



# Marx's Das Kapital: A Biography (Books That Changed the World)

By Francis Wheen



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In vivid detail, Francis Wheen tells the story of *Das Kapital* and Karl Marx's twenty-year struggle to complete his unfinished masterpiece. Born in a two-room flat in London's Soho amid political squabbles and personal tragedy, the first volume of *Das Kapital* was published in 1867, to muted praise. But after Marx's death, the book went on to influence thinkers, writers, and revolutionaries, from George Bernard Shaw to V. I. Lenin, changing the direction of twentieth-century history. Wheen's captivating, accessible book shows that, far from being a dry economic treatise, *Das Kapital* is like a vast Gothic novel whose heroes are enslaved by the monster they created: capitalism. Furthermore, Wheen argues, as long as capitalism endures, *Das Kapital* demands to be read and understood.



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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"As gripping and as readable as a first-rate thriller."

"Wheen...presents this splendid reevaluation with great wit and verve."

"[Wheen] brilliantly evokes the atmosphere of Victorian Gothic that pervades the pages of Das Kapital."

"[An] exhilarating read, and a healthy corrective to those brought up to think of Marx's work as rigid and doctrinaire."

#### About the Author

Francis Wheen, an author and journalist, was named Columnist of the Year for his contributions to the Guardian. He is the author of several books, including *How Mumbo-Jumbo Conquered the World* and a highly acclaimed biography of Karl Marx that has been translated into twenty languages. His collected journalism, *Hoo-Hahs and Passing Frenzies*, won the George Orwell Prize in 2003. Simon Vance, a former BBC Radio presenter and newsreader, is a full-time actor who has appeared on both stage and television. He has recorded over four hundred audiobooks and has earned over twenty Earphones Awards from AudioFile magazine, including one for his narration of *Theft* by Peter Carey. A twelve-time Audie finalist, Simon has won three Audie Awards, including one for *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, and the 2008 Booklist Voice of Choice Award. He has also been named an AudioFile Golden Voice as well as an AudioFile Best Voice of 2009.

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The titles that make up the Books That Changed the World series might be called Òlibrographies,Ó since they tell the life story of historyÓs most influential tomes. Karl MarxÓs DAS KAPITAL, like other books in the series, may have been read by relatively few, but many of its disciples have had wide influence. British narrator Simon Vance has an appropriately erudite tone for this material. It says something about the impenetrability of MarxÓs masterwork that even the brief summary is boring, but the later sections on how the book influenced revolutionaries (especially in Russia) is far more interesting and relevant for modern listeners. VanceÓs warm voice and steady pacing help listeners follow what can be a difficult text. D.B. Ó AudioFile 2008, Portland, Maine-- *Copyright Ó AudioFile, Portland, Maine*

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