

**THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION.  
I. REFORM AND  
REVOLUTION; II. THE DAY  
AFTER THE REVOLUTION**

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The Social Revolution. I. Reform and Revolution; II. The Day After the Revolution by Karl Kautsky & A. M. Simons & May Wood Simons

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**KARL KAUTSKY & A. M. SIMONS & MAY WOOD SIMONS**

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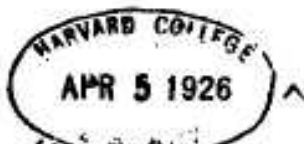
BY  
KARL KAUTSKY

- I. REFORM AND REVOLUTION  
II. THE DAY AFTER THE REVOLUTION

TRANSLATED BY  
A. M. AND MAY WOOD SIMONS

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*Substituted for a copy lost  
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**TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE**

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The greater part of the first half of this translation was already completed before the numbers of *Justice* containing the translation of J. B. Askew reached us. Hence little use could be made of that work. Some comparisons with the first few pages were made in the proofs, and a few alterations made in accordance with suggestions there received, for which we wish to give due credit. The present translation has also been compared with the French translation of the first part which appeared in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*.

Finally we wish to extend our thanks to Comrade Kautsky for his kind permission to bring this translation of what we believe to be one of the most important contributions made to Socialist literature during the last decade before American readers.

A. M. SIMONS,  
MAY WOOD SIMONS.

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

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The following writings owe their existence to the action of a Socialist Reading Circle in Amsterdam, a society largely composed of Academics, who invited me to speak there and in Delft. Among the themes that I suggested was that of Social Revolution. But as the comrades in both cities selected the same theme, and I did not wish to repeat myself, I divided my subject into two essays practically independent from one another, but connected in their general thought, and called it "Reform and Revolution" and "On the Day After the Revolution."

The Society wished to publish these essays and naturally I had no reason to object to this, but in the interest of their circulation I proposed that they be issued by the German Party Publishing House, to which the Holland comrades very gladly agreed.

It is not a stenographic report of the lectures that is here given. I have included many lines of thought, in the writing which would have been too long to have given in the lectures. But in general I have kept within the limits of the lecture and have not sought to make a book of it.

The purpose of the work shows for itself and needs no explanation. It had a special application for Holland in that shortly before

my lectures, which took place on the 22d and 24th of April, 1902, the former minister Pierson had made an assertion in a public assemblage, and argued for it, that a proletarian revolution must, for certain necessary reasons, be avoided. My lectures form a direct answer to this. The Minister was, however, so friendly as to attend the second one, where he made industrious notes and did not offer a word against me.

*K. Kautsky*

Because of the predominating academic character of the public that attended, aside from local and propagandist reasons, I was led to choose the theme of Social Revolution for the lecture. The Academics are those among us who are least friendly to the idea of revolution, at least in Germany. All things considered, however, the case appeared somewhat different in Holland and the applause of my audience there very pleasantly surprised me. My assertions raised scarcely any antagonism, but only approval. I hope that this is not entirely because of international politeness. If not, Marxism has a body of strong representatives among the Academics of Holland.

I can wish nothing better than that my attempt should receive the same approval among German comrades that it has found among those of Holland, and I extend my thanks to the latter for the friendly reception they have given me in a very agreeable duty.

K. KAUTSKY.



# THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION

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## THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL REVOLUTION.

There are few conceptions over which there has been so much contention, as over that of revolution. This can partially be ascribed to the fact that nothing is so contrary to existing interests and prejudices as this concept, and partially to the fact that few things are so ambiguous.

As a rule, events can not be so sharply defined as things. Especially is this true of social events, which are extremely complicated, and grow ever more complicated the further society advances—the more various the forms of co-operation of humanity become. Among the most complicated of these events is the Social Revolution, which is a complete transformation of the wonted forms of associated activity among men.

It is no wonder that this word, which every one uses, but each one in a different sense, is sometimes used by the same persons at different times in very different senses. Some understand by Revolution barricades, conflagra-

tions of castles, guillotines, September massacres and a combination of all sorts of hideous things. Others would seek to take all sting away from the word and use it in the sense of great but imperceptible and peaceful transformations of society, like, for instance, those which took place through the discovery of America or by the invention of the steam engine. Between these two definitions there are many grades of meaning.

Marx, in his introduction to the "Critique of Political Economy," defines social revolution as a more or less rapid transformation of the foundations of the juridical and political superstructure of society arising from a change in its economic foundations. If we hold close to this definition we at once eliminate from the idea of social revolution "changes in the economic foundations," as, for example, those which proceeded from the steam engine or the discovery of America. These alterations are the causes of revolution, not the revolution itself.

But I do not wish to confine myself too strictly to this definition of social revolution. There is a still narrower sense in which we can use it. In this case it does not signify either the transformation of the juridical and political superstructure of society, but only some particular form or particular method of transformation.

Every socialist strives for social revolution

in the wider sense, and yet there are socialists who disclaim revolution and would attain social transformation only through reform. They contrast social revolution with social reform. It is this contrast which we are discussing to-day in our ranks. I wish here to consider social revolution in the narrow sense of a particular method of social transformation.

The contrast between reform and revolution does not consist in the application of force in one case and not in the other. Every juridical and political measure is a force measure which is carried through by the force of the State. Neither do any particular forms of the application of force, as, for example, street fights, or executions, constitute the essentials of revolution in contrast to reform. These arise from particular circumstances, are not necessarily connected with revolutions, and may easily accompany reform movements. The constitution of the delegates of the third Estate at the National Assembly of France, on June 17, 1789, was an eminently revolutionary act with no apparent use of force. This same France had, on the contrary, in 1774 and 1775, great insurrections for the single and in no way revolutionary purpose of changing the bread tax in order to stop the rise in the price of bread.

The reference to street fights and executions as characteristic of revolutions is, however, a clue to the source from which we can obtain important teachings as to the essentials of revolu-