

# Karl Kautsky and the Socialist Revolution, 1880-1938: A Study in the Transformation of Social Democracy



**Karl Kautsky and the Socialist Revolution 1880-1938**  
(Verso Modern Classics) by T. J. English

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5



Language	: English
File size	: 739 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 382 pages



Karl Kautsky was one of the most important figures in the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the international socialist movement. He was a leading theoretician of Marxism and a close collaborator of Friedrich Engels. Kautsky's work had a profound influence on the development of social democracy in Europe and beyond.

Dick Geary's book, *Karl Kautsky and the Socialist Revolution, 1880-1938*, is a comprehensive and authoritative study of Kautsky's life and work. Geary traces Kautsky's intellectual development from his early days as a Marxist to his later years as a leading figure in the SPD. He also examines Kautsky's role in the major debates that shaped the socialist movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Geary's book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of social democracy, Marxism, or the socialist movement. It is also a fascinating portrait of a complex and influential figure.

## **Kautsky's Early Life and Education**

Karl Kautsky was born in Prague, Bohemia (now the Czech Republic), in 1854. His father was a tailor and his mother was a dressmaker. Kautsky's

family was poor, but they were able to provide him with a good education. He attended the University of Vienna, where he studied history, philosophy, and economics.

Kautsky became interested in socialism while he was a student. He was influenced by the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. In 1875, Kautsky joined the Austrian Social Democratic Party. He quickly became a leading figure in the party and was elected to the Austrian parliament in 1890.

### **Kautsky and the German Social Democratic Party**

In 1883, Kautsky moved to Germany and joined the SPD. He quickly became one of the most important figures in the party. He was a leading theoretician of Marxism and a close collaborator of Friedrich Engels. Kautsky's work had a profound influence on the development of the SPD.

Kautsky was a strong advocate for a peaceful and democratic transition to socialism. He believed that the working class could achieve its goals through parliamentary reforms and trade unions. He opposed the use of violence and revolution.

Kautsky's views were not always popular with the SPD leadership. In the early 20th century, a number of SPD leaders, including Eduard Bernstein, began to advocate for a more moderate and reformist approach to socialism. Kautsky opposed these views and argued for a more radical and revolutionary approach.

### **Kautsky and the First World War**

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 posed a major challenge to the socialist movement. Kautsky was a vocal opponent of the war and argued that it was a betrayal of the socialist principles of internationalism and solidarity. He was expelled from the SPD in 1917 for his opposition to the war.

After the war, Kautsky continued to be a leading figure in the socialist movement. He helped to found the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany (USPD) and was a member of the Reichstag (German parliament) from 1920 to 1928.

### **Kautsky's Later Years**

Kautsky's later years were marked by increasing isolation and disillusionment. He was critical of the Soviet Union and the rise of communism in Europe. He also became increasingly pessimistic about the prospects for socialism.

Kautsky died in 1938, just a few months before the outbreak of the Second World War. He is remembered as one of the most important figures in the history of social democracy.

### **Legacy of Karl Kautsky**

Karl Kautsky's legacy is complex and contested. He is often seen as a moderate and reformist socialist, but he was also a radical and revolutionary. He was a strong advocate for democracy and international solidarity, and he opposed the use of violence and war.

Kautsky's work continues to be debated and discussed by socialists around the world. He remains a significant figure in the history of the socialist

movement and his ideas continue to inspire and challenge socialists today.

## Reviews

"Karl Kautsky and the Socialist Revolution, 1880-1938 is a magisterial work of scholarship. Geary has produced the definitive biography of one of the most important figures in the history of socialism." - **Eric Hobsbawm**

"Geary's book is a major contribution to the study of socialism and the labor movement. It is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of the left." - **Noam Chomsky**

"Karl Kautsky and the Socialist Revolution, 1880-1938 is a brilliant and insightful work. Geary has written a book that will be essential reading for anyone interested in the history of socialism." - **Robert Skidelsky**

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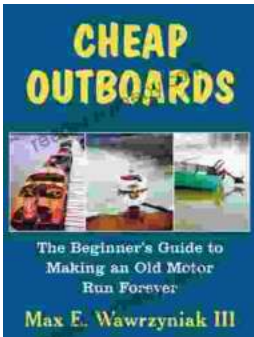
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