

Rosa Luxemburg in Translation: A Comparative Study of the Complete Works in the UK, France, and Italy

Ana Caerols Mateo* 

Associate Lecturer, Department of Romance,
French, Italian and Translation Studies,
Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain

Abstract

This article examines the current state of the translated editions of the ‘complete works’ of Rosa Luxemburg, one of the most influential figures in European Marxism at the turn of the 20th century, with particular attention to the projects undertaken in the United Kingdom, France, and Italy. In recent decades, various publishers and collectives have undertaken projects to recover and translate her theoretical, political and epistolary works, to rescue her legacy in different languages and political contexts. This phenomenon not only responds to academic interests but is also deeply linked to ideological dynamics and contemporary political militancy, making these editions spaces for negotiation between memory, historiography and political action. The study focuses on three paradigmatic cases in Western Europe: the United Kingdom, France and Italy. In the Anglo-Saxon world, the project was promoted by Verso Books under the coordination of Peter Hudis. In France, the work carried out by the Smolny collective and the Agone publishing house has opted for a contextualised edition that emphasises the historical and political dimension of the texts. In both countries, these efforts face financial and logistical constraints, but they have made significant progress thanks to the commitment of translators, editors and activists. In the Italian case, although there is no systematic project for a complete edition, the pioneering work of figures such as Lelio Basso, who played a crucial role in disseminating his thought during the 1960s and 1970s, is recognised.

Keywords: Translation, Rosa Luxemburg, multilingual critical edition, history of publishing, cultural mediation

Original Article

Accepted: 20.05.2025

Received: 30.04.2025

* Corresponding author: acaerols@ucm.es

Cite this article: Mateo, A. C. (2025). Rosa Luxemburg in translation: A comparative study of the complete works in the UK, France, and Italy. *Translation and Interpreting Research*, 2(6), 15-26. DOI: 10.22054/tir.2025.87881.1047

Publisher: ATU Press

Translation and Interpreting Research is the journal of Research Institute for Translation Studies (RITS), affiliated with Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran.

1. Introduction

That translation underpins history, that it is a fundamental part of it, while also reflecting and manifesting a broader sociocultural and political context, is evidenced, among other things, by research in the field of translation such as that carried out in recent years. Works such as those by Rundle (2012, 2021, 2022) on the history of translation in totalitarian regimes or European fascism and communism; research such as that by Hermans (2022) which addresses the importance of studying the history of translation and the links between history and translation. Similarly, translation practice plays a fundamental role in the development and evolution of a country's political thought (Calafat & Valdeón, 2020; Fernández & Evans, 2018, 2020).

This article discusses the work of editing Rosa Luxemburg's 'complete works' in English, by Verso Books, and in French, by Collectif Smolny-Agone, editions in both cases that are still awaiting new titles, based on previous translations or new translations or retranslations. A more succinct study of the Italian compilations of the Polish Marxist is also carried out.

Rosa Luxemburg wrote mainly in Polish and German, but also in Russian and French. The publication of her legacy in her mother tongue is far from complete. In the 1950s, after decades of exile following her assassination in 1919 at the hands of the German Freikorps, the Warsaw-based publishing house Glos i Wiedza published some of her works. In 1963, a bibliography was published in Warsaw, which was expanded in 1971. It included all the Polish, German, Russian and French texts known at the time. After 1971, virtually no more Polish texts were published in Poland. In the wake of the events of 1968, Rosa Luxemburg's work underwent a kind of revival, both in Europe and elsewhere, which was reflected in the publication of her 'complete' works in the then Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). These editions were almost correlative: while the FRG began its rehabilitation of the Polish Marxist in the late 1960s, the GDR undertook this work in the early 1970s, under the close supervision of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (in German: Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, abbreviated to SED or PSUA in Spanish), a party integrated into the Soviet sphere.

Among Western European countries, France and the United Kingdom occupy a 'privileged' position as the precursors of this attempt to rehabilitate the complete works of Rosa Luxemburg. These two countries are the first, after Germany, to carry out this process, which is still ongoing. Those responsible have taken as their reference the edition that began in the 1970s in East Germany by Dietz Verlag.

In some cases, the texts have been translated directly from German and Polish, and even from Russian; in others, some texts have been retranslated, such as certain translations from English and French. It is estimated that there are thousands of pages in the Polish archives that have not yet seen the light of day. It should also be noted that there are numerous articles and materials that, although unsigned, were written by Luxemburg. Thanks to the commitment and drive of activists and militants of the 'socialist' cause(s), various publishing houses and collectives have set out to publish the complete works of the revolutionary Marxist theorist. It will be particularly significant to follow how these processes develop in the Anglo-Saxon and French contexts and, to a lesser extent, in Italy.

2. Recovery and Rehabilitation of Rosa Luxemburg in English

In recent years around 2,000 additional pages of unpublished writings by Rosa Luxemburg in German have been discovered and published as supplementary volumes in the ongoing editions (P. Hudis, personal communication, August 11, 2020). Today, several thousand additional pages of writings originally in Polish have not yet been published, even in German. In the English-speaking world, the

lack of accessibility to her complete writings remains considerable, despite the enormous effort being made. Although her most important political writings – such as *Reform or Revolution*, *The Mass Strike*, *Political Party and Trade Unions*, and *The Russian Revolution* – were translated and published some time ago, dozens of essays and speeches and hundreds of articles have yet to be translated into English.

In the late 1970s, M.^a José Aubet compiled the main anthologies of Rosa Luxemburg's texts in English. Among them is an anthology of speeches published in 1970 by M. A. Waters (*Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*, New York, Pathfinder Press), speeches presented in chronological order and accompanied by comments from Lenin and Trotsky in the form of an appendix on the political and theoretical personality of the revolutionary. There is a Spanish translation of this edition (Pluma publishing house, Bogotá, 1976, in two volumes entitled *Obras escogidas*). D. Howard's 1971 edition, *Rosa Luxemburg. Political Writings* is arranged thematically and, in addition to an introduction by the editor, contains an unpublished article (*What at the origins of May Day?*, 1984) and other articles of lesser importance. R. Locker's 1972 selection of political writings (*Rosa Luxemburg. Selected Political Writings*, London, Johnathan Cape) includes little-known texts considered to be of lesser importance.

And finally, a collection of writings devoted to the national question, edited by H. B. Davis in 1976 (*The National Question: Selected Writings*, New York/London, Monthly Review Press). This selection contains the revolutionary's three most important contributions on the national question, one of the most controversial issues in all of Rosa Luxemburg's work. At the time, it was the most complete version produced in the West (Aubet, 1977b). Other later anthologies, all published before 2014 – when the project to publish 'all' her works in English began – are (Castle, n.d.): P. Le Blanc (Ed.) (1999). *Rosa Luxemburg; Reflections and Writings*. Humanity Books; T. Kowalik (Ed.) (2004). *The Accumulation of Capital* (A. Schwarzschild, Trans.). Routledge – one of the central works of Luxemburgian thought; P. Hudis and K. Anderson (Eds.) (2004). *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*. Monthly Review Press; and, finally, Revolutionary History (Ed.) (2009). *Rosa Luxemburg; Selected Political and Literary Writings*. Merlin Press.

2.1. The 'Complete' Works in English: An Ongoing Project

The publication of Rosa Luxemburg's 'complete works' in English – including books, essays, articles, speeches, manuscripts and letters, material which, as we have already pointed out, is seeing the light of day for the first time – is a paradigmatic case in the geographical-political context of the West, where the figure and work of the revolutionary are still little known. Verso Books, a publishing house founded in 1970 in New York by the 'staff' of *New Left Review* – a British magazine focusing on Marxist political issues – is carrying out the project in collaboration with the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung and Karl Dietz Verlag Berlin. The publication of these works is being coordinated by Professor Peter Hudis, and, for the first time, most of her available works are expected to be available in English in the coming years. The project is being developed according to the following schedule. The original publication plan consists of 17 volumes, six of which will be devoted to her correspondence. At the time of writing, five volumes have been published. The first appeared in 2014 and the second in 2015. The third and latest volume published (2019) is dedicated to Political Writings (vol. III). In addition to these, there is one more volume of his correspondence.

Thousands of pages have been translated from German on topics such as anthropology, imperialism, non-Western societies, labour and democracy – some of them discovered in recent years – and thousands more pages of material from Polish, much of which refers to the Russian Revolution of 1905–1906. In addition to this, material previously translated into English is being retranslated. Even so, according to the editors, more than 75% of his work remains untranslated into English.

The plan is presented in three sections (Table 1).

Table 1. Sections

I. Economic writings	First three volumes
II. Political writings	Nine volumes
III. Letters	Five volumes

To date, as reflected on the Verso Books website (n.d.), four volumes have been published, not counting the volume dedicated to correspondence.

The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg, Volume I

Economic writings 1. Rosa Luxemburg.

Edited by Peter Hudis.

Translated by David Fernbach, Joseph Fracchia and George Shriver.

Volume I of the complete works project brings together economic writings not previously available in English, at least in their entirety, such as *Introduction to Political Economy*, which explores, among other things, the impact of capitalist commodity production and the industrialisation of non-capitalist social strata in the developing world. It also includes a series of manuscripts on pre-capitalist societies and economic history as part of her work at the Social Democratic Party School in Germany. It also contains some of Rosa Luxemburg's most important speeches on the globalisation of capital, wage labour, imperialism, etc., and a new translation of her doctoral thesis.

The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg, Volume II

Economic writings 2. Rosa Luxemburg.

Editors: Peter Hudis and Paul Leblanc.

Translators: Nicholas Gray, George Shriver and David.

Volume II, published in 2015, includes new translations of two of her most important texts: *The Accumulation of Capital* and *The Anticritic*. It is one of the most important works on capitalism's drive for self-expansion and its connection to imperialism. It is presented for the first time as the author conceived it. It also includes an essay on volumes 2 and 3 of Marx's *Capital*.

The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg, Volume III

Political Writings 1. On Revolution: 1897–1905. Rosa Luxemburg.

Edited by Peter Hudis and William A. Pelz.

Translators: Henry Holland, Alicja Mann, and George Shriver.

The first of the three volumes, *On Revolution*, is devoted to the subject to which Rosa Luxemburg devoted her life: revolution. It contains writings from 1897 to the end of 1905 and was published in January 2019 as volume III of the complete works. This volume includes, almost in its entirety, articles and reports on the revolutionary process of 1905. Most of these writings appear for the first time in English, translated from German and Polish. These texts offer a new perspective on issues such as the relationship between spontaneity and organizing, the role of national minorities in social revolution, and the inseparable link between the struggle for socialism and revolutionary democracy. They provide a strong impetus for the development of much of her later political theory, such as those devoted to mass strikes and internationalism, among other issues.

The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg, Volume IV

Political Writings 2, On Revolution: 1906–1909.

Edited by: Peter Hudis and Sandra Rein.

Translators: Jacob Blumenfeld, Nicholas Gray, Henry Holland, Zachary King, Manuela Kölke and Joseph Muller.

More than 80% of the 600 pages of this fourth volume are content appearing in English for the first time. The translations are from German, Russian and Polish originals. It contains texts on the revolution covering the period between 1906 and 1909, in particular on the revolutionary process of 1905–1906, its analysis and consequences. This volume also includes numerous writings and essays not previously available in English, such as *Lessons of the Three Dumas*, written in 1908, and *Notes on the English Revolution*, on the 1640s, as well as texts on the role of mass strikes in the revolutionary process.

*The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg, Volume V
Political Writings 2, On Revolution: 1910–1919.*

Edited by: Helen C. Scott and Paul Le Blanc.

This volume is in preparation and is scheduled for publication in April 2024. Much of the material collected appears in English for the first time. It contains all of Rosa Luxemburg's writings on the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the revolutions of 1918–1919 in Germany. It also includes all kinds of material – articles, essays, manuscripts – on the European socialist movement before the First World War.

The Letters of Rosa Luxemburg.

Edited by Georg Adler, Peter Hudis and Annelies Laschitza.

Translated by George Shriver.

The volume devoted to Rosa Luxemburg's letters corresponds to the translation of *Herzlichst Ihrer Rosa*, published in 1978 by Annelies Laschitza and George Adler, and represents the longest collection of her letters ever published. The volume includes 190 letters written to prominent figures in the labour movement, as well as friends, lovers and colleagues, such as Leo Jogiches, Karl Kautsky, Clara Zetkin and Karl Liebknecht. The letters are also being published in English for the first time.

2.2. George Shriver: Rosa Luxemburg's Militant Translator

Special mention should be made of one of Rosa Luxemburg's main translators into English, who passed away in 2020. His name was George Shriver, an activist committed to socialism. His first task was to undertake the translation of *The Letters of Rosa Luxemburg* (2011), whose reference title would be *Herzlichst, Ihre Rosa*. George Shriver translated from Russian, Polish and German, languages in which, in the words of Peter Hudis, he 'moved with uncommon ease' (Hudis, 2020). And so, little by little, he took on the translation of her 'complete works', becoming the main translator of Rosa Luxemburg's works into English. First, he translated previously unpublished manuscripts on pre-capitalist societies, anthropology and economic history, which appeared in the first volume of the complete works. Next, he translated an essay on Marx's *Capital*, which appeared in volume 2. He continued to translate a multitude of articles and manuscripts on the Russian Revolution of 1905, which were included in volume 3 of the English edition, devoted entirely to the revolution and published in 2019. After his death, Peter Hudis left us these words – taken from a passage in Rosa Luxemburg's correspondence – of gratitude and recognition from his friend George Shriver:

Then see that you remain a human being. To be a human being is the main thing, above all else. And that means: to be firm and clear and cheerful, yes, cheerful in spite of everything and anything, because howling is the business of the weak. To be a human being means to joyfully toss your entire life 'on the giant scales of fate' if it must be so, and at the same time to rejoice in the brightness of every day and the beauty of every cloud. (Hudis, 2020)

3. Rosa Luxemburg in French: The Pioneers

The first translations of the revolutionary Marxist were published in the 1930s; in 1930, Lucien Lauran, André Prudhommeaux and Marcel Ollivier published *L'Accumulation du Capital d'après Rosa Luxemburg*. A few years later, between 1934 and 1947, René Lefeuvre and Cahiers Spartacus published works ranging from *La Révolution Russe* (1937) to *Réforme ou Révolution* and *Grève de Masse, Parti et Syndicats* (1947), not to mention *La Crise de la Social-Démocratie*, which appeared later, in 1993. However, if there is one reference point when it comes to the publication of the first anthologies of Rosa Luxemburg, among other exponents of the political left tradition, it is François Maspero, an eminent publisher, writer, journalist and translator, a key figure in European left-wing political culture in the 1970s and one of the greatest experts on the revolutionary's work.

In 1969, in the immediate aftermath of May 1968 – which would lead to a resurgence and almost a rediscovery of the figure and work of the revolutionary – Maspero published two volumes of correspondence, the complete version of *L'Accumulation du Capital* and two collections of political texts, *Oeuvres I-IV, Petite Collection Maspero*, with the collaboration of translators Irène Petit and Claudie Weill; and *Textes* (Ed. G. Badia), Ed. *Sociales*, also in 1969. These early anthologies were joined by two volumes of letters to Léo Jogiches, published by Denoël in 1971. The early 1970s also saw the publication of *Le Socialisme en France (1898–1912)* (Ed. D. Guérin), Belfond, 1971, which brings together unpublished articles not included in the complete works that refer to the situation in France; and *Lettres et tracts de Spartakus* (Ed. Tête des Feuilles), 1972.

3.1. The 'Complete' Works of Rosa Luxemburg in French: A Proposal from the Agone Smolny Publishing Collective

The Agone-Smolny publishing collective explains how the restoration of a contemporary edition of Rosa Luxemburg's work should be approached.

La production de Luxemburg est donnée tour sauf académique. Portée par le mouvement de classe, elle en subit les flux et les reflux. Deux articles recensés en 1897 mais soixante l'année suivante, dix-sept en 1901 mais quatre-vingt-un en 1905! L'effort de contextualisation et de spécification historique des interventions de Rosa Luxemburg est donc primordial et doit soutenir l'ensemble de l'appareil critique accompagnant ses textes (...) Restituer son œuvre de façon dite 'scientifique' porterait le risque d'introduire une distanciation entre l'auteur et la finalité qu'il souhaitait donner à son œuvre ... (Collectif Smolny-Agone, 2021).

According to the editors, this is the most 'complete' edition possible, in line with the progress of the document search work, carried out in consultation with the counterpart teams preparing the English and German versions, Verso Books and Karl Dietz Verlag Berlin, respectively. This edition is not complete in the sense that many of the writings and newspaper articles are not yet available. Many of his unpublished titles, mostly unsigned articles, but whose authorship has been ascertained, come mainly from newspapers such as the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* or the *Sozialdemokratische Korrespondenz* (Collectif Smolny-Agone, 2021).

The approach adopted in this edition could be described as thematic and chronological. The thematic groupings are intended to give coherence to the collection of works presented, while reflecting the context of the period and the labour movement as a whole. The chronological aspect, in turn, allows us to grasp the evolution of Rosa Luxemburg's thinking and the conditions in which it developed. The latest volumes are devoted to correspondence, also following a chronological criterion (Collectif Smolny-Agone, 2021). According to the editorial proposal, the publication project has the following itinerary. The first volume, published in 2009, contains the posthumous *Introduction à l'économie politique* and is accompanied by a reflection on the importance of Luxemburg's work. It is the first in

a series that will include at least ten volumes of texts and three large volumes of correspondence. What has been published so far, as reflected on the website (Collectif Smolny-Agone, 2021), is presented as follows:

Introduction à l'économie politique
Premier volume des Œuvres complètes
 Translation by Jacqueline Blois
 Introduction: 'Rosa Luxemburg, integrity of a work'
 Epilogue by Lous Janover

In 1906, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) opened a Central School in Berlin for the training of its cadres. From 1907 onwards, Rosa Luxemburg began teaching lessons in economic history, political economy and the history of socialism, a task she continued until 1913. *The Introduction to Political Economy* was published posthumously in 1925, when her party colleague and executor decided to publish it in book form.

A l'École du socialisme
Œuvres complètes - Tome II. Rosa Luxemburg
 Translated from German by Lucie Roignant
 Foreword by the Smolny Collective
 Afterword by Michael Krätke

All the texts in this second volume, translated from German, were previously unpublished in French. On the one hand, it includes documents that complement *The Introduction to Political Economy*, the result of her lectures at the Central School of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. On the other hand, it includes speeches and articles on theoretical training in the labour movement and reviews of Karl Marx's posthumous works.

Le Socialisme en France (1898–1912)
Œuvres complètes - Tome III. Rosa Luxemburg
 Edited and with a foreword by Jean-Numa Ducange
 Translated from German by Daniel Guérin and Lucie Roignant
 Translated from Polish by Aleksander Jouselin

This volume brings together Rosa Luxemburg's writings on French politics during this period. The central debate within the European left at the end of the 19th century revolved around the possibility of collaborating with bourgeois governments or breaking directly with the capitalist system. The debates between Rosa Luxemburg, Kautsky and Bernstein on 'reform or revolution' that were taking place in Germany and the positions held by Jaurès and Millerand – with whom the revolutionary Marxist would argue bitterly over his rapprochement with bourgeois governments, becoming the first socialist to form part of a bourgeois government – are a clear example of Luxemburg's contributions to the political events surrounding France at that time. The great political trial that was the Dreyfus affair in the 19th century, the question of revolutionary syndicalism. These are some of the other issues dealt with in this volume.

The brochure Junius, la guerre et l'Internationale (1907–1916)
Œuvres complètes - Tome IV. Rosa Luxemburg
 Edited by Julien Chuzeville, Marie Laigle and Éric Sevault
 Translated from German by Marie Hermann
 Introduction by Julien Chuzeville and Éric Sevault

The writings included in Volume IV constitute a harsh indictment of the Social Democracy's capitulation to war within the framework of the Second International and an exhortation to the international proletariat to take sides in the war of 1914. *The Crisis of Social Democracy*, written from

prison in 1915 and also known as the *Junius Pamphlet*, is one of the most important political writings of the Polish revolutionary. This text exposes, like no other, the roots and causes of the Great War and denounces the motives and justifications given by the SPD for intervening in it.

L'Accumulation du capital

Contribution à l'explication économique de l'impérialisme

Œuvres complètes - Tome V. Rosa Luxemburg

Edited by Xavier Crépin and Éric Sevault

Translated from German by Irène Petit and Marcel Ollivier and revised by Marie Boudoussier

Preface by Guillaume Fondu and Ulysse Lozhkin

Epilogue by Mylène Gaulard and Loren Goldner

Published in 1913, this is a seminal work in the field of Marxist economics and one of the first studies and analyses of imperialism on the impossibility of realising surplus value for accumulation within capitalism. It is a work that exposes the central problems facing the reproduction of capitalism within its own territories. Beyond its theoretical interest and importance, the book was a 'tool' for the struggle against imperialism in the context of the First World War.

In addition to those mentioned above, the following titles are in preparation:

Œuvres complètes - Tome IV, Rosa Luxemburg

Impérialisme, colonialisme et militarisme.

Edited by Ulisse Lojkine, Dominique Villaeys-Poirré and Alice Vincent

Expected release date: 2026

Correspondance complète - Volume I: 1891–1905

Edited by Julien Chuzeville, Marie Laigle and Éric Sevault

Expected release date: 2026

4. Rosa Luxemburg and her Works Compiled in Italian

It should be noted that there is no project to translate Rosa Luxemburg's complete works into Italian comparable to those being carried out in the English-speaking and French-speaking worlds. Lelio Basso, lawyer, socialist activist and founder of the Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria, PSIUP) in 1964, is one of the main figures responsible for introducing Rosa Luxemburg's work into Italian, both as an editor and as a translator, as well as being one of the greatest experts on the Marxist revolutionary. We could say that Lelio Basso is to the Italian sphere what Maspero was to the French. According to research carried out by M.^a José Aubet (1977b), the most important anthologies in Italian dedicated to the Polish revolutionary include: *Scritti politici* (edited by L. Basso, 1967 and 1974) Rome, Riuniti, contains an introduction, written by Lelio Basso himself, considered one of the best contributions to the knowledge and work of Rosa Luxemburg; *Scritti sull'arte e sulla letteratura*, Verona, Bertani, 1976, contains relatively little-known writings despite being a subject dealt with extensively by Rosa Luxemburg; *Per conoscere Rosa Luxemburg* (edited by L. Basso), Rome, Mondadori, 1977, is a compilation of Rosa Luxemburg's texts on various topics which, 'for the first time, offers an excellent theoretical contextualisation of Luxemburg's work based on the criticism and commentary that her writings aroused in her time' (Aubet, 1977a, p. 263).

Similarly, we cannot fail to mention the first Italian anthology of selected writings by the revolutionary Marxist: *Scritti scelti*, with a long introductory essay by Luciano Amodio (Einaudi, Turin, 1963). This text was reissued in 1976 in a revised and expanded version by Einaudi, a leading Italian publishing house founded in 1933 by Giulio Einaudi, together with Leone Ginzburg, Massimo Mila, Norberto Bobbio and Cesare Pavese, a group that was later joined by Natalia Ginzburg and Giaime

Pintor. The publishing house was founded with a strong political and cultural imprint, specialising in non-fiction and essays, which were two of its most important collections: the *Biblioteca di Cultura Storica and Saggi*. It was a publishing house with a strong left-wing slant that published authors such as Marx, Gramsci, Lukács, Rosa Luxemburg herself, and the series known as Libri Bianchi, created in response to the events and crisis in Hungary in 1956 and the revelation of the crimes of Stalinism. It also renewed Italian fiction, introducing new authors and publishing today's classics, such as Calvino, Passolini, Thomas Mann, Lacan, Leonardo Scascia and Elsa Morante (Einaudi, 1994).

Between the 1960s and 1970s, many other texts by the revolutionary Marxist were published. These included key works of Luxemburgian thought, political and economic writings, as well as some editions of her vast correspondence, such as Lelio Basso's edition of *Lettere a Leo Jogiches*, published in 1978 in Milan by Feltrinelli. Between 2012 and 2013, an anthology of a significant part of her political writings was published, as well as a selection of her correspondence that is worth mentioning. The publishing house Eir is responsible for this anthology. It is an edition translated from German by Lelio Basso himself. In the introduction to these *Scritti politici*, Lelio Basso (2012) defines Rosa Luxemburg's theoretical work as 'a resounding fight against any attempt to harden Marxism into soulless schemes'. In the introduction to these volumes, he explains the reasons why he has produced this edition:

La ragione che mi ha spinto a presentare al pubblico italiano questa antologia dei principali scritti politici di Rosa Luxemburg non è stata quella di dare un contributo alla conoscenza storica del movimento operaio internazionale, nel quale Rosa Luxemburg ha occupato per vent'anni un posto preminente, ma di offrire uno strumento attuale, ancora oggi perfettamente valido, per l'elaborazione e l'approfondimento di una strategia di lotta per il movimento operaio. È valido ancora oggi, anzi lo diventa sempre di più man mano che i militanti più seri e impegnati, spezzate le catene del dogmatismo e abbandonate le illusioni perennemente risorgenti dell'opportunismo, tornano alla fonte viva del pensiero marxista, riscoprendone l'inesauribile ricchezza (Basso, 2012, p. 11).

The selection of works included in these two volumes reflects the centrality of the topics and their historical relevance (Table 2). These are some of the most important titles:

Table 2. The Most Important Titles

<i>Riforma sociale o rivoluzione?</i>	<i>Social Reform or Revolution?</i>
<i>Problemi di organizzazione della socialdemocrazia russa</i>	<i>Problems of Organizing Russian Social Democracy</i>
<i>Prefazione a 'La questione polacca e il movimento socialista'</i>	<i>Preface to 'The Polish Question and the Socialist Movement'</i>
<i>Sciopero generale, partito e sindacati</i>	<i>General Strike, Party and Trade Union</i>
<i>Discorso al congresso del POSDR</i>	<i>Speech to the RSDLP Congress</i>
<i>La crisi della socialdemocrazia</i>	<i>The Crisis of Social Democracy</i>
<i>La rivoluzione russa</i>	<i>The Russian Revolution</i>

The correspondence collected by Lelio Basso covers the period from 1893 to 1919. And, as Basso himself notes in his introduction to this volume:

È chiaro che per comprendere questo aspetto interiore di Rosa, e soprattutto per apprezzarne l'impatto sul suo pensiero politico, sono indispensabili le lettere dal carcere, dove la Luxemburg trascorse gli ultimi anni della sua vita, anni di rievocazione forzata, di ricordi che affiorano, di un bilancio della sua vita costantemente riconsiderato (Basso, 2012, p. 23).

5. Conclusions and perspectives

A comparative analysis of the editions of Rosa Luxemburg's 'complete works' in the English-speaking world, French-speaking world and, to a lesser extent, Italian-speaking world shows that the recovery and dissemination of her legacy responds both to historiographical interest and to a need to intervene in contemporary political debates. In this sense, the publishing projects studied – Verso Books in the United Kingdom, Agone-Smolny in France and the pioneering contributions of Lelio Basso in Italy – show how translation and critical editing become mechanisms of cultural and political mediation, bringing together historical memory, ideological commitment and editorial praxis.

This comparison also reveals the asymmetries between national contexts: while systematic long-term projects are developed in English and French, in Italy the initiative of individual intellectual figures has predominated, giving shape to partial but significant corpora. This disparity highlights the centrality of institutional and non-institutional resources and militant collectives in the consolidation of comprehensive editions.

Beyond their philological dimension, these 'publishing ventures' open up spaces for the transnational circulation of Marxist ideas, revitalising, among other things, debates on democracy, revolution, imperialism and the labour movement.

Several promising lines of research are emerging for further investigation:

1. Documentary expansion: There are still thousands of unpublished pages in Polish and other languages, access to and translation of which are essential for a more complete view of Luxemburg's thought.
2. Digital and open access editions: The use of online platforms and open editions could democratise access to these texts, promoting both academic research and their appropriation by social movements.
3. Interdisciplinary approaches: Dialogue between the history of translation, political theory, cultural studies and critical editing can enrich the analysis of Luxemburg's impact in different historical and geographical contexts.
4. Transnational comparisons: Extending the study to other languages would make it possible to map the global reception of Luxemburg and better understand her place in the intellectual history of the 20th century.
5. Critical rereading in a contemporary key: Editions should not be limited to preserving her legacy but can serve as a basis for rethinking current debates around globalisation, social justice and emancipatory struggles.

In conclusion, the editorial and translation work surrounding Rosa Luxemburg constitutes a privileged space for the encounter between intellectual history and political activism. Its future prospects depend on the ability to continue articulating academic research with the political and social challenges of our time.

References

- Aubet, M.^a J. (1977a). Breve guía para la lectura de Rosa Luxemburg. *Materiales*, 3, 259–269.
- Aubet, M.^a J. (1977b). *Obras escogidas*. Pluma.
- Basso, L. (1967). *Scritti politici*. Riuniti.
- Basso, L. (1974). *Scritti politici*. Riuniti.
- Basso, L. (2012). *Scritti politici*. Eir.
- Calafat, C., & Valdeón, R. A. (2020). Introduction: The politics of translation and translation of politics. *Translation & Interpreting*, 12(2), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.12807/ti.11222.2020.a01>
- Castle, S. (n.d.). *Rosa Luxemburg: Reflections and writings* (P. Le Blanc, Ed.). Humanity Books.
- Collectif Smolny-Agone (2011, January 4). Rosa Luxemburg: l'intégrité d'une œuvre. *Agone*. <https://agone.org/aujourd'hui/rosa-luxemburg-l-integrite-d-une-oeuvre>
- Davis, H. B. (Ed.). (1976). *The national question: Selected writings*. Monthly Review Press.
- Fernández, F., & Evans, J. (2018). *The Routledge handbook of translation and politics*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315621289>
- Fernández, F., & Evans, J. (2020). Politics. In M. Baker & G. Saldanha (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies* (pp. 414–419). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315678627-88>
- Hermans, T. (2022). *Translation and History: A textbook*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315178134>
- Howard, D. (Ed.). (1971). *Rosa Luxemburg: Political writings*. Jonathan Cape.
- Hudis, P. (2020, April 29). In memoriam of George Shriver, translator of Rosa Luxemburg. *Verso Books*. <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/news/4689-in-memoriam-of-george-shriver-translator-of-rosa-luxemburg?srsltid=AfmBOopEvJW5AqK0fOsgTF1YSmmG208eMgM3mXVb6y-fUZgaX1yRmzZu>
- Hudis, P., & Anderson, K. (Eds.). (2004). *The Rosa Luxemburg reader*. Monthly Review Press.
- Kowalik, T. (Ed.). (2004). *The accumulation of capital* (A. Schwarzschild, Trans.). Routledge.
- Locker, R. (Ed.). (1972). *Rosa Luxemburg: Selected political writings*. Jonathan Cape.
- Luxemburg, R. (1970). *Rosa Luxemburg speaks* (M. A. Waters, Ed.). Pathfinder Press.
- Luxemburg, R. (1976). *Obras escogidas*. Pluma.
- Luxemburg, R. (1977). *Per conoscere Rosa Luxemburg* (L. Basso, Ed.). Mondadori.
- Luxemburg, R. (2009). *Rosa Luxemburg: Selected political and literary writings* (Revolutionary History, Ed.). Merlin Press.
- Maspero, F. (Ed.). (1969). *Œuvres I-IV*. Petite Collection Maspero.
- Revolutionary History (Ed.). (2009). *Rosa Luxemburg: Selected political and literary writings*. Merlin Press.
- Rundle, C. (2012). Translation as an approach to history. *Translation Studies*, 5, 232–240. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14781700.2012.663615>

Rundle, C. (2021). Introduction: The historiography of translation and interpreting. In C. Rundle (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of translation history* (pp. 18–26). Routledge. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781315640129>

Rundle, C. (2022). *The Routledge handbook of translation history*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315640129>

Verso Books (n.d.). *Rosa Luxemburg*. Verso Books. <https://www.versobooks.com/authors/748-rosa-luxemburg>

