thompson 1978; Hobsbawm 1972; and many of the essays in Hobsbawm 1982. This can usefully be compared to two statements on historical method, Bloch 1954; Carr 1964. For Althusserian critique, see Althusser 1970; Althusser 1970a; Althusser 1977. Johnson and the Birmingham School made a seemingly Marxist

No single review can adequately resolve this question of what a history written as historical materialism constitutes. For some, the defining feature will be one of method, for others, issues of political tone will carry considerable weight. Structure has prevailed as the traditional foundation, but agency has occupied firmer ground as the subject of study in more recent times. The basic point is that much is up for grabs – the issue, like so many, is rather more open than some are willing to concede and, depending on the subject of study, the materialist accent will inevitably lean in particular directions.

Complicating matters still further is historical materialism's prideful distinction as one of the few bodies of theory that associates a part of itself, as Perry Anderson has noted, with unrelenting *self*-criticism. Like the proletarian revolutions from which it can not be disassociated, historically developed historical materialisms, in Marx's words, 'criticize themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course, come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh, deride with unmerciful thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltrinesses of their first attempts, seem to throw down their adversary only that he may draw new strength from the earth and rise again, more gigantic, before them'.² All of this makes 'naming' *the* historical materialism not only difficult, but somewhat futile.

A rigorous tradition

Yet we must, lest we lose sight of historical materialism's standard, flag some markers that will inevitably blow in the winds of change and revision. Any text of historical materialism is premised on the determinative boundaries of historically contextualised materiality. This means it attends, at one level or another, to political economy, relations of subordination/superordination (power) grounded in actual histories of who does what to whom and for what tangible return, and periodisation, within which modes of production, governance, and struggle are located and move. In this, historical materialism differs from so much contemporary scholarship, with its one-sided reification of discourse, representation and image, on the one hand, and undue focus on subjectivity, partiality, and the parochial, on the other, most of which elevate the arcane and obfuscate obvious social discord, the authority of the economic, and the centrality of foundational transformation. Historical materialism, and its analytic categories, can never be divorced from the broad social relations of production and exchange; nor is it possible to sever this interpretive orientation from a rigorous

splash with their critique of ostensible 'culturalism' in the late 1970s, but little is now heard from this quarter and a colonising, truly culturalist impulse now animates much of contemporary historiography, with detrimental affect on all historical-materialist effort. See Clarke, Critcher, and Johnson (eds.) 1979. Governmentality represents but one recent 'analytics' driven by concern with subjectivity. See Rose 1999.

² Anderson 1983, p. 11, quoting Marx 1968.

judgement of evidence, which is often, of course, read against the grain, but must be marshalled, nevertheless, with a demanding scrutiny of a weight of sources rather than a selective sentimentality that elevates interpretation on a pedestal of authorial creation. Marxists guided by historical materialism have always appreciated power's capacity to socially construct knowledge, but they have never bowed to the ultimatism too common in our 'postmodern Foucauldian times', in which all knowledge is too easily reduced to *nothing but* social construction. Thus works of historical materialism, whatever their subject matter, reach for broad, verifiable understandings that, at one and the same time, transcend an ideology of empiricism, yet rest on empirical evidence that is both interrogated and amassed in ways that insure conceptualisation is never merely reducible to the quaint, the limited, or the intellectually fashionable.³

This, then, is a tall and difficult order. To be an historical materialist, especially in our often ahistorical and relentlessly non-materialist times, is no mean feat. As history is increasingly marketed as sanitised nostalgia and materialism assailed by a virtual Pandora's pantheon of ever-proliferating idealist pyrotechnics, the lure away from historical materialism, even among its seeming advocates, is strong indeed.

The vantage point of vision

There is no doubt that Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker regard their excavation of the hidden history of the revolutionary Atlantic as a work of historical materialism, and with good reason. In giving voice to the slaves, pirates, dispossessed commoners, sailors, persecuted dissidents, and proto-industrial strikers who presented, for the powerful capitalist interests of one of globalisation's first chapters of acquisitive individualism and unceasing predatory accumulation, a many-headed hydra of oppositional challenge, Linebaugh and Rediker resurrect an obscured history of levelling discontent. Viewed from above, this was a monstrosity aiming at nothing less than turning the universe upside down:

The world is chang'd now. All damnations
Seize on the Hydra-headed multitude,
That only gape for innovation!
O who would trust a people? (p. 64)

But Linebaugh and Rediker see things differently. 'Our book looks from below', the authors proclaim with confidence in their opening pages (p. 6). It is an assertive statement that raises many questions.

³ On empiricism see Mills 1959; and, for a discussion of differentiating empiricism as ideology and an empirical idiom, Thompson 1978, pp. 63–4.

Two such primary queries are: Why would we want to visualise only from below, and is this ever even a possibility, especially if we are looking at the past as historical materialists? And, accepting, for argument's sake, that this is indeed the vantage point our analytic gaze should issue from, do Linebaugh and Rediker actually practise what they preach?

Looking from below, of course, can be a way of declaring political identity, and in the sense that historians of the working class, the peasantry, the *sans-culottes*, the landed or sea-faring dispossessed, aboriginal groups driven into marginality, races reduced to slavery, small householders, or other *menu peuple* explore histories of the bottom portions of society, with their particular experiences of oppression and exploitation and their views of those who are oppressing and exploiting them, there is nothing inherently wrong in looking from below. That said, historians of these sectors of society below do their subject great violence if they restrict their looking only to source examinations and historical consequences emanating 'from below', if, indeed, there ever could be such a separatist ladder-like scaffolding of historical process. To understand, in all of its complexity, the lived experience from 'below', it is always necessary to grasp astutely socio-economic movements, the generation of ideas and cultural formations, and structural transformations that, however developed they came to be at the bottom of society, had a good part of their history forged 'from above', at the top. The early work of Eugene D. Genovese presented an example of the two-sided depth and range of historical-materialist investigation precisely because his well-researched grasp of the world the slaves made was premised on a close and sure examination of the world the slaveholders built.⁴ This is not to say that all historical-materialist writing must reconstruct society in its totality. It is to suggest that class and other structures and experiences of social station are negotiated places of being, always arraigned with and often against adversaries, the men, women, and children who make their histories doing so not entirely as they, and they alone, please.

The phrase 'history from the bottom up' muddled much of this inevitable reciprocal heterogeneity of historical development, within which hegemony is always forged in the crucible of arms twisting in ever-widening circles of contention. Often associated with the British Marxist historians and the practice of historical materialism, the designation of such a thing as 'history from the bottom up' is a populist misnomer. In their origins, the British Marxist historians contained diversities of sensibility and approach, but their formative influences, Maurice Dobb and Dona Torr, combined analytical visions that focused simultaneously on powerful élites, economic transformation and its varied consequences, class formation, and the struggles of masses of common people.⁵

⁴ Genovese 1965; 1971; 1974.

⁵ Dobb 1945; Torr 1956.

E.P. Thompson, assimilated to the advocacy of 'history from the bottom up' by a less historically-materialist and more decidedly liberal promotion of academic social history in the 1970s, never in fact embraced this loose conception of historical method. He utilised the different, but related, term of 'looking from below' (as do Linebaugh and Rediker), but he did so rarely and carefully, most emphatically in a work that was itself as much an examination of the 'top' of society (the eighteenth-century landed Whigs) as it was of the bottom (the poaching Blacks of the Windsor forests). Thompson was uncomfortable, in general, with any historical research that positioned its vision in such a way as to obscure the reciprocal making of class antagonists.⁶ So were his co-workers in the fields of historical materialism. Hobsbawm, Hill, Kiernan, Dorothy Thompson – indeed, virtually all of the British Marxists – looked both from above *and* from below, their emphases differing depending on their subject of study, be it radical ideas, capital and industry, imperialism, Shakespeare, working-class mobilisation, women and radicalism, or the monarchy.

To state, then, as do Linebaugh and Rediker, that they look from below, proclaims a political perspective, but also perhaps signals a problematic slippage in conception of method. Ironically, this problem would disappear if *The Many-Headed Hydra's* aggressive articulation of where it looks were more rhetorical than real, and not actually practised. Or, alternatively, the problem would be compounded were Linebaugh and Rediker to complicate matters further by asserting that they look from below at the same time that they attend too uncritically to the perhaps less than reliable, ideologically distorted, vision from above to construct what they claim is a bottom-up view. What we have, then, in a prefacing statement on 'looking from below', is a political articulation of authorial position, a vantage point of perspective, a method – all of which need intellectual and political wrestling with in order to determine meaning.

In the end, the final question is how the authors handle their material: is their book a success, is it rendered problematic by a double vision that manages to blur historical reality by accepting too easily the currency of debased ruling-class coin, without having access to any reasonable exchange medium of the dispossessed, or, rather, is it mixed in its accomplishments? In this review, I suggest the latter, appreciating what Linebaugh and Rediker have done, challenging some of their evidence and their reading of it, and acknowledging the imaginative creation they have delivered. Ultimately, *The Many-Headed Hydra* confronts a fundamental problem of 'seeing from below' in general, where sources are seldom generated transparently, and of creating

⁶ Thompson 1975, p. 16, where the word 'below' is purposefully placed in inverted quotation marks. An early essay by Thompson, titled 'History from Below' appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 7 April 1966, but it is useful to note, as Dorothy Thompson records, that the title 'was given to the piece by the editor, became the common term for the sort of history Edward wrote, but it was one about which he had doubts, since he always resisted any kind of history which neglected the structures of power in society'. 'History from Below' is reprinted in Thompson 2001, pp. 481–9, with Dorothy Thompson's comments on p. x.

materialist histories of the bottom, which demand an assessment of multiple, rather than singular, social layers and their influence. The issue is always one, at least in part, of evidence: Is it there? Where does it come from and why? Is it being read adequately? Is it passed to us formed in ways that compromise our capacity to utilise it to speak to histories seen from below but often framed from above? Are there other events undermining a particular perspective? A close look at *The Many-Headed Hydra* thus sheds considerable light on just how difficult it is to probe materially the history of the dispossessed. To look from below is no simple, or simplifying, matter, and this is especially the case when the canvas of study stretches across centuries and continents, as it does with Linebaugh's and Rediker's book, rather than decades, discrete locales, and particular pieces of legislation, as it did with Thompson's *Whigs and Hunters*.

Looking below from above: ruling authority, the birth of the hydra, and the reign of terror

Indeed, one contradiction inherent in *The Many-Headed Hydra's* proclaimed address from below is that it is from above that Linebaugh and Rediker begin and where, it must be said, they often remain. They commence with the robust fears of the classically-educated architects of the Atlantic economy, who understood themselves in terms of Greek and Roman mythology to be engaged in the Herculean task of building civilisation itself, premised on state formation, extension of empire, and the transforming power of capital. Against them and their progressive mission stood the many-headed venomous hydra of the disorderly lower ranks, from whom emanated all manner of resistances to things proprietary. The Hercules myth saw heroic development conquer backward fugitives of misrule. Linebaugh and Rediker orchestrate their understanding of the polarised Atlantic revolutionary world, as a creation of capital vs. a possibility of alternative visions and struggles waged from below, by the ranks of the exploited, along the axis of this Hercules/Hydra myth, constructed from above. They look to ruling-class phobia for their inspirational grasp of the dialectic of defeat: they designate a central environment, the appropriated 'commons' (already lost), glimpsing in the terror of empire's eye the potential of a roving global band of commoners, composed of all manner of masterless men and women, from 'Ethiopian' woman servants to highwaymen of the seas. From this 'hydrarchy' emerged a 'volatile, serpentine tradition of . . . radicalism' impossible to suppress, 'slithering quietly belowdecks, across the docks, and onto the shore, biding its time, then rearing its heads unexpectedly in mutinies, strikes, riots, urban insurrections, slave revolts, and revolutions.' (p. 173). This is the subject of Linebaugh's and Rediker's research, a look at the underside of the Atlantic of empire and exchange that depends, curiously, on a vision from above, one that sees only darkly, through the distorting exaggerations of eyes narrowed in fear and loathing.

The study moves chronologically, from the early seventeenth century to the late eighteenth/early nineteenth centuries, a period of revolution, Jacobinism, and abolitionist struggle, an approach that connects England and America, France and Haiti, Gambia and Belize. Linebaugh and Rediker opt for the presentation of detailed instances of the hydra's historical presence, which are then used as springboards for discussion of more wide-ranging generalities. The wreck of the *Sea-Venture* off the coast of Bermuda in 1609 opens into an account of commoner attempts to build various paradises in the New World, something the officers of the Virginia Company could not tolerate. Such acts of rebellious recreation were paralleled by regional Tudor uprisings in Old England, from the Cornish Rising of 1497 to the Southwark Riots of the 1590s or the Midlands Revolt of 1607. What with propertyless men and women of plebeian will in motion in Old Worlds and New, their alternative vision confirmed in practices of mutiny, desertion, and free cohabitation with native peoples in the mainland Americas and ideals of worlds without work and laws, private property and magistrates, the hydra's head did indeed seem always rearing. Linebaugh and Rediker, more than any other historians of this period in the protracted transition to capitalism as a world system paced by the predatory extraction of surplus, chronicle the many and varied rebellions and resistances of common people. As a many-headed hydra, this opposition from underneath the sanctimonious superiorities and privileged accumulations of aristocracies, merchants, and bourgeoisies, was indeed a terrifying prospect for those above.

To sever and suppress it required a resolute class discipline, ordered in legal codifications such as the 1609 treatise, *Laws Divine, Moral, and Martial*, a gruesome tract that met resistance with all manner of punishments, promising whippings, galley service and death, twenty-five of its thirty-seven articles prescribing capital punishment. Linebaugh and Rediker present the seventeenth century as the making of class on a global scale, the social formation of an emerging world economy decisively dependent upon hewers of wood and drawers of water. This new world order was driven by insatiable appetites – for money, for land, and above all for labour. The three accumulative needs were not unconnected: divorcing the people from the land was the original, primitive act from which labour-power could be secured, out of which money could be wrung as surplus. Capital was born in this moment of expropriation and exploitation. But it could only be nurtured by terror, which spread from metropolitan centre to the world hinterlands, where commodities and chattels were harvested in brutalising environments, the interpretive high priest of which, according to Linebaugh and Rediker, was none other than the 'wise man' of the scientific revolution, Francis Bacon. They see in his writings such as *The New Atlantis* (1627) a ruling-class conceptualisation of monstrosity tending toward a theory of genocide, one that blended skin colours in the homogenising hue of class. 'By 1617', Linebaugh and Rediker claim,

ruling-class policy was to ship the expropriated to far flung labor markets, and various slave trades grew up to accommodate and extend the policy. Thus began what in a later day would be called the middle passage. Terror was instrumental; indeed, it was a mechanism of the labor market for the hewers and drawers. They had become deracinated. (p. 60)

The gestation of 'commonism': Putney's proliferation

To illustrate the case, and to move inside the alternative vision of the hydra, Linebaugh and Rediker strike creatively on the person of Francis, a West Indian 'Blackymore maide'. A servant woman whose Bristol master was located on wharves that put Francis in daily contact with the varied exchanges of the triangular trade, she heard the words and accents of the North Atlantic (Gaelic, African, American, West Indian, Dutch) and saw its traffic in dark-skinned men, women, and children. The sources are thin, but Linebaugh and Rediker see through their tissue-like transparency a vision from below, evident to them in Francis's Anabaptism. There, they discern an incendiary antinomianism, feeding into the religious radicalism of the defeated New Model Army and Oliver Cromwell's campaign of the 1640s. This leads them to focus on the significance of the Putney Debates, defined, they insist, by 'commonism' and slavery, and marking the high point of revolutionary possibility in the seventeenth century. They perhaps read the Debates too one-sidedly, sidestepping the dialogue over the meaning of property in an embrace of the most radical positions coming out of the 1640s, which they then attribute influence to in the evolution of 'commonism'.⁷ From Gerrard Winstanley and the Diggers, the path of the hydra leads Linebaugh and Rediker to a series of 1649–52 events in Ireland, Barbados, and West Africa, all of which confirm for them the ways in which 'the everlasting gospel' spread its worldly alternative: 'the struggle against slavery, the struggle for the commons' (p. 142).

Linebaugh and Rediker thus see an army of redressers, reaching across continents and through the ages of maritime capital's traversing hoarding of wealth, property, and power. The languages and perspectives of this 'motley crew' were joined, according to *The Many-Headed Hydra*, at points of discipline (enclosure, prison, factory, and hangman's noose), exchange (sea-borne ship and tavern), and upheaval (revolt, mutiny, conspiracy, seizure, abolitionist jubilee). This latter agency of resistance is central to the study, and appears as relentless as it was routinely and viciously suppressed. When, in 1816, twenty-four English commoners were sentenced for protesting against enclosures and the high price of bread, the assizes at which their fate was sealed

⁷ While Hill 1972 provides ample example of the existence of radical, anti-property ideas in the 1640s, a close reading of the account of the Putney Debates in its pages confirms more of a dialogue around property than Linebaugh and Rediker acknowledge.

echoed with the lyric of Handel's *Air*: 'Why do the heathen so furiously rage together?' (p. 315).

Linebaugh and Rediker are not so much empirically or theoretically engaged with this question. Instead, they assume collective rage as central to historical process, a just war waged by the have-nots against the haves. There are times when the two authors, clearly committed to a view of the downtrodden people as inherently rebellious, overreach themselves, likening an impulse of resistance, imprecise and lacking in focus, to a revolutionary upheaval of decided determination.

Thus, a 1741 New York conspiracy, lasting two weeks and involving a few hundred disaffected elements of the Linebaugh-Rediker 'motley crew' is equated in its unsuccessful efforts to incite an urban insurrection, to the truly awe-inspiring Neapolitan uprising of the fisherman Massaniello in 1647. The latter revolt drew into its ranks an eventual army of 150,000, actually seized power in the name of the poor, seating a bare-footed mariners' capped commoner on the throne of one of the largest cities in the world. Naples was turned upside down: prison doors were flung open to free the incarcerated; tax records were burned; nobles were forbidden to wear expensive garments; the properties of the rich were seized, and opulent furnishings burned in the streets; the price of bread was brought down and placed under controls; it was rumoured that those who would champion monarchy in the midst of the Massaniello revolt stood in the shadow of the gallows. That ruling authority trembled at the potential global reach of the Naples uprising, which it saw circulating from the shores of the Mediterranean through England's Putney Debates, occurring at the same time, is one thing – a 1650 literary production proclaiming: '*The people is a beast which heads hath many/England of late shew'd this more than many.*' But, for Linebaugh and Rediker to suggest that this same impulse rocked New York City in a vague conspiratorial discontent emanating from a tavern almost a century later is, however useful the discussion of the 1741 activities, overstatement at best (pp. 114, 179).

The problem is conceptual. One analytical wheel driving this cart of characterisation is Linebaugh's and Rediker's reliance on the terms 'commons' and 'commoners', from which they assume an oppositional and alternative political economy of 'commonism', pitted against capitalism's agendas and acts, including 'slavery, dispossession, the destruction of the commons, poverty, wage labor, private property, and the death penalty' (p. 140). All recalcitrance, all resistance, all rebellion – over centuries of disorientating socio-economic transformation involving continents whose social formations, political economies, and cultures were diametrically different – are lumped into this commoners' just revolt. Too much is thus placed indiscriminately in an interpretive container that is being asked to hold far more than it can reasonably be expected to envelop, both politically and intellectually. The result is: overdrawn comparisons, selection and elaboration of instances that seem exaggerated in importance and significance, and a somewhat cavalier handling of the important matter of historical

periodisation and context. This is at the heart of a rather mean-spirited critique of *The Many-Headed Hydra* by David Brion Davis in the pages of *The New York Review of Books* (NYRB), where the text is parodied as itself a parody – ‘of highly romanticized Marxism’. But what Davis does not know about Marxism, romantic or otherwise, would fill more than an article in the NYRB, just as his Cold-War-style equation of small-c communism and the Thousand Year Reich speaks legions about a politics of nasty conflation.⁸

The condescension of the commons

Central to Linebaugh’s and Rediker’s task is what they conceive of as the Thompsonesque art of rescuing historical losers from the enormous condescension of posterity. The violence of the defeats that have left History’s dispossessed largely invisible is, for the authors of *The Many-Headed Hydra*, a consequence of a dual process, registered in past and present. On the one hand, the brutality of power’s coercions has long suppressed the very presence of the poor, the producers, and protest, and perhaps at no point more decisively than in that period of the Atlantic Revolution’s making of an international order of exchange. At the material base of this long historical process, too often conceived as a netherworld of capitalism’s prehistory, exists a sunken mass of intransigent humanity that Linebaugh and Rediker struggle to bring out of the dark depths into the analytical light. On the other, if History has left this mobile, multi-ethnic proletariat defeated and depressed, historians have written the powerless out of their narratives of victory by refusing to look beyond the captivating abstractions of nation-state and the circuits of capital, categories unwelcoming to understandings of the propertyless, especially those whose modes of production were in something of a perpetual, international motion. This combination of violent suppression, interpretive abstraction and confinement, and subjective instability has insured that the very history Linebaugh and Rediker want to recover is highly elusive, most emphatically when it is approached, as they insist it must be, from below.

While Thompson posed his early endeavour of rescue in terms of limitations of time and space, concentrating his historical research on the England of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a time of trouble associated with the congealed emergence of the repressive modern bourgeois state and capitalism’s Industrial Revolution, in which hand manufacture and rural domesticity was being replaced by the disciplines, market orchestrations, managerial innovations, advanced technologies, divisions of labour, concentrations of production, and emerging factory system, Linebaugh and Rediker reach across continents and centuries. Their conduit is the

⁸ Davis 2001.

wind of thought and the traversing of oceans, rather than the footpaths of labour migration, although they necessarily address this as well. Their travels are exciting in their range, and the breadth of their vision from below, however much it draws on the view from above, is novel and stimulating.

The paradox of reproduction

Scintillatingly suggestive, the argument, as it repeats itself around the globe, is at times, however, rather stretched. 'The commons' and its plebeian, anti-proprietary (in persons or things) 'commonism' burst with the variety of dispossessions that Linebaugh and Rediker pour into it. The rough-edged social tensions of the emerging capitalist world and its conflictual material relations of inequality tear against the historical sensibilities that construct notions of 'the hydra', 'the motley crew', 'the multi-ethnic proletariat'. Uniformly, these are interpreted by Linebaugh and Rediker as repositories of values and behaviours antithetical to property and slavery, chattel or wage, defiant in the face of power's demand that ownership of men and women, the land and the seas, production and exchange, be codified. As attractive as is the Linebaugh and Rediker construction of commoner revolt and 'commonist' values, materialist historians familiar with their sources and their arguments will inevitably find themselves confronting evidence, should they seek to look seriously for it, that tells more complicated tales. The oppressed, not surprisingly, did not always unambiguously challenge capital and other established powers or their authorities in unequivocal refusals of all exploitations and oppressions. Indeed, they often bought into the reproduction of oppression and exploitation themselves, if opportunities presented such options. Not all below was solidarity in the revolutionary trans-Atlantic.

Pirates did not just free slaves, for instance; they also traded in them, and calculated the value of their booty or the compensations of injuries suffered in chattel bodies as well as pieces of eight (an arm lost 'on the chase' would take in 600 pieces of eight or six slaves). Even in the mythical commoner outpost of Madagascar's *Libertalia*, a product of the fertile mind of Captain Charles Johnson, and described at length in *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates* (1724), the utopian buccaneer commander, Captain Mission, said to knock the chains off slaves and make them 'free men, and Sharers in His Fortune' ran into an implacable 'commonist' refusal to extend this freedom universally. When *Libertalia's* egalitarian pirate crews seized a party of 100 Muslim girls and their families en route to Mecca, Mission pleaded with his men to free the young women. His exhortations fell on deaf ears as the polygamous buccaneers demanded to keep the captured women, anything but consensual 'partners', as 'wives'. The Mosquito Indians of the Nicaraguan coast, whom Linebaugh and Rediker suggest taught E.P. Thompson's ultra-Jacobin 1802 conspirator, Colonel Edward Despard, many lessons in 'ideas of freedom' and possessed

a 'seminal knowledge of the commons' (pp. 281, 267), were similarly not averse to enslaving prisoners of war.⁹

Montserrat's Irish: a complication for the commons

If no one can doubt the capacity of the Irish to resist their reduction to a status of perpetual servitude in outposts of Empire such as Barbados, Montserrat, and Jamaica, Linebaugh's and Rediker's depiction of them as something of a vanguard of interracial anti-slavery, commonist revolt (pp. 120–7) bypasses significant other evidence that presents the reconstructed 'freeborn' Irish, especially the formerly indentured aspiring to small planter status, as among slavery's advocates. Like the account of pirates, in which buccaneer ships are accorded the status of 'multiracial maroon communities' (p. 167), the ways in which the Irish dispossessed, forced to follow the sails of seventeenth-century diasporas, interacted with black Africans in the Age of Slavery is approached in new and exciting ways by Linebaugh and Rediker. No doubt there are cases aplenty of Irish-African coalition, but the enthusiasm for instances of solidarity in *The Many-Headed Hydra* could perhaps be reined in with a more judicious canvassing of other evidence and experience.

They cite, for instance, 'the Black Irish' of Montserrat as a regional ethnicity and clearly associate it with an alliance of indentured Irish servants and black African slaves, sealed in Caribbean plots of 1675, 1686, and 1692. Perhaps, but ethnographic evidence about the 'Black Irish' of Montserrat is at best ambiguous, and its major chronicler, John Messenger, has left many historians unconvinced of a truly important Irish legacy, let alone one sealed in African-Irish solidarities of the sort suggested by Linebaugh and Rediker. Indeed, one historian, Donald H. Akenson, has argued that the paucity of evidence for such a legacy is explainable in exactly opposite ways. The 'Black Irish', supposedly the product of eighteenth-century marriages, are overwhelmingly concentrated in Montserrat's richer, more arable, northern land mass, where Irish Protestants and English Anglicans predominated, and where larger plantations, higher concentrations of slaves, and the galloping capitalist monoculture of sugar factories were evident. The Irish, especially the poor of indentured (and likely Catholic) background, were, in contrast, 'settled' in greatest concentration in the impoverished, small-holding southern 'horseshoe' where petty plots were given over to the production of tobacco, indigo, various provisions, and debased artisanal sugar cultivation and curing. The 'Irish horseshoe' was Montserrat's 'Corktown': its three census districts in the late seventeenth century were between 76 and 91 per cent Irish, and it was this region of the island that was most threatening, traitorous, and turbulent.

⁹ For a discussion of some of this, and a citation of many relevant sources, see Palmer 2000, pp. 188, 193–5, 199.

But it was not a bastion of revolutionary 'commonism'. Nearly 32 per cent of the small households held an adult slave or two, and, the predominance of male slaves aside, these chattels were not likely to end their days as beloved mistresses or wives. The southern Montserrat Irish were far more likely to be working the land alongside Church-sanctioned white spouses than were their more profligate seigneurial counterparts to the north. It was these 'dominant' and, for a variety of obvious reasons, more 'enlightened', Montserrat barons – some English, some Irish, and a smattering of Scots – who, again for obvious reasons (lack of a wife, availability of opportunity, accessibility, and seclusion, and possibly a variety of cultural factors), proved prone to bed slave women. This is precisely why the island's 'Black Irish' never called 'the horseshoe' home. They were not, overwhelmingly, born to the formerly destitute Irish commoners, whose racism fitted well with their seized chance to rise from the bottom on the back of slave labour. And, as Carl and Roberta Bridgenbaugh have reasonably suggested, 'nobody could have been a more vicious taskmaster than a recently freed small planter trying desperately to get established by endeavoring to get every penny out of his investment in labor'.¹⁰

By 1680, the Irish constituted a subordinate smallholder majority of approximately 1,870 of the 2,680 white population of Montserrat. However rebellious they were (and they did indeed at times prove disloyal subjects to their powerful English rulers, even going so far as to cast their lot with the rival French in the 1660s), their antagonism to the hegemony of Protestant power never quite boiled to the point that they countenanced freeing or allying with the plantation economy's approximately 1,000 black slaves. Had they done so, a common community could have been established on Montserrat and the sugar slavery of the Island would not have flourished over the course of the eighteenth century, when the unfree black population soared to a reputed (if often questioned) 10,000 by 1774.¹¹

Hydra's insight

It is thus critical to weigh alternative readings such as these when grappling with Linebaugh's and Rediker's arguments, which have an almost intuitive appeal to the retreating radicalisms of our time. Yet, historical materialists gain little by washing clean the stained problematics of the past. Too much carping in this direction, however, also buries much and obscures the insight and imagination of this book. The chapter on 'the outcast nations of the earth', for instance, revisits the New York Conspiracy of 1741 (mentioned above), which, however exaggerated in the Linebaugh and Rediker

¹⁰ Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh 1972, pp. 106–7.

¹¹ Akenson 1997, especially pp. 73, 88, 111–16, 179, 185–6; Fergus 1994, pp. 22–6, 61, 81–4; Messenger 1967; 1967a; 1975.

comparison to the Naples events of 1649, convinces me – whose brief allusion to the revolt in *Cultures of Darkness* followed conventional wisdoms in understating the extent of the actual conspiracy – of the need to look deeper.¹² Most of the standard commentary on this waterfront-tavern nurtured incendiary plot of African-Americans and poor whites has skimmed the polite surface of ‘fact’ and ‘evidence’, allowing a jaundiced view of authority’s admittedly fear-driven irrationality to cloud the character of the ‘uprising’ in doubt. If Linebaugh and Rediker overstate the significance of this revolt, they offer us another perspective, in which the connective strands of the Atlantic world, seen not so much from below but through the eyes of fearful authority in an outpost of empire, worried by imperial attack from another European power and the possibility of a wider slave uprising, come together in a creative historical reconstruction of an event perhaps too easily slighted. In a way, this kind of overstatement, clearly a weakness of the book, is also its strength. In bending the analytical stick against the tautly narrow interpretive conventionality of our times, *The Many-Headed Hydra* insists on prying open a space in which the rebellious ‘commonism’ of the past, long suppressed as both act and knowledge, finally receives a hearing. In doing so, it reaches beyond empiricism through a conceptually-poised empirical idiom that demands respect at the same time as it stimulates reserve.

Whatever one’s particular reading of the strengths and weaknesses of Linebaugh’s and Rediker’s utilisation of Olaudah Equiano, Edward and Catherine Despard, or Robert Wedderburn to illuminate the meanings of the American Revolution, Jacobinism, Empire, and the Jubilee of abolitionism – these being the last chapters of the book – there is no doubt that, in terms of the hydra of revolt and opposition as it entangled issues of class, gender, and race in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, their account is a stimulating inducement to rethink the limitations of past accounts. But, as historical materialists, Linebaugh and Rediker owe their project, always one that is going to be assailed by mainstream interpretations, a thoroughgoing engagement with *all* evidence and argument, rather than the inclination, present in this study, of tilting interpretation in ways that accent *only* the positive possibility of a solidarity of the oppressed, sealed in the diffusion of revolutionary thought that is assumed rather than demonstrated to have existed.

Historical and materialist queries

For instance, in the discussion of ‘the motley crew’ and the American Revolution, Linebaugh and Rediker develop usefully Jessie Lemisch’s arguments about jack tars as the shock troops of a radical revolutionary contingent that pushed the

¹² Palmer 2000, p. 179.

constitutionalist struggle against British domination to the left, with street mobilisations and crowd actions that challenged property and propriety.¹³ They take this further in their insistence that 'the motley crew' was multi-ethnic, and that it drew on the ideas and active revolts of the transatlantic 'commonist' tradition, from Putney to Tacky's slave revolt in Jamaica in 1760. Linebaugh and Rediker then use the memoirs of the ostensible Igbo slave and sailor Olaudah Equiano to serve as an example of the vectors of revolutionary-democratic antinomianism that they understand as central to the transatlantic experience of 'commonism', concluding their chapter with an effusive elegance:

The theory and practice of antinomian democracy, which had been generalized around the Atlantic in the seventeenth-century diaspora, would be revived and deepened in the eighteenth. What went out in whiteface came back in blackface, to end the pause in the discussion of democratic ideas in England to give new life to worldwide revolutionary movements. What goes around, comes around, by the circular winds and currents of the Atlantic. (p. 247)

Such a passage is a welcome provocation to consider anew much that we have thought 'known'. But it also licences a great deal in its powerfully evocative prose, through which an almost poetic sensibility sidesteps issues of evidence and interpretation.

Some hard questions need asking: do Linebaugh and Rediker demonstrate convincingly that the theory and practice of antinomian democracy had indeed been generalised throughout the Atlantic world in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? Have they actually argued through adequately the reciprocities of white and black in this epoch of enslavement and the murderous trade in human bodies of colour, from which whites of high station and low profited (or understood themselves to profit), albeit in highly differentiated ways? What is an historical materialist to make of this almost environmentally determinist suggestion that winds and currents inevitably carry revolutionary movements and ideas? It does not help, of course, that an empirical interrogation of the veracity of Equiano's account has now been launched, the suggestion made that his 1789 narrative, on which Linebaugh and Rediker rely, fabricates a connection to Africa and the experience of the Middle Passage.¹⁴ But this issue of an individual claim is less than pivotal: Equiano could well have constructed 'his' narrative as a composite 'recollection', an accounting drawn from sea stories and oral histories quite as valid as any personal biography.

¹³ Lemisch 1968; 1997; 1999.

¹⁴ Caretta 1999.

Jamaica, 1760: Tacky's Revolt, the commons, and Africanist chiliasms of despair?

More troubling is the assumption of what needs demonstrating: the actual movement (and purchase) of ideas, evidence of tangible commitments to a 'commonist' culture, and organised expressions of alternative. That the sites of Linebaugh's and Rediker's vectors of revolutionary development, such as Tacky's Revolt, often fit awkwardly at best within their argument of a 'motley crew' united in its battle against *both* enslavement and dispossession, is more disturbing.

Tacky's Revolt, for example, is difficult to understand, as Linebaugh and Rediker, claim, as striking 'the tocsin of freedom's uprising' within 'the cycle of the American Revolution', (p. 236) when many have argued, without denigrating its significance, that it represented something of a transition in the history of slave revolt. Genovese's succinct characterization seems apt, and far more complicating, in its assessment of maroon-African, slave-British, plantocracy-revolutionary ideas relations, than Linebaugh and Rediker are prepared to allow:

The pacification of the maroons made revolt during the eighteenth century more difficult and less frequent, but not less intense: In 1760, St. Mary's Parish exploded in a revolt of at least 400 slaves, which triggered other revolts, one of which engaged about a thousand. The maroons helped the British crush 'Tacky's Rebellion,' but not before Jamaica had been shaken to its foundations by Akan slaves-turned-warriors, called to arms by obeahmen. This revolt, and those of 1765 and 1766 marked the beginning of the transition from rebellions aimed at restoring an African past to the movements to establish a revolutionary future.¹⁵

A recent historical account, on which Linebaugh and Rediker rely but do not follow, sees Tacky's Revolt as led by African Coromantees bent, to be sure, on freedom, but not one necessarily governed by Winstanley's understanding of the commons.

According to Michael Craton, who often cites the same eighteenth-century accounts that Linebaugh and Rediker draw upon, the Jamaican Coromantee slave uprising was 'a classic revolt led by the fiercest of the unassimilated Africans, . . . possible only in a comparatively early stage of plantation development'. Craton echoes the West Indian Jamaican historian, Edward Long, an admittedly fearful commentator, whose hatred for the Akan slaves was patently clear in 1774 writings that claimed Tacky and his followers were intent on 'the entire extirpation of the white inhabitants; the enslaving of all such Negroes as might refuse to join them; and the partition of the island into small principalities in the African mode; to be distributed among their leaders and head men'. This, if true, was hardly a call to the commons.

¹⁵ Genovese 1979, p. 36.

Nor, it must be said, were some of the rebel slaves' actions: at one plantation they raped 'the mulatto mistress' of a slain overseer, sparing her life only when the estate's slaves spoke kind words of her always being on their side. Linebaugh and Rediker quote a passage from Long that also appears in Craton's book, a recounting of a captured Akan slave revolt leader's conversation with a Jewish militia guard. They stress the African's view that the sailors did not oppose the revolution, and would 'bring us things from t'other side the sea, and be glad to take our goods in payment' (p. 222). Craton reads the entire passage differently: 'Thus, in Long's account, the Coromantee was proposing a decolonized Jamaica and a situation very similar to that in his native West Africa; the Africans would be firmly in political control, the white Europeans would come as commercial suppliers, and the Jews (like the Portuguese *tangomaos*) would act as middlemen'. 'Commonism', clearly, is here in the eye of the beholder.¹⁶

It is possible to see in Tacky's Revolt something different from a linkage backward to Winstanley and the Putney Debates and forward to the American Revolution. This understandable revolt, which ended in vicious repression, was an eminently materialist struggle to drive to ultimate deadly defeat an enslaving enemy and reconstitute an old, and almost certainly inequalitarian, African order. Africanisms motivated Africans.

Assailing a brutalising slave régime, the rebel chattel Tacky ordered his world view less around ideas of the commons antagonistic to property than around the outlawed Akan religion, with its belief in spirit possession, supernatural power, and the ever-present influence of the dead. How much this revolt could possibly have 'revived and contributed to a tradition of revolutionary thought that stretched back to Winstanley and the English Revolution' (pp. 222–3) is surely questionable given Tacky's willingness to condemn to chattelhood all blacks who did not join unambiguously with him – unless Linebaugh and Rediker want to argue that some Levellers actually advocated enslaving Englishmen as a form of punishment, a position put forward fleetingly in the aftermath of the Putney Debates. But the implication of such qualifications compromises the notion of the commons considerably. More fruitful, perhaps, although it ventures on to highly contentious interpretive ground, given the sensitivity with which we must approach resistance to enslavement drawn out of cultures entirely foreign to contemporary Anglo-American experience, is the possibility that Tacky's Revolt was an anguished, entirely justifiable uprising driven, in part, by a quest for freedom that drew some of its sustenance from an African-ordered 'chiliasm of despair'.¹⁷

¹⁶ Craton 1982, pp. 125–39; 1997, pp. 169, 179.

¹⁷ On Leveller enslavement see Eltis 2000, pp. 15–16, quoting a Winstanley pamphlet of 1650; on 'chiliasm of despair' see, of course, Thompson 1963, pp. 375–400.

Hydra's advocates: Despard, Wedderburn and Blake

Linebaugh and Rediker also insist, with no evidence to hand save that he was born in Jamaica in its aftermath, that Tacky's Revolt 'undoubtedly influenced' Robert Wedderburn (p. 319). The offspring of an enslaved mother and her estate-owning, doctor slavemaster, Wedderburn became a radical Spencean and abolitionist, a crusader for the freedoms of wage and chattel slaves on both sides of the Atlantic. If Tacky's Revolt had less of an impact on him than suggested in passing in *The Many-Headed Hydra*, the San Domingo Revolution of Toussaint L'Ouverture, with its motivating connections to eighteenth-century bourgeois revolution and the anti-slavery crusade, surely registered with him directly. A black Jacobin, Wedderburn makes a part of the case Linebaugh and Rediker want to establish, and strongly so.¹⁸

Going too far, interpretively, then, is a setback in this study, but not one that repudiates its promise, for such transgression pushes us to rethink the nature of evidence and event. It brings figures such as Equiano, Despard, and Wedderburn into new focus. This could be done with less hyperbole and more nuanced appreciation of contradiction, to be sure. The account of Despard, who grew into his revolutionary stand of the late 1790s and early 1800s, out of blocked passages to military promotion and frustrated reform sensibilities in the tightening anti-radical climate assailing English Jacobins in the post-1789 years, should probably take into account his complicity with, and possible direct involvement in slavery and ruthless military discipline in Jamaica, Nicaragua, and Belize over the course of the 1760s, 1770s, and 1780s. To do this, and to then address the reconfiguration of this officer and official within imperialism's army, would be to explore change and transformation, which were irksomely messy constants in the Atlantic world of the eighteenth century. But not to do this fits better with a particular view from below, in which the hydra's advocates are seldom at odds with one another or with the revolutionary impulse of 'the motley crew'. It almost certainly was never quite this clear-cut. Yet, that said, who can read Linebaugh's and Rediker's account of Despard and not concede how much more extensive and rich is our knowledge of this executed Jacobin conspirator, written about so sympathetically by E.P. Thompson in the early 1960s, now that we have a perspective from the hidden history of the revolutionary Atlantic?

The authors close with William Blake and the final moment of that globally transformative revolutionary Atlantic period, the 1790s. They bring together race and class as what they perceive to be the decisive solidarities of the Age of Revolution, with gender somewhat in the background. Acknowledging the subsequent separation, through nineteenth-century defeat of the multi-ethnic proletariat, of these lived experiences and sites of oppression and struggle, Linebaugh and Rediker are perhaps

¹⁸ Note, of course, James 1963.

overemphasising what might have been the better to galvanize what could, in our time, become.¹⁹ They insist that, in the two centuries separating Blake and ourselves, much has been lost, and many defeats suffered at the hands of capital's rapacious project. They concede that 'the globalizing powers have a long reach and endless patience', but insist, nevertheless, that 'planetary wanderers do not forget, and they are ever ready from Africa to the Caribbean to Seattle to resist slavery and restore the commons'.

In what distant deeps or skies
 Burnt the fire of thine eyes!
 On what wings dare he aspire?
 What the hand, dare seize the fire? (p. 353)

Is this romanticism? Perhaps. But it is in the best tradition of this potentially revolutionary sensibility.²⁰ Marx, after all, understood well capital's capacities, not only to write its record in the annals of history in 'blood and fire', but also of its ability to accommodate, domesticate, and blind with a brilliant array of hegemonic incorporation. Yet his appeal, too, was constant: workers of all worlds had nothing to lose but their chains would they only unite. Historical materialism is not purely and simply a decontextualised science, a method of grasping political economy as relations of global power, a bleak accounting of ruling élites' tight but supple hold over the masses. It is also about 'seizing the fire'. Linebaugh and Rediker give us some flames. We can ask for more, but we should recognise that, in doing so, we must never demand less.

Historical materialism and revolutionary movement

As a project, historical materialism is as much political as it is analytical. It exists, as some wonderfully suggestive writings by Perry Anderson imply, at the interface of act and thought.²¹ In the absence of the former, an active Marxist movement of powerful influence with the potential to seize power for class ends, the latter, Marxist interpretive thought, is necessarily constrained, and at times skewed. To say this is not to argue that such work is valueless. Often, its skewing is its strength. Lacking the moorings of a revolutionary movement, which would give them the strength to speak the truth, conceptualisations and writings struggling to be historically-materialist in times of radical defeat and setback confront their climates of constraint in ways that can overstate the possible the better to revive potential struggles.

¹⁹ See, as well, Thompson 1963, p. 13: 'Causes which were lost in England might, in Asia or Africa, yet be won.'

²⁰ Löwy and Sayer 2001; Löwy 2002.

²¹ Anderson 1976; 1983.

Reading *The Many-Headed Hydra* may be about this kind of problem. Linebaugh and Rediker want the 'commonism' of the revolutionary Atlantic of centuries past to be there for the 'commonism' of the current global struggle. That it was not, at least to the extent that the authors claim in their generalised argument, is not to say that it was non-existent, nor to deny, as Linebaugh and Rediker suggest, that it has not been suppressed historically and historiographically. Yet, this book tells us so much that we have not known, and reaches to create an awareness of vibrant traditions of resistance long obscured, buried, and denied, that it goes a substantial way towards being a text of historical-materialist recovery. Its tragic flaw is that it wants too much, and neglects the extent to which this was, sadly, too little.

If the revolutionary movement in our time was less precarious, more robust in its capacities, not so beaten down by forces of superior and hostile strength, it would not seem so necessary to create a vision from below somewhat at odds with what had happened in the revolutionary Atlantic's past – which did, of course, contain significant currents of alternative so brilliantly imagined and pointed to by Linebaugh and Rediker. It is perhaps the case that works of historical materialism are most likely to emerge in the shadows of the kind of relentlessly sobering revolutionary activism that needs no exaggerated past because its present is sufficiently large and powerful. This was, after all, the context of 1848, 1871, and 1917, pivotal moments that spawned original texts of historical materialism.

Our times, unfortunately, are not a period such as these. And given that, then, we can both thank Linebaugh and Rediker for what they have produced, and take our critique of their deficiencies as well as our embrace of their considerable accomplishments into the active creation of the kinds of movements that will nourish both the emancipation of humanity and advances in historical-materialist research.

References

- Akenson, Donald Harman 1997, *If the Irish Ran the World: Montserrat, 1630–1730*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Althusser, Louis 1970a, *For Marx*, London: New Left Books.
- Althusser, Louis 1970b, *Reading Capital*, London: New Left Books.
- Althusser, Louis 1977, *Politics and History*, London: New Left Books.
- Anderson, Perry 1976, *Considerations on Western Marxism*, London: New Left Books.
- Anderson, Perry 1983, *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism: The Wellek Library Lectures*, London: Verso.
- Bloch, Marc 1954, *The Historian's Craft*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Bridenbaugh, Carl and Roberta Bridenbaugh 1972, *No Peace Beyond the Line: The English in the Caribbean, 1624–1690*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Caretta, Vincent 1999, 'Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa? New Light on an

- Eighteenth-Century Question of Identity', *Slavery and Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Societies*, 20, 3: 96–105.
- Carr, Edward H. 1964, *What Is History?*, Harmondsworth: Pelican.
- Clarke, John, Chas Critcher, and Richard Johnson (eds.) 1979, *Working-Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory*, London: Hutchinson.
- Cohen, Gerald A. 1978, *Karl Marx's Theory of History – A Defence*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Craton, Michael 1982, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Craton, Michael 1997, *Empire, Enslavement and Freedom in the Caribbean*, Oxford: James Currey.
- Davis, David Brion 2001, 'Slavery – White, Black, Muslim, and Christian', *New York Review of Books*, 15 July: 51–5.
- Dobb, Maurice 1946, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Eltis, David 2000, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fergus, Howard A. 1994, *Montserrat: History of a Caribbean Colony*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Caribbean.
- Genovese, Eugene D. 1965, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South*, New York: Random House.
- Genovese, Eugene D. 1971, *The World the Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation*, New York: Vintage.
- Genovese, Eugene D. 1974, *Roll, Jordon, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, New York: Pantheon.
- Genovese, Eugene D. 1979, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Hill, Christopher 1972, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution*, New York: Viking.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. 1972, 'Karl Marx's Contribution to Historiography', in *Ideology in Social Science*, edited by Robin Blackburn, New York: Pantheon.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. (ed.) 1982, *The History of Marxism, Volume 1: Marxism in Marx's Day*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- James, C.L.R. 1963, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, New York: Vintage.
- Lemisch, Jesse 1968, 'Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 25, 3rd series: 371–407.
- Lemisch, Jesse 1997, *Jack Tar vs. John Bull: The Role of New York's Seamen in Precipitating the Revolution*, New York: New Press.
- Lemisch, Jesse 1999, 'Communications: The "Mob" versus the "Crowd" – The British Marxists and Early American History; and a Word about "Empiricism" and "Theory"', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 56, 3rd series: 231–7.
- Löwy, Michael 2002, 'Unusual Marx', *Monthly Review*, 53: 59–63.
- Löwy, Michael and Robert Sayer 2001, *Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity*, Durham, NC.: Duke University Press.

- Marx, Karl 1968 [1852], *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in *Selected Works*, Moscow: Progress.
- Messenger, John C. 1967, 'The "Black Irish" of Montserrat', *Eire-Ireland*, 2, 2 Spring: 27–40.
- Messenger, John C. 1975, 'Montserrat: The Most Distinctively Irish Settlement in the New World', *Ethnicity*, 2, 3, September: 281–303.
- Mills, C. Wright 1959, *The Sociological Imagination*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Palmer, Bryan D. 2000, *Cultures of Darkness: Night Travels in the Histories of Transgression*, New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Rose, Nikolas 1999, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thompson, Dorothy (ed.) 2001, *The Essential E.P. Thompson*, New York: New Press.
- Thompson, Edward P. 1963, *The Making of the English Working Class*, New York: Vintage.
- Thompson, Edward P. 1975, *Whigs and Hunters: The Origins of the Black Act*, New York: Pantheon.
- Thompson, Edward P. 1978, *The Poverty of Theory & Other Essays*, London: Merlin.
- Torr, Dona 1956, *Tom Mann and His Times, Volume One: 1856–1890*, London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Copyright of Historical Materialism is the property of Brill Academic Publishers and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.