

Karl Kautsky — Between Darwin and Marx

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Karl Kautsky has experienced a curious fate at the hands of contemporary writers. Despite being a figure of considerable historical significance in the international socialist movement of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he has rarely been accorded the attention his stature in the movement warrants. It is perhaps timely, given the recent collapse of Russian-style communism in Eastern Europe, to return to one of its early critics and to reassess the philosophical basis of the man whom Lenin referred to slightlyingly as “the revisionist Kautsky”.¹

Kautsky was the foremost theoretical exponent of Marxism in the German Social Democratic Party in the thirty years before the first world war. He popularised Marx's works, edited the theoretical organ of the Party from 1883 and was the major theoretical force in designing the political platform which influenced the Party's destiny for some twenty years. The collapse of German social democracy as a force for world peace, on the eve of the first world war, however, linked him forever with the failure of that party to achieve its revolutionary goal.

Theorists from the 1920s up to the present day have denounced Kautsky's brand of Marxism as orthodox, determinist and fixed, influenced far more by Darwin's theory of evolution than by Marxist dialectics. Karl Korsch,² for example, an influential German Marxist of the Frankfurt School, and the late Erich Matthias,³ a Social Democrat in post-war Germany, coined the phrase “Kautskyianism” to describe this brand of Marxism, responsible they believed for the revolutionary inactivism (*Immobilismus*) of pre-war German socialism. Korsch and Matthias set the tone for the powerful historical consensus that has prevailed to the present day in writers as varied as Carl Schorske, Walter Holzheuer, Dieter Groh, and most recently, Roger Fletcher.⁴ The basis of this consensus is the claim that Kautsky diminished Marxism through his Darwinism and, in the process, crippled the revolutionary aspirations of the German working class.

This article aims to challenge this consensus, which was based, I claim, on the false premise that Marxism and Darwinism were philosophically incompatible, and therefore Kautsky's attempt to combine the two was his chief theoretical weakness. Firstly, it is argued that the two processes of evolution and dialectics were not necessarily antithetical theories of development in the nineteenth century, and that they were natural allies in the larger debate between materialism and idealism which was raging in Germany at that time. Secondly, it is claimed that Kautsky's relationship with evolutionary theory did not show that uniformity of ideas which historians have attributed to him. His evolutionism was erratic and fluctuated from a pre-Marxist position through to a total rejection of evolution as “bourgeois ideology” and then to an accommodation with it from a post-Darwinist perspective. The crucial task of assessing Kautsky lies, I argue, not in dismissing him as an evolutionist but in evaluating the type of evolutionary theory he adopted and analysing how he related that to Marxism and society. As a result this article

shows that Kautsky made a substantial contribution to Marxist theory precisely because of the influence of evolutionary theory.

It is important to note that Marx and Engels themselves embraced evolutionary theory both as a new revolutionary method in the physical sciences, and as complementing almost exactly what they were achieving in the social sciences. Marx, for instance, greeted Darwin's *Origin of Species* with enormous enthusiasm, commenting to Engels that "this is the book which contains the natural-historical foundation of our outlook".⁵ The judgement was reiterated a year later when Marx wrote to Lassalle that Darwin's book "is very important and serves me as a natural scientific basis for the class struggle in History".

Even as late as the second edition of *Das Kapital*, we find Marx quoting with approval a review of his book in the *European Messenger* of St Petersburg, in which he states:

He is still more interested in the law of their change, their evolution, that is to say, the transition from one form to another, from one series of relations into a different one ... In a word, economic life goes through an evolutionary history resembling that with which we are familiar in other domains of biology ...

It appears that Marx himself was not disturbed by the apparent confusion in terminology, for he stated, "When the writer describes so aptly and (as far as my personal application of it goes) so generously, the method I have actually used, what else is he describing but the dialectic method?"⁶

The practice of interrelating the two processes was more common in Engels' writings, primarily because some of his work, *Anti-Dühring* for instance, was concerned with method, whilst Marx's main purpose lay in the detailed investigation of a particular stage within the dialectic process. Thus Engels contended in a preface to *Anti-Dühring* that:

it is precisely dialectics that constitutes the most important form of thinking for present-day natural science. For it alone offers the analogue for, and thereby the method of explaining, the evolutionary processes occurring in nature ...⁷

Again in a chapter on "Dialectics and the Negation of the Negation" Engels maintained,

It is obvious that in describing any evolutionary process as the negation of the negation, I say nothing about the particular process of development ... When I say that all these processes are the negation of the negation, I bring them all together under the one law of motion.⁸

As far as Engels is concerned then, the evolutionary process is not complementary to the dialectic method but rather incorporated within it. Certainly he did not see the two processes as diametrically opposed.

It was within the historical context of the confusion caused by the first world war, the divisions and collapse of a united working-class movement in Germany and the paradoxical success of a revolution in the underdeveloped economy of Russia, that the opposition between evolutionary Marxism and a dialectical and revolutionary praxis⁹ arose. However this was not the context in which Marx and Engels operated. The real issue for Marxists at that time was not a matter of opposing the evolutionary process to the dialectic method but of arguing about the proper basis of evolutionary theory itself and the actual mechanism generating change. On the one hand, the historical dimension of the evolutionary process offered Marxism a natural scientific basis for a theory of social development. On the other hand, the use of natural selection as the operative mechanism in the evolution of the species could not offer Marxism a satisfactory explanation of the basis on which change was actually achieved.

Thus we find in the correspondence between Marx and Engels and in large sections of volumes two and three of *Das Kapital*,¹⁰ great criticism directed not against evolutionary

theory as such, but against the theory which influenced Darwin most directly in his description of the causes of evolution, namely Malthus's theory of over-population.¹¹

II

Certainly it is no secret that Kautsky was a Darwinist before he was ever a Marxist¹² and, as both Steinberg, and Gottschalch, Karrenberg and Stegmann,¹³ point out in their respective books, this was not a strange journey for a social democrat of Kautsky's era to make. Indeed, Kautsky's early work on population, *Der Einfluss der Volksvermehrung auf den Fortschritt der Gesellschaft*,¹⁴ is an example of the pre-Marxist character of this Darwinian phase. However, over the course of his political career, Kautsky's attitude towards Darwinism changed radically, and his second work on the theme of over-population, *Vermehrung und Entwicklung in Natur und Gesellschaft*,¹⁵ published in 1910, was written entirely from a Marxist perspective. Despite this, the assessment of the relationship between Kautsky and Darwinism has been surrounded by a number of myths. One of those myths relates to the uniformity of his ideology, particularly in the way it has been influenced by Darwinism. Matthias, for instance, commented that Kautsky's final work on the materialist conception of history was simply the completed expression of his earlier Darwinism. Karl Korsch, although admitting certain fluctuations in Kautsky's position, nevertheless characterised him as holding a consistent evolutionary and materialist ideology.

Steinberg, however, in his work *Sozialismus und deutsche Sozialdemokratie*,¹⁶ points out the discontinuities in Kautsky's political development and particularly in his attempts to synthesize Darwinism and Marxism. Steinberg claims that Kautsky's earliest work, for instance, on over-population,¹⁷ was completely within the Malthusian tradition and, although he described himself as a socialist, he believed, in contradiction to Marx, that the real menace to the establishment of a socialist society was over-population. Yet Steinberg points out that a decade later, after his sojourn in London with Engels and an intensive study of *Das Kapital*, his attitude towards the relevance of natural science theory began to change.¹⁸ In an article written in 1890, Kautsky stated that each of the areas of science had its own law but that the primary factor governing these laws was not so much the development of the species but the development of human society itself. Even more revealing is the passage which appeared in his book on social revolution¹⁹ published in 1902, in which he defined evolutionary theory as a necessary bourgeois theoretical tool because it was anti-revolutionary in contrast to the earlier catastrophe theory. Steinberg maintains, however, that Kautsky's attitude towards Darwinism became ambivalent when he later attempted to interpret evolution and revolution as part of a single process on the basis that evolution also proceeded by catastrophes or "leaps".²⁰ According to Steinberg, whatever the superficial comparisons between these processes, Kautsky's analysis abstracted that opposition which lay embedded in the historical genesis of the two theories concerned and, in fact, marked the shift in Kautsky's political position from left to centre, a shift which occurred within the Party towards the end of the first decade of the twentieth century.

Steinberg's comments are significant in view of the fact that Kautsky's next book on over-population²¹ in which he explored certain natural scientific propositions, was published in 1910 at the same time as his shift in political attitude occurred, which suggests that Kautsky's exploration into natural science and evolutionary theory grew out of his conservative periods. In fact the opposite is true. Steinberg's conclusion ignores the developments occurring at the time which made evolutionary ideas the site of radical rather than conservative theorizing and political practice. For one thing, the emergence of De Vries' theory on mutation at the turn of the century made evolution again a current

topic of the day and renewed the debates between Lamarckists²² and Darwinists, consequently encouraging further Marxist analysis. Secondly, in Germany in particular, evolution became the centre of controversy between Idealists and Materialists. Indeed, Steinberg's conclusion ignores the fact that, for most Marxists in this period, opposition was located not so much between advocates of evolution and those of revolution as between those advocates of the historically based processes and those of the static, metaphysical ones. This opposition was particularly strong and enduring in Germany, where conflict between natural scientists and Christian conservatives took on a political dimension which was bitter and constant, and which pre-dated the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* by at least a decade and lasted well into the twentieth century. During this period evolutionary theorists were treated almost as political radicals, banned from universities and ostracised by society. The world in which Kautsky grew up was one in which any form of materialist or humanist thought was politically repressed. For instance, in the 1850s and 1860s the materialists Karl Vogt and Friedrich Buchner²³ were deprived of teaching posts and public appointments. In the 1870s the conservative forces within the Bismarckian State reaffirmed their refusal to accommodate evolutionary teaching in universities or schools.²⁴ In the 1890s political parties were actually formed on the basis of support for or opposition to evolutionary teaching.²⁵ And, as a consequence of this, leading natural scientists felt impelled to construct a total philosophical system on the basis of evolution. Versions were produced for popular consumption, in order to provide ideologically the rationale for their theories in opposition to the monolithic system presented by Church and State.²⁶ In England this task was provided by social rather than natural scientists, perhaps an indication of the degree to which the German political system had invaded science itself.²⁷

Kautsky's argument therefore remained influenced very clearly by the debate in Germany over propositions in natural science. The Malthusian hypothesis had to be upheld because it provided the cornerstone of Darwinism, and evolutionists in Germany were fighting not simply Christian conservatism but its hegemony over the whole of society including government. Consequently, Kautsky's early work was a reflection of arguments among natural scientists for enlightened and rational government in the interests of science and the progress of society. It was radical but not Marxist, it used a Marxist analysis in a purely empirical way and neglected the real dimension of Marxism, which questioned the basic assumptions of natural science in terms of its relations to a class-divided society. It did not analyse social change as a product of directed class conscious activity but rather saw it as a response to a moral imperative laid upon society as a whole.

One of the significant features in the early work on population is the importance Kautsky placed on the Malthusian and Darwinian premise that "the established tendency of organic life is to propagate beyond the present mass of food which it needs for its survival", and that this tendency formed the basis of all social problems.²⁸ This meant that whilst he was forced by the logic of his argument to admit that the social transformation of the means of production, particularly in agriculture, would greatly increase the supply of food, he was bound by the Malthusian premise to agitate not for social transformation on the basis of class action, but for birth control.²⁹ Kautsky's tendency towards empiricism, which divorced scientific study from an economic or political base, is a strong feature of the book and an indication of the pre-Marxist character of this early work.

According to Marx, Malthus's population theory was based on an economic analysis that highlighted the role of the unproductive classes as the realizers of value for the capitalist community. To this end, Malthus had developed the notion that profit was

somehow "added on" in the exchange of commodities, thus necessitating a class of buyers, the idle rich, who could return to the capitalist more value than was contained in the commodities, shifting the emphasis placed by Ricardo on the producing class of workers as the creators of value in the economic system. He was then able, according to Marx, to support his proposition that it was the surplus population among the working class rather than the exigencies of the capitalist system itself which was the cause of poverty, misery and vice.

Kautsky also dismissed Malthus's economic theory as unscientific, basically using Marx's arguments on the sources of profit and value to do so, whilst expanding on a broad description of the way supply and demand for labour fluctuated in a capitalist economy. However, his analysis was not tight enough to accept the connections that Marx had made between Malthus's political position and his theory. Kautsky still maintained the validity of Malthus's proposition that misery and vice were the result of over-population rather than of a class-divided society. Kautsky did challenge the notion that Malthus's theory on population held the same status as Natural Law, based as it was on the premise that the increase in population always exceeds the productive capacity of the land. Kautsky argued instead that agricultural capacity could be increased by technical innovation but that the effectiveness of scientific improvements could only be realised by large-scale reorganization of agriculture and the abolition of private property in land. Consequently he agreed with Marx that Malthus's concept of a constant degree of natural fertility was an erroneous one and that fertility was an historical phenomenon shaped by a particular mode of production.

But Kautsky failed to investigate the origins of the "law of diminishing returns" on which Malthus had based the notion of arithmetical progression of land, or to tackle significantly the Ricardian application of that law to his theory on rent, as Marx had done in *Theories of Surplus Value*.³⁰ This meant that in the context of Kautsky's work on agriculture, he had not undermined Malthus's theory at all but merely shifted its emphasis.

Consequently, Kautsky ended his book in agreement with the Malthusian hypothesis.

To want to remove the struggle for existence is a utopia which will never be successful. Prostitution, illness, misery, war and death are inevitable in today's human race unless the laws of population are recognised in all their terror.³¹

Whilst other forms of social organization might ameliorate the situation, the law itself would still apply, Kautsky claimed. The final section of Kautsky's book is thus concerned with the moral injunction that man must unite on the issue of the regulation of population in order to achieve the larger goal of the subjugation of nature.

When we consider Kautsky's second book on over-population, *Vermehrung und Entwicklung in Natur und Gesellschaft*, written thirty years later, we are confronted with a very different treatment of the subject, in that he uses the Marxist method in his analysis of Natural Law and over-population. Whilst Hans-Josef Steinberg is basically correct in his assessment that, in this second work, Kautsky was still attempting to unite nature and society within a single notion of revolution, he neglected the emphasis Kautsky placed, not simply on the development of technique in changing both nature and society, but upon the social organization and direction of that knowledge. The book is based not on the application of a natural law to society, but on the understanding that society and nature are in many respects separate entities, although the laws governing change in society act upon and influence the natural law. The book commences with a fairly thorough discussion of the relationship between nature and society. "Society", stated Kautsky, "is a special part of nature with special laws that man, if he wishes, can call natural law, because, in many respects, it is no different from natural law".

But the problem of equating social and natural phenomena in this way, as Kautsky pointed out, is the apparent lack of law-like qualities in the area of social activity in comparison with the accuracy, regularity, permanent and predicting qualities evident within the natural sphere. Kautsky claimed this assumption was untrue in the sense that natural law can only operate within given organic conditions, which are themselves open to change over a period of time, whilst social phenomena also give rise to law-like regularities, not easily perceived, but available for isolation and definition through careful investigation. Kautsky added that it was only through the recognition of the conditions under which social or natural laws operate that humans could effectively challenge and change those laws. And it was precisely within the natural sphere, where the conditions underpinning natural law are more easily recognizable, that the work of controlling and directing change has had most effect. In fact Kautsky maintained that it was the transformation of natural conditions through the social development of technique that initiated transformations in the social sphere.³² But because the areas of controlled nature appeared minute in comparison with the vast areas of human knowledge built up around natural phenomena, natural law itself appeared in the light of a permanent and unchanging structure, valid under all conditions. Conversely, added Kautsky, because the social transformations produced by technical development appeared all-pervasive in comparison, social phenomena were perceived to be variable and transitory, and social law to be an historical rather than a permanent quality. Yet, although Kautsky denied the validity of opposing natural and social phenomena in this way, he even more vigorously argued against the attempt to confuse the two by the transposition of natural law and natural conditions on to the social realm.

To suggest this alternative as Malthus did, stated Kautsky, serves the function of the established interests in society who maintain that "the relation of humans to nature is the basis of their social relations"³³ and who attempt to impose upon social law the same unchanging conditions that appear as the basis of natural law. Society certainly had its origins within the relationship of humans to nature but, argued Kautsky, humans perform activities within society at two different levels, one natural and the other social. In order to satisfy certain physical needs, humans enter into a relationship with nature to produce material goods, which in turn create conditions for exchange and barter. But although the natural needs of humans and the material qualities of goods are the occasion for exchange relations they cannot serve as an explanation of the special process that humans work within to achieve their objective. That process, stated Kautsky, formed the basis of the social relations between humans and was subject to conditions within society and not within nature, conditions such as the structure of property relations. It was the social and not the natural relationship that formed the basis of social law, Kautsky maintained, because it was upon the structure of that relationship that the development or impediment of the forces of production depended, and not the other way round as Malthus suggested. "The knowledge of nature certainly does not signify the knowledge of society but it constructs its assumptions".³⁴

It was necessary, therefore, argued Kautsky, in the treatment of such social problems as over-population, to enter into debate with natural scientists, to explore fully the assumptions lying behind the Malthusian and Darwinist propositions in order to expose more clearly the real basis of over-population and the social law arising from it.

In his arguments against Malthus, therefore, Kautsky certainly emphasised the historical basis of law in human society and the importance of social and economic factors in the explanation of human phenomena. These were all partially elements of a Marxist analysis. In this sense, he employed Marxism as a critical theory. But the important additional factor that Kautsky used in his debate with Malthus was the

development of human technique,³⁵ incidentally a characteristic feature of most of Kautsky's works, which, he stated, radically altered not only the conditions within society but in nature also. Thus, the very conditions which were made the basis of investigation by Malthus and Darwin and from which inference was drawn about human society, were themselves partly structured by the interference of that society. Kautsky mentioned, in particular, the wholesale destruction of woods, which occurred in the process of early cultivation and permanently destroyed the balance in the ecological system, as a major example of the limitations placed upon the feeding space of organic life by human endeavour. Therefore Kautsky maintained that the extrapolation from natural conditions of the hypothesis on the unequal ratio of fertility between humans and their means of subsistence ignored the social dimension that affected both human procreation and the production of food.

In his chapter on "Arithmetical Progression and the Production of Food", Kautsky entered fully into the debate on the issue of diminishing productivity in agriculture, stating that the only relationship economists used in an explanation of the law of diminishing returns was the natural one of humans to the soil. The economic process which lies behind the natural one and which connects the costs of agricultural productivity not simply to the fertility of the soil but to the exchange relations with other areas of commodity production, including the medium of exchange itself, is neglected in the simple assertion that agricultural costs and prices are high because they include the cost of diminishing returns from the least fertile ground. What it also ignored, Kautsky claimed, was the nature of the social relations embodied in the possession of land which equally affected prices and productivity.

The formation and expansion of feeding space is not such a simple and steady process as the law of arithmetical progression suggests. It depends instead upon different conditions that exist in different historical periods and thus, for each special form of society must be specially investigated.³⁶

Agricultural fertility was conditioned by the dislocations of war, by the deteriorating effects of government policy which exploited land for its own purposes, by the demoralising effect of social organisation in agriculture which increased surplus not through technical advance but through unpaid labour time, far more than any absolute natural condition.

This predominance of the historical over natural conditions was evident also, Kautsky suggested, in the rate of human fertility. The Malthusian law of simple geometrical progression in man in fact reflected the situation existing in an agriculturally based society consisting predominantly of small farmers or tenants, faced by the dislocations of early industrialization. The development of a settled agricultural community, Kautsky argued, usually implied increased human fertility because of the longer life-span and domesticity of peasant women and the ceaseless demand of the soil for extra unpaid labour.³⁷ Yet the system of small-scale farming, developed after the decline of feudalism in England and France, provided a social mechanism for controlling fertility by relating marriage to property. With the growth of industrialization and urbanization that social mechanism no longer operated, whilst the natural fertility still encouraged by a land-based economy resulted in a specific situation of increased population among a property-less and poverty-stricken working class, a situation from which Malthus drew his hypothesis.

If Malthus was right why the decline in population in the three decades since 1880? Hardly because of a decrease in feeding space. On the contrary, the means of subsistence had been considerably enlarged with the expansion of grain cultivation in America and Russia. It was more feasible to suggest, Kautsky argued, that the rapid growth of large

towns separated from the influence of the land, the increase in the number of women in full-time employment, the introduction of compulsory military service following the wars of 1866 and 1870,³⁸ the spread of prostitution and venereal disease, the mass production and consequent accessibility of better types of contraceptive devices, all contributed significantly to the overall decline in birth rate. Kautsky contended: "It is not the business of men to accept a single general law of population that applies under all conditions."³⁹

It is evident that the mature Kautsky was certainly able to apply the Marxist method in his analysis of population and produce a critique of Malthus and his scientific theories which was based totally on the social relations of the means of production. To this extent Kautsky could certainly be seen as a Marxist. But it is the relationship between his work and Marxist revolutionary theory that has come under critical scrutiny and needs to be further explored.

It is in fact in this area that Kautsky can be seen as offering some of his most pertinent Marxist insights. Kautsky claimed that knowledge itself was the mechanism which would enable the proletariat to engage in revolutionary struggle. This theory followed from his analysis of the centrality of knowledge, in the form of scientific theory and technique, to capitalist accumulation at the turn of the century. Now Kautsky certainly saw social revolution as a way of removing, initially anyway, the impediments to the technical development of resources, but the way in which he saw this objective developing in a proletarian context was closely connected with his own view of the development and application of knowledge. That development, stated Kautsky, followed a *dialectical* pattern, at times extended, at times confined, but the aim behind the pursuit of knowledge was always the same, the attempt to construct a unified and coherent order from its individual parts. "For the townspeople", argued Kautsky,

society is more influential than nature. From the former he gains his strongest, most enduring expressions and he approaches the investigation of nature after he has already received a world picture from society.⁴⁰

But furthermore,

Every class will also develop its own world view which will be determined not simply by the natural and scientifically known facts of the time but much more through its position in society. In this sense, one can speak of a bourgeois and a proletarian science.⁴¹

Kautsky gave the example in which the same brick can be used to construct either princely palaces or proletarian slums and to date, he maintained, the scientific brick has not only been used to construct palaces but also to maintain them.

Despite the fluctuating relations of the exploiting class to science in the course of historical development, science constantly remains the privilege of the exploiter, his priceless privilege that most surely establishes his dominion, giving him the highest and lasting enjoyment.⁴²

But, argued Kautsky, it was over this privilege more than any other, that class struggle will first express itself. An aspiring class, he stated, before it ever gains the social and political dimension to seize power, will launch its first onslaught in the area of knowledge, attempting, by clever critique, to divert its flow from established patterns. Equally so in capitalist society, where the immense expansion of technical production, developed through the exploitation of the proletariat, nevertheless, for the first time, offers the proletariat the means of undermining that mystique on which the hegemony of capitalism rests. Mass literacy and the mass production of books were two such tools, Kautsky argued, by which the class struggles of the proletariat, generated through the work process, can become allied to the rich arsenal of scientific knowledge offered by the new sciences of society. It was particularly to the present industrial proletariat, rather than

to the pre-industrial urban poor,⁴³ that scientific knowledge offered both a relief from the monotony of wage labour and a focus for revolutionary action.⁴⁴

Thus Kautsky, in his analysis of revolution, emphasised the development of theory as the powerful adjunct of class struggle. He did not here suggest the notion implied to him by Gareth Jones, in his article on the originality of Engels,⁴⁵ that theory was somehow separated from and imposed upon the proletariat, directing its struggles from above, but rather that theory and class struggle were simultaneous and interconnected products of the same process: capitalist society.

Up till now, the oppressed working class struggled for more bread, more material pleasures. The modern proletariat is the first working class in world History who recognised the privilege of the exploiting classes in science as an oppressive one and struggled energetically to break it. The content of class struggle has ... stretched beyond the simple question of the stomach ... to the demands for a greater reduction of labour time in order to gain leisure for the endless diversities of man's intellectual and spiritual nature.⁴⁶

In tackling the question of over-population in a socialist society, Kautsky maintained that, as long as the socialist victory did not endanger the source of food either by civil war or by the wholesale expropriation of landowners, it should not be a problem in the immediate vicinity of a revolutionary victory.

The tasks of the revolution would initially be directed into the expansion of productivity in agriculture, which would considerably enlarge the source of food for a period of time. But the real problem of such expansion would be generated by the contradictory nature of technical application itself which, whilst it extends the area of human control and activity in one direction, destroys the diversity and balance in nature producing the attendant ecological problems. Man's activity in nature in turn creates social problems, Kautsky claimed, the most significant arising from the general lowering of mortality rates, the desired objective of a socialist society. The achievement of this objective would necessarily create pockets of over-population and in a curious chapter entitled "Class Hygiene", he suggested it might even cause the propagation of deleterious illnesses among the population. But in what way could such circumstances be contained? Not by any legal or bureaucratic impediments to marriage or the right to procreate, Kautsky stated, but by the Malthusian device of moral persuasion, the difference being that the socialist tool would be exerted by every member of society upon every other member of society and not by a privileged few upon the vast majority.

In conclusion, therefore, it is apparent in the comparison of these two works, that Kautsky's transition to Marxism fundamentally altered his attitude towards Darwinism. It is important to acknowledge that Kautsky's interest in evolutionary theory brought to Marxism an extra dimension in which Marxist theory could be used and shown to be relevant to Kautsky's nineteenth-century audience. Kautsky's studies on population control, his examination of the latest evolutionary theories and his analysis of natural law were all part of the ongoing debate in secular Europe at this time. It was therefore essential not only to enter the debate, but to enter it from a Marxist perspective. In this sense the critiques of Kautsky's evolutionary background were really reflecting the perspectives of the twentieth century rather than the needs of the nineteenth century.

NOTES

- 1 Vladimir Illich Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1970), p. 2.
- 2 Karl Korsch, *Marxism, and Philosophy and Other Essays*, (London: NLB, 1970). The Frankfurt School of Marxists included George Lukacs and also Antonio Gramsci from Italy. These theorists emphasised the Hegelian interpretation of Marxism and the need to combat the ideological and cultural hegemony of the ruling class; they referred to the earlier writings of Marx to support their case.
- 3 Erich Matthias, "Kautsky und der Kautskyanismus" in *Marxismusstudien*, edited by Iring Fetscher, (Tubingen, 1957).
- 4 Carl Schorske, *German Social Democracy 1905–1917*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1955); Walter Holzheuer, *Karl Kautsky's Werk als Weltanschauung*, (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1972); Dieter Groh, *Negative Integration und revolutionärer Attentismus*, (GmbH: Ullstein, 1973); Roger Fletcher, *Revisionism and Empire. Socialist Imperialism in Germany 1897–1914*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1984).
- 5 John Hoffman, *Marxism and Theory of Praxis: Selected Correspondence, Marx to Engels, 19th December 1860*, (New York: International Publishers, 1975), p. 55; Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), Marx to Ferdinand Lassalle, 1861, p. 115.
- 6 Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, 2nd ed. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1957) Preface, 1872, pp. 427–436.
- 7 F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1934), pp. 46, 47.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 160.
- 9 "Praxis" is a German word meaning practice which has acquired a specific meaning in Marxist terminology. It denotes a special union of theory and practice, affecting and directing one another. The result is revolutionary rather than pragmatic or contemplative.
- 10 Marx, *Das Kapital*, p. 872; Karl Marx, "Malthus as an Apologist", *Theories of Surplus Value*, III, 1861–1863, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977); see also R. L. Meek, *Marx and Engels on Malthus*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1953) pp. 116–117; Marx, "Malthus on Overproduction and Overconsumption", *Theories of Surplus Value*, III, p. 157.
- 11 Malthus's theory on population appeared in *Essay on Population*, first published in 1778. To quote Malthus himself: "The power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for people. Population, when unchecked, increased in geometrical ratio. Subsistence increases only in an arithmetical ratio. Hence arises the absolute necessity for some checks to the growth of population and these checks are misery and vice." Kenneth Smith, *The Malthusian Controversy*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951) p. 5. It was on this basis that Malthus criticised the Poor Laws of 1803 as unnatural interference with the necessary checks on population increase.
- 12 Karl Renner, *Karl Kautsky*, (Berlin, 1929) p. 14.
- 13 Hans-Joseph Steinberg, *Sozialismus und deutsche Sozialdemokratie: Zur Ideologie der Partei von dem ersten Weltkrieg*, 3rd ed. (Bonn: Neu Gesellschaft GmbH, 1972), p. 45; Gottschalch, Karrenberg and Stegmann, *Deutsches Handbuch der Politik*, edited by H. Grebing, *Geschichte der sozialen Ideen in Deutschland*, (Munich, 1969) pp. 137–138.
- 14 Karl Kautsky, *Der Einfluss der Volksvermehrung auf den Fortschritt der Gesellschaft*, (Wien: Bloch und Hasbach, 1880).
- 15 Karl Kautsky, *Vermehrung und Entwicklung in Natur und Gesellschaft*, (Stuttgart: Dietz Nachf, 1910).
- 16 Steinberg, *Sozialismus und deutsche Sozialdemokratie.*, p. 52.
- 17 Kautsky, *Der Einfluss der Volksvermehrung*.
- 18 Karl Kautsky; see article on Socialism and Darwinism which appeared in the *Österreichischen Arbeiterkalender*, quoted in Steinberg, *Sozialismus und deutsche Sozialdemokratie*, p. 52.
- 19 Karl Kautsky, *The Social Revolution*, (Chicago: Charles Kerr & Co., 1913), p. 12.
- 20 Karl Kautsky, *Die historische Leistung von Karl Marx*, (Berlin, 1908).

- 21 Karl Kautsky, *Vermehrung und Entwicklung in Natur und Gesellschaft*, (Stuttgart: Dietz Nachf, 1910)
- 22 Chevelier de Lamarck, writing in the early nineteenth century, first developed a scheme of evolution based on the inheritance of acquired characteristics.
- 23 Karl Vogt (1821–1895), became involved in the 1848 revolution. Fredrich Buchner (1824–1899); his *Kraft und Stoff* was one of the most widely read popular scientific works of the age.
- 24 1877, the scientific meeting at Munich where Haeckel's evolutionary theory was opposed by Virchow on the grounds that the evolutionary hypothesis was still unproved.
- 25 Redevelopment of Haeckel's Monist League and its opposition, *Der Keplerbund*.
- 26 The most popular of which was Ernst Haeckel's *The Riddle of the Universe*, which appeared in 1899.
- 27 For instance, Social Darwinists such as Herbert Spencer (1820–1903); Robert M. Young, however, points out in his article on Darwinism, "Evolutionary Biology and Ideology ... Then and Now", *Science Studies* (1971), pp. 177–206, that the direction of natural science itself was influenced by considerations other than purely scientific ones. The point made here is that the process in England was much more subtle and diffused than in Germany because of the different nature of the political regime and social structure.
- 28 Kautsky, *Der Einfluss der Volksvermehrung*, p. 27.
- 29 *Ibid.*, pp. 182–183; Kautsky suggested the Raciborski method.
- 30 Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, II & III.
- 31 Kautsky, *Der Einfluss der Volksvermehrung*, p. 170.
- 32 This concept was open to disagreement among Marxists such as Korsch who considered it to be undialectical.
- 33 Kautsky, *Der Einfluss der Volksvermehrung*, p. 14.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 16.
- 35 A feature that Korsch disputed in his critique of Kautsky as being unconnected with the human element in dialectical development.
- 36 Kautsky, *Vermehrung und Entwicklung in Natur und Gesellschaft*, p. 96.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 166; Kautsky mentioned the increased rate of fertility amongst Boers compared with the fertility rate for Hottentots during the same period in South Africa.
- 38 Between Germany and the Austrian Empire and Germany and France.
- 39 Kautsky, *Vermehrung und Entwicklung*, p. 196.
- 40 *Ibid.*, p. 127.
- 41 *Ibid.*
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 129.
- 43 See Karl Kautsky's studies: *Communism in Central Europe at the time of the Reformation*, (New York: Russell, 1956), and *Thomas More and His Utopia* (New York: International Publishers, 1959); also *The Foundations of Christianity* (New York: Russell, 1956) first published in 1908. All these works deal with the unsuccessful revolts of the urban and rural poor in pre-capitalist societies. Due to the low level of technical development of such societies the poor were in no position to challenge effectively the weapons wielded by the ruling classes and, as a consequence, reverted to superstition, bringing about the failure of their revolts.
- 44 Kautsky referred here also to the positions of farmers and artisans for whom he saw the acquisition of a scientific critique of society as equally superfluous in that they already received the full produce of their labour and required only to increase that product through individual means, often by increasing the amount of working time, thus limiting the time allotted for mental and cultural activities. See Kautsky, *Vermehrung und Entwicklung*, p. 129.
- 45 Gareth Stedman Jones, "Engels and the Genesis of Marxism", in *Beyond Bureaucracy*, *New Left Review* 106, (November/December, 1977), p. 83.
- 46 Kautsky, *Vermehrung und Entwicklung*, p. 132. Kautsky also included here a long section on the relationship of art and nature, in which he described the human appreciation of art as a natural instinct. He emphasised, however, the social basis of appreciation and creativity in artistic endeavour but agreed with Trotsky's conclusion that any attempt to promote a proletarian art form would be both premature and artificial. See Kautsky, *ibid.*, p. 144.