THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE OF LOUIS BONAPARTE

IN THE UNITED STATES, GERMANY, AND FRANCE, 1852-1932

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ABSTRACT

THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE OF LOUIS BONAPARTE

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This dissertation is a political history of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,* from its composition by Karl Marx and first publication in New York City in 1852 to the last edition published in the Weimar Republic eighty years later. It studies ten editions published in the United States, Germany, and France, using sources such as the correspondence among those involved in making them to determine the political significance of each edition, explaining why the work survived and how it changed over time. It posits that an original political meaning of the work as a "picture of the land of revolution" was quickly forgotten and new modes of interpretation developed to explain its past and present meaning in different national contexts. In this eighty-year period, the *Brumaire* rose slowly from near oblivion to be recognized as a prime example of historical materialism and a model of revolutionary political thought, but dilemmas of interpretation already evident in inconspicuous forms in the nineteenth century took drastic political shapes after the First World War. Much of our scholarly knowledge of the *Brumaire* today remains deeply influenced by its political history before 1933. A history of the text is finally a critical investigation of a large part of this inherited knowledge that aims to inform the future uses of Marx in teaching and research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Introduction

How does a text endure? *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* is a remarkable case. Its composition appears to have been improvised, not carefully planned in advance. Two weeks after Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte's coup d'état of December 2, 1851, Karl Marx promised an essay [*Aufsatz*] with the title for the first issue of a German weekly newspaper in New York City.[1] This became a plan for three articles, then four, five, six, and finally, seven, as he repeatedly promised that the next part would be the last. Its initial publication had a similarly improvised character, as plans for the weekly newspaper were postponed and the text appeared finally as the first in a planned series of pamphlets. Attempts to print it in Germany or Switzerland, or in French or English translation, were all unsuccessful, as were attempts to smuggle the American edition into Germany.[2] The political situation in Europe was a practical obstacle to distribution and a discouragement even to readers in the United States. Adolf Cluss, in Washington, D.C., reported that even the "enlighteners" (*Aufklärlinge*) there had lost hope for France and thus interest in the political situation.

How did the *Brumaire* rise from this original oblivion to acquire any real meaning at all in an extended sense? How did it come to be central to twentieth-century

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[1] Marx/Engels Gesamtausgabe (hereafter MEGA), III:4, p. 276 (KM to Joseph Weydemeyer, December 19, 1851) For the rest of this paragraph, see the more detailed account of this genesis and the circulation of the 1852 edition in chapter one, below.

[2] Even the modest estimate in the preface by Marx to the revised second edition of 1869, that a "few hundred" copies found their way into Germany, may be an exaggeration. Jürgen Herres, *Marx Und Engels: Porträt Einer Intellektuellen Freundschaft* (Ditzingen: Reclam, 2018), 166.

understandings of Marx in politics and scholarship, a source of famous quotations and fundamental concepts, a model of historiography and revolutionary political thought, at times acquiring heroic status, laden with expectations of prophecy and resurrection? What is the origin of our own more mundane working knowledge of the *Brumaire*, the range of recognizable meanings that it has in its normal uses in teaching and research. How do these various roles of the *Brumaire* in the mostly peaceful production of academic knowledge relate to its tumultuous political history?

There is very little research into such questions. In fact, the political history of the *Brumaire* is largely unknown. This dissertation proposes that a political history of the text is essential for a critical understanding of the *Brumaire* today, as scholars in the past decade have turned from their earlier work of critical deconstruction to a project of "Marx revival," focused on rediscovery and reconstruction, and dazzling postmodern interpretations of the *Brumaire* have given way to less dramatic uses of the text as a source and example. This dissertation studies the history of the text as a constructive criticism of this newfound working knowledge, aiming to inform and influence the future uses of Marx in scholarship. At the core of this history are ten editions, in German, French, and English, published from 1852 to 1932. I try to explain why each edition was published when, where, and as it was, drawing on sources that include the archives of people and parties involved in making them. I also survey printed references to the *Brumaire* as evidence of its meaning and use, but the main contours of this history are defined by the repeated decision to publish the text.

The decision to publish an edition of the *Brumaire* was always a political decision. The history of editions is thus a political history, in a sense that differs somewhat from the "political history of editions" as practiced by Terrell Carver and Daniel Blank in their history of the *German Ideology* manuscripts.[3] For Carver and Blank, a history of editions is "political" when it involves an extended political struggle over the meaning of the text. Although there were already political motives involved in the composition of the *German Ideology* manuscripts in the 1840s, for example, and in some unsuccessful attempts at their publication, they had no "political history" before the First World War, because there was no "political chain reaction" comparable to their "impact" from the 1920s on. Yet political histories of different texts at different times may take completely different forms than such a "chain reaction." A text can have an extended political history that only occasionally becomes a struggle over meaning.

In this history, the *Brumaire* will rarely spark political actions, other than the acts of republishing the text and referring to it in print. In place of struggles over meaning, different beliefs about the text mostly just coexist. The drama is in how the text itself moves, changes, and simply survives, over a long period of profound changes in society, politics, and culture. The struggles are those of editors and translators trying to understand Marx and promote his work, sometimes also their own careers, often in hard circumstances. This is largely a story of individuals and small groups within parties, often parties in formation or undergoing rapid change, sometimes the hidden struggles among

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[3] Terrell Carver and Daniel Blank, *A Political History of the Editions of Marx and Engels's "German Ideology" Manuscripts* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

those involved, what Filipe Carreira da Silva and Mónica Brito Vieira call the "politics of the book."[4] Most of the editions studied here have been discussed briefly by specialists in the past, but not in detail, together, or with the questions I am posing. The political significance of editions is rarely obvious, and it was often necessary to construct other contexts for interpretation than could be found in existing histories of socialism. This was especially true with the first edition. I start out from the premise that the original meaning of the *Brumaire* has been forgotten. Because this may be controversial, I explain my position in the first part of this introduction, drawing brief contrasts to recent scholarship. I then summarize my research into the later history of the *Brumaire,* from the second edition of 1869 to three editions from the Weimar Republic.

The Original Meaning of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*

What was the original meaning of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*? When I began my research, I expected some answers to this question to be easy to find, but this was very far from the case. Scholars explained how the work related to other writings by Marx or other accounts of the same events, described in detail the struggles to print and distribute the work, and studied its form and content in many different ways, but rarely explained exactly what its original value and use was supposed to be, why it was supposed to matter

[4] Filipe Carreira da Silva and Mónica Brito Vieira, *The Politics of the Book: A Study on the Materiality of Ideas*, Penn State Series in the History of the Book (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019).

for some potential readers in its sphere of circulation. I reluctantly inferred that its original meaning had been forgotten and could not be found again through these familiar approaches to the text itself. It would have to be reconstructed in another way and from sources that had been neglected by scholars.

The piece of evidence that gave me this idea was a brief preface that was added to the *Brumaire* by its first editor, Joseph Weydemeyer, dated May 1, 1852. Weydemeyer described the *Brumaire* as a "picture" of a current situation, at the time of his own writing, some five months after the coup d'état. This original metaphor of the work as a picture is rarely if ever discussed in scholarship today. It has been largely displaced by the metaphors of the text as an explanation of events or a drama, for example. For Weydemeyer, in contrast, what is at stake in the work is a present situation. What it shows most of all is what has *not* changed. "France is and remains the land of revolutionary energy [*Thatkraft*]," he declares, "and, as much as Germany has taken the lead in intellectual and theoretical development, remains the focus [*Schwerpunkt*] of revolutionary development."

For short, I call this the view of the text as a picture of the land of revolution. The "picture" shows how it is possible to sustain and reassert a longstanding view of France that has become uncertain. This is the essence of what I call its original meaning. It can be contrasted to the view of Marx as "unmasking" what he depicts or "destabilizing" representations, as he might appear to do in hindsight. It defines a specific goal of the explanation of events and a context of other ways to "picture" or characterize France in political arguments at the time. Relating the *Brumaire* to other depictions of France in

political use restores a view of the work as criticism in the sense of an attempt to assess uncertain beliefs, in this case, beliefs about France and its role in history. German democrats in particular drew far more negative conclusions than Marx about the situation in France and the French people themselves.

Weydemeyer gives an important example. He describes certain "leaders of petit-bourgeois democracy" as "embarrassed in their expectations" by the coup d'état. That is, they had recently shared the common view of France as the land of revolution, a view that they now completely repudiate in various ways. Considered in relation to these drastic shifts in beliefs about France, from heightened expectation to disappointment and blame, the *Brumaire* has a more affirmative character than may be apparent to a reader who is not aware of the alternate views at the time. It no longer appears to attack what it depicts. It is also not exactly an attack on the democrats that Weydemeyer mentions here. They are already supposed to be "embarrassed." Marx seeks out the causes of their errors in order to affirm, at least to some degree, a formerly shared belief in France as a potential site of a revolution.

This view of the *Brumaire* as restoring a prior concept of France as the land of revolution does not seem very obscure to me, but it is not clearly articulated in scholarship today. Weydemeyer's preface, with its affirmation of what France "is and remains," has been reprinted only rarely and is hardly ever mentioned by scholars. The context of democratic arguments that he uses to explain its meaning is often studied for other reasons, because it involves many of the leading figures of the European revolutions, their attempts to organize for the "next" revolution, and their contributions to

the history of democratic and nationalist ideas, but it is not yet studied as a context for interpreting the *Brumaire.*

The sources that I use to reconstruct this context are rare but will be known to some specialists in German-American radical history. They include the newsletter of the socialist *Turnerbund,* a nation-wide network of German gymnastic associations in the United States that published many of Weydemeyer's own writings, and *Janus,* the short-lived newspaper of his local rival in New York, Karl Heinzen. The writings in *Janus* by Heinzen and his overseas ally Arnold Ruge provide a particularly useful point of contrast with the *Brumaire*. "The French are in the fetters of the priests and their own military vanity," Ruge declared, in a text written at the same time as the *Brumaire* and published in *Janus*. "And who shall now rescue the sacred flame of mental freedom, from which everything else follows? Who but we, the Germans?"

To clarify my claim about original meaning, the historical interpretation of this edition as "picture" in its own sphere of circulation can be contrasted with two other familiar approaches to the text, its interpretation in relation to other writings by Marx and its criticism as a purported representation of reality. Both approaches can be called classical. They go back to the late nineteenth century and remain completely essential for the broader scholarly understanding Marx. They have limited use, however, for grasping the original meaning of the *Brumaire.* Recent biographies by Jonathan Sperber and Gareth Stedman Jones provide sophisticated examples of each approach.
Sperber relates the *Brumaire* to Marx's own earlier experiences and expectations, as one of many documents of a greater revolutionary experience:

> In a painful and difficult process, beginning with his expulsion from Cologne in May 1849 and ending with the conclusion of the Cologne Communist Trial in November 1852, Marx would watch his hopes for a new revolution expire. … Out of this series of defeats would emerge a new theory of the preconditions for revolution and a literary masterpiece, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.* In that work, Marx would offer a veiled self-criticism of his own actions during the 1848 Revolution, but also find a way to extend the hopes of that year into a dismal future.[5]

As one of the leading specialists in the history of the revolutions of 1848, Sperber draws sensitive but clear distinctions here, for example, between a text that simply belongs to a time of heightened revolutionary expectations or looks back at them already with bitter irony, and one that belongs to the end of an extended process of realization that continues through the course of 1852. His ultimate description of what Marx is doing in the *Brumaire* is also suitably complex, appropriate to his notion of the work as a "literary masterpiece."

What Sperber describes, however, is not what I would call original meaning. By "veiled self-criticism," he means a supposed tendency in Marx to repudiate aspects of his own ideals by "projecting" them onto others and attacking them. The way that Marx "criticized French leftists for seeing 1848 as a rerun of 1789," near the start of the *Brumaire,* is supposed to be a "drastic example," because Marx himself had often imagined revolution in similar terms, as a repetition at the level of events. Sperber notes in passing elsewhere that Marx still saw France as the land of revolution, for some time after writing the *Brumaire,* but he does not consider the *Brumaire* itself as an attempt to show others how this familiar belief about France can be sustained. This has further

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[5] Jonathan Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life* (New York: Norton, 2013), 238.

consequences for locating the *Brumaire* in Marx's work, as the practice of "veiled self-criticism" is supposed to have helped Marx "to maintain his position as the person articulating the direction of human history."[6] The original exoteric meaning of the *Brumaire,* I argue, involves much more direct and quite different relationships to arguments about the direction of history. I return to this contrast in my conclusion.

Gareth Stedman Jones pursues a second essential approach to historical interpretation of the *Brumaire,* assessing its veracity, in relation to our own knowledge of its objects, especially the phenomenon of Bonapartism.[7] For Stedman Jones, the *Brumaire* is not only a document of revolutionary experience and beliefs; it has to be assessed as an attempt to explain "why the revolution in France had come to such a grotesque end," or in Marx's own words, from the preface to the revised second edition of 1869, "how the class struggle in France ... made it possible for a grotesque mediocrity to play a hero's part." Stedman Jones regards this attempt as a total failure. By depicting a crisis "as a kind of comedy," Marx "missed what was important ... the emergence of a novel form of democratic politics," the advent of mass suffrage, the creation of a constitution that finally gave the people their own power to choose an "outsider," and finally, a form of conservative populism that was "wholly new." In this case, the revolution of 1848, "far from signifying farcical or comic repetition, represented a huge innovation in nineteenth-century politics." This is no "literary masterpiece," as Sperber

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[6] Sperber, 172. The quotation refers to an earlier example of "veiled self-criticism," the attack on the "True Socialists" in the *German Ideology* manuscripts and elsewhere, but "Marx would repeat this process in future works, particularly *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.*"
[7] Gareth Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 305–13, 334–42.

has it, but a "willful and perverse" misrepresentation, involving crude class prejudices against peasants and the *Lumpenproletariat,* a denial of "independent space to the people's political concerns."

This harsh treatment of Marx reflects a broader critical concern that is much more central for Stedman Jones than it is for Sperber, a concern to criticize "Marxism" (his quotation marks) and a view of Marx created in the late nineteenth century, by Engels among others. Stedman Jones wants to understand Marx's works "as interventions in already existing fields of discourse ... addressed to his contemporaries," as distinct from a later view of Marx as a scientist. What I find particularly compelling in this approach is the attention paid to concepts of class that Marx is supposed to have shared with others in his time. To interpret the work as "intervention," however, must involve more than just locating it in fields of discourse, as essential as that is. In my understanding of "intervention," it must also involve relating the work to a definite sphere of circulation, to some arguments that Marx could have plausibly influenced, as "addressed" to identifiable contemporaries, and not simply related to the symbolic repertoire of a "field" of discourse, as represented in intellectual-historical practice perhaps in the history of concepts. Here, too, the rediscovery of original meaning will challenge broader arguments about the place of the *Brumaire* in Marx's work.

A third biographical approach might be considered here. Sven-Eric Liedman (*A World to Win*) sets out to show "not only who Marx was ... but why he remains a vital source of inspiration today."[8] He even claims of the *Brumaire* that "only posterity has

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[8] Sven-Eric Liedman, *A World to Win: The Life and Works of Karl Marx* (London; Brooklyn: Verso, 2018)

been able to appreciate the work according to its merits." These merits are not in any literary act of self-critical reflection or even in the explanation of events, but rather in discrete philosophical insights "about social classes, on the difference between saying and doing, on the history that marks people's thinking and language, on historical patterns that are repeated, and especially on people's freedom and lack of freedom."

This aphoristic-philosophical approach to the *Brumaire* can also be called classical. It also goes back to the (late) nineteenth century, and it has far more traction in scholarship today than the fairly specialized questions posed by Sperber and Stedman Jones. Any consideration of the actual uses of the *Brumaire* in scholarship today must conclude that the *Brumaire* is above all as a source of quotations and discrete ideas, wholly apart from any special interest in Marx as political actor or interpreter of specific events. Sperber and Stedman Jones provide a good basis for critical engagement with broader conceptions of Marx, but their work remains fairly remote from this everyday working knowledge of the *Brumaire.* I take seriously Liedman's position that the *Brumaire* is only possible to appreciate today. But what does this new kind of "appreciation" involve?

Liedman quotes a recent poll in Germany, ranking the *Brumaire* among the greatest works of world literature. If it deserves this status, it is not because of a few philosophical insights, expressed in its most famous passages, but also because it is an intricately constructed whole, in which rhetoric and logic are combined with astonishing dexterity into an argument about real things, an argument that is also historical evidence of the author's political experience (Sperber) and judgment (Stedman Jones). What seems

more important than this, however, is that these few famous passages only stand out from the whole and seem to have any independent philosophical meaning because the text as a whole has a political history. To explain why the *Brumaire* "remains a vital source of inspiration today," I propose, the resources of biography are essential but not sufficient. We must also study its history.

The Eighteenth Brumaire in History, 1869-1933

Marx himself did not generally treat the *Brumaire* as a work that had any obvious lasting value. He only mentioned it in print on one significant occasion between the first two editions, quoting from it at length in his 1860 polemic *Herr Vogt. Herr Vogt* is (barely) remembered today as a polemic, but it was advertised and reviewed also as historical "compendium." The very recent past was already treated as posing problems of interpretation and knowledge that required almost antiquarian research. The *Brumaire* now became a small part of a developing record of debates from the revolutionary era, at a time of apparent liberalization in Germany, when many revolutionaries were returning to political life.

In this context, Marx quotes only from the end of the *Brumaire*, his passages on the character of Bonaparte and his association with the *Lumpenproletariat.* The characterization is thus removed from the affirmative context of a picture of the land of revolution. This was highly influential, not least for the understanding of the *Lumpenproletariat* as an agent of "reaction," rather than a part of an argument about the

unstable character of the regime. The example is considered closely at the end of chapter one, as it shows the dilemmas that the *Brumaire* and the revolutionary period more broadly posed as evidence in political arguments in retrospect. Reviews of *Herr Vogt* also show a pressure to forget divisive arguments and errors of the past, to present a more respectable and inspiring picture of democracy.

This tension between historical knowledge and democratic respectability influenced the interpretation of Marx from the start. The original meaning of the text, as a picture of the land of revolution, also belonged to a certain discourse of modernity that gave way to others in the course of time. It originally depended on a sense of belonging to the modern "age of the French revolution," in which France was still the symbol and crux of revolutionary expectations and fears in Europe. It was also arguably modern in treating the present as immediately past, "instant history," as the *Brumaire* is sometimes described. I dwell on the example of *Herr Vogt* because it shows how a document of a moment may pose quite challenging problems for interpretation even in the near future. This raises the question of how the *Brumaire* had any meaning later on.

The initiative to republish the *Brumaire* mainly came from Wilhelm Liebknecht, who became close to Marx as an exile in London and brought copies of the first edition with him to distribute when he returned to Berlin in 1863. A remarkable notebook at the New York Public Library attests to the extreme rarity of the *Brumaire* at this time and the beginning of interest in Marx in the next generation. It includes a handwritten copy of the whole *Brumaire,* following the first edition, made by the student Sigfrid Meyer in Berlin, in about 1865. Marks on this manuscript show that the source was most likely a copy of

the text, now lost, that had been lightly edited by Marx himself, as a part of a first unsuccessful attempt at republication by Liebknecht in the fall of 1864. I don't think that this manuscript has been studied before.

Meyer's interest was unusual, an extremely early attempt to preserve and make sense of the revolutionary writings of Marx and Engels as a group. The interest was shared with others but did not represent any greater demand that could justify a new edition. Somewhat later, in the fall of 1868, there was a new kind of public interest in the *Brumaire* from several directions. Liebknecht was now a leader, with August Bebel, of a democratic party in Saxony, and a vocal opponent of the course that the Lassallean movement had taken after Lassalle's death in 1864, under the pro-Prussian socialist agitator Johann Baptist von Schweitzer. Tensions mounted especially after the Prussian victory in the war of 1866 and with the prospects of a Prussian war with France, when Leibknecht increasingly defined the situation and international mission of social democracy in terms of opposition to "Caesarism" in France and Germany.

Liebknecht's use of this word is essential for determining the political significance of the revised second edition of the *Brumaire*, published in Hamburg in 1869. This edition is important today for its preface by Marx, most of all for a famous sentence that summarizes his argument: "I show how *class struggle* in France .... enabled a mediocre and grotesque personage to play the hero's role." The sentence can be regarded as a timeless self-presentation, in which Marx "tells the reader how the text

should be read," as Dominick LaCapra puts it.[9] But it can also be historicized as a strategic use of theory in a political situation, as a part of a greater self-historicization that concludes with a surprising new intention to influence the German language. This example can be opposed to other ideas of the use of theory.

Marx hopes that the new edition will help to destroy the word "Caesarism." I see this as a precise, modest, realistic view of how a work from the past, although originally invested in a moment and a greater historical logic that is no longer current, may still have political significance, through an influence on an emerging political vocabulary. As in the case of the concept of France that was supposed to be at stake in the first edition, the survival of this neologism was already uncertain. In opposing the word "Caesarism," Marx is at odds with a pejorative liberal use of "Caesarism" to describe an oppressive regime that earns popular support by meeting the material needs of the people, what Walter Bagehot in the *Economist* called a "Benthamite despotism," but also with its derivative use by Liebknecht, Bebel, and others in the First International, to denounce and equate Napoleon III and Bismarck.

This intention to destroy a word is used to explain the political significance of the new emphasis on class struggle and also to interpret the revisions to the text. The Meyer manuscript shows that Marx at first intended only to make small changes, mostly to the

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[9] Dominick LaCapra, "Reading Marx: The Case of The Eighteenth Brumaire," in *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983). Peter Stallybrass draws an even sharper contrast than LaCapra does between the preface by Marx and the preface by Engels to the third edition of 1885. "Where Engels claims that Marx was never taken by surprise," he writes, "Marx's own preface stages the radical contingencies by which his representation ... came (or rather failed to come) to public attention." Peter Stallybrass, "'Well Grubbed, Old Mole': Marx, Hamlet, and the (Un) Fixing of Representation," *Cultural Studies* 12, no. 1 (1998): 3–14.

beginning of the text. His later and more important changes focus on the end. These included removing passages that depicted Bonaparte as dominating civil society, as in what later Marxist theories call the "autonomy of the state." I claim that these changes reinforce the original meaning of the *Brumaire*, that France was (in the spring of 1852) still the land of revolution. This can be opposed to ideas proposed in the past, that Marx was concealing his own earlier errors of judgment or moderating his earlier revolutionary views for tactical reasons.

Marx's preface and revisions, like Weydemeyer's preface to the edition of 1852, are important in hindsight, but they were not immediately influential. The newspaper of the Lassalleans now praised its "deep philosophy of history," but other reviews were confused about the role of class in the text and the idea of class struggle as such had only an erratic influence on how the *Brumaire* was discussed and used. Each journalist described the argument differently, and it was very unclear why the work should outlast the political career of its protagonist, after the Franco-Prussian War, let alone how its politics were relevant in the new German Empire. The *Brumaire* was in fact mentioned only rarely, even in the German socialist press, in the following decade. The most consequential influence of Marx may have been in what he did *not* do, namely, try to explain the political meaning of the first edition. He certainly did not recall the argument about what France "is and remains."

I found little evidence that any individual interpreter or editor of the *Brumaire* had a great influence on its meaning, beyond just keeping it in circulation. Later editions were also less closely tied to specific political circumstances than the first two and can rarely

be understood as political actions by their makers in the same specific way. The first translations of the *Brumaire* into French provide a rich illustration of these points. The idea of a French translation had come up already when the *Eighteenth Brumaire* was first published, in 1852, but it was not realized until 1891. The translator was Edouard Fortin, a socialist leader from the small city of Beauvais, in the north of France. Nine years later, there was a second French translation responding to the first. Léon Rémy's 1900 translation was published by the popular-science press Charles Reinwald, in Paris, in a single volume with *Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850,* in a series of works in the "sociological sciences" edited by Augustin Hamon. In chapter three, I closely consider the genesis of these two translations in the context of political modernization in the French Third Republic. Both are definitely influenced by Engels and German socialism, but each also has already a considerable life of its own.

The Fortin translation has a surprisingly long history, beginning in October, 1883, as a collaboration between Fortin and his friend Paul Lavigne. The following spring, Fortin and Lavigne had a bitter fight that left the ownership of their work in doubt. Over Lavigne's protests, Engels chose to work with Fortin. Their still unpublished correspondence records their developing relationship, as Fortin rose to a regional leadership role in the *Parti ouvrier,* later called the *Parti ouvrier français* (POF). In harsh contrast, Lavigne was marginalized and died of tuberculosis in 1887, some four years before the translation was published under Fortin's name. For the party, the *Brumaire* was a source for studying new problems at a time of new practical horizons. Its history

also shows the various uses of Marx and Engels for Fortin, as he worked his way into the intellectual hierarchy of an increasingly modern political party.

Rémy and Hamon began their political careers outside of the POF, in independent socialist and anarchist circles and maintained a critical stance toward the uses of Marx by socialist parties in the 1890s. Rémy hoped to restore historical materialism to an imagined "purity," before its supposed corruption by Engels and others. Hamon had less special interest in Marx and was mainly concerned to promote his own vision of the "sociological sciences." Their edition was attacked by one of the leading intellectuals of the POF, Marx's own son-in-law, Paul Lafargue, as a form of "piracy" typical of "intellectuals." It was also denounced from another direction, as falling short of the "scientific socialism" represented by Jean Jaurés. This chapter balances historical and textual interpretation, analyzing the "politics of the book," the challenges of translating technical terms like *Weltgeschichte*, *bürgerliche Gesellschaft, Lumpenproletariat*, and *Inhalt,* and the dilemmas of editing a text that now belonged to a distant political time.

No doubt, the problems of interpretation were most clearly articulated in Germany. Here the anti-socialist laws of 1878 prompted a more general concern to define the history of socialism and the scientific status of Marx's work, including the *Brumaire.* This was the broader context for the third edition of 1885, with the new preface by Engels that dramatized the act of interpreting events in real time. Repression also prompted attempts to preserve and reactivate political tradition in the exile *Sozialdemokrat,* edited by Eduard Bernstein, where I see the first example of the enduring idea of the *Brumaire* as a means for the "revival" of Marx, a vital source for

rediscovering the practical-political value of his greater project. "What Marx has been for social democracy, we do not need to go over again here," an anonymous journalist declared in the *Sozialdemokrat,* in March, 1887, "but it is befitting always and always again to point out what he still *is* in his works for us today, what a wealth of teachings we can draw from his writings, not only about past times, but rather also for the present." The article used the *Brumaire* to promote the philosophical insight that Marx's conception of history "in no way leads to a dull mechanism … a denial of the influence of intellectual currents and personal initiative." It was also supposed to hold specific lessons even for "so-called *bourgeois* democrats" who had lost recent elections to supporters of Bismarck.

Some of these references to the *Brumaire* sometimes anticipate our own understanding of the text in certain ways. In fact, remarkably many of our own assumptions and problems of interpretation become evident in some forms before the First World War, even if they remain inconspicuous, not yet developing into formal exegesis and debate. The *Brumaire* was not discussed at much length in print, even in the German socialist press, before the First World War, even as it was translated into Polish, Russian, French, Italian, and English. After 1885, there would be no new edition of the *Brumaire* in Germany for twenty-two years. Scholarly critics of Marx who tried to interpret his works as a whole could exclude the *Brumaire* from consideration, as not "science," or compare it to earlier writings by Marx to show how his theories had led to misleading expectations. Socialists could approve its depiction of the corrupt bourgeoisie, its concern for rural poverty, or its prophetic diagnosis of the corruption of Bonapartism;

some comparisons were also drawn to the short-lived radical right-wing movement that formed in France around General Boulanger. In the 1890s, however, the *Brumaire* seemed increasingly to belong to the past. With the legalization of the party in 1890 and its re-founding as the modern SPD, a general tendency to historicize Marx became apparent, taking different forms.

By 1895, in one of his final writings, Engels relegated the *Brumaire* to a former age of revolutions, when he and Marx had seen France as a model of revolution and believed that the end of capitalism was nigh. Bernstein re-read the work with increasing ambivalence during his turn to what was called "revisionism," as he was editing a history of the February revolution and the Second Republic by a French-Swiss anarchist named Louis Héritier. He came to condemn its seemingly catastrophic view that counter-revolution was a kind of progress, but at the same time, approved its "spirit," as a potential remedy to what he called the "conceptual fetishism" of class. This can be contrasted to its roles in reaffirming class stereotypes, as in the grand narrative of Karl Kautsky, in which the *Brumaire* depicts the very moment that the bourgeoisie abandoned its own revolutionary ideals and revealed its true moral character.

By 1907, I see the question first clearly posed in the German socialist press, "How should we read Marx?" This mainly concerned the order in which the increasingly long list of his republished works were supposed to be studied, with the *Brumaire* as only one of a number of writings from the revolutions of 1848-9 that were themselves just one stop on an imagined transformative journey. In 1914, when Marx's work entered the public domain in Germany, the *Eighteenth Brumaire* was promptly republished by Dietz Verlag

in a series of small texts for self-education called *Kleine Bibliothek.* In contrast to Franz Mehring's edition of *Revelations of the Communist Trial in Cologne*, for example, this *Brumaire* had no new critical preface to place it in historical perspective. It did have an exhaustive "name register" with identifications, compiled by the Russian socialist David Riazanov.

The status of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* seemed to remain modest even in Germany. It was adapted for use in modern political parties and modern social science, but there was little sign anywhere of the identification with the text that would become evident in the Weimar Republic. One exception to this rule is the subject of chapter five. In the fall of 1897, an English translation of the *Brumaire* was serialized in New York City, in *The People,* the weekly organ of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP). The translator, Daniel De Leon, saw "counterparts" in the text to all of the party's rivals, including the Populists, trade unions, Eugene V. Debs, and Tammany Hall, "the American 'Society of December 10.'" The translation was timed to an important local election, to select the first mayor to rule over the five boroughs of New York City. This attempt to "actualize" the text again goes well beyond the kinds of casual citation that are common in Europe.

De Leon's translation is an unusual work that still rewards close reading. It was De Leon, for example, who seems to have come up with the unusual verb "grubbed" in the famous quotation (as it is best known in English) "well grubbed, old mole." This conveys the older meaning of "grubbed," to turn up the earth, but De Leon used the word "grub" elsewhere to describe just scraping by, doing lowly work, to "grub" for a living. This is the most successful of his use of slang words to create a sense of intimate

connection in order to re-actualize the work in politics. Other coinages, like "slum proletariat," seem less fortunate.

De Leon's use of the *Brumaire* was distinctly modern, perhaps even *modernist* in its relationship to an instant, its collage-like recombination of elements from the past to suit the present. His was also a distinctly metropolitan work that was quickly divorced from its origins. The Russian-owned small press that first published the translation sold the rights to Eugene V. Debs at the time of the founding of the Socialist Party of America in 1901. Debs sold the *Brumaire* in turn, in 1906, to the growing cooperative socialist publishing house Charles H. Kerr in Chicago. Kerr immediately republished the *Brumaire* from the original plates. Shortly after, he began to move left, seeking larger audiences by promoting working-class writers over perceived "intellectuals," embracing the Industrial Workers of the World and coming into conflict with the Socialist Party. In 1913, he published a new edition of De Leon's translation with new type and a new claim, that "the spectacular figure of Theodore Roosevelt now offers a striking parallel to that of Napoleon the Little." The counterpart to Louis Bonaparte was no longer "Boss" Tweed and his successor in Tammany Hall, Richard Croker, but a former American president, recently defeated in his bid for re-election as the candidate of the new Progressive Party.

This is obviously very far from the whole history of the *Brumaire* in the nineteenth century, whatever that might mean. I have not studied the editions in Russian, Polish, or Italian, for example. The history of the text in Germany, however, is at least usefully compared to its very different histories in France and the United States. This is

particularly important for challenging the assumption that the meaning of the *Brumaire* was simply determined, whether directly or indirectly, by influential German Marxists, such as Engels or Karl Kautsky. They were certainly influential in some ways. The history of the *Brumaire* in France or the United States can hardly be understood apart from German Marxism, but the relationship is still very loose. The relationship between the original meaning and the extended meanings of the text, the means by which it "transcends" its time in general, is perhaps not easily ascribed to the actions of "Marxists" at all, but perhaps better explained in terms of larger-scale cultural-historical transformations, by thinking of the *Brumaire* as undergoing "modernization." If so, it should be added, the process still remained incomplete before the First World War. In fact, its later significance was hardly anticipated.

The *Kleine Bibliothek* edition of 1914 was republished each year during the postwar period of revolutionary crisis, in 1919, 1920, 1921, and 1922. In these few years alone, the *Brumaire* may have had as many readers as in its entire prior history up to this point. It also secured its place as one of the most quoted texts by Marx, across the chaotic political spectrum of German socialism and communism. The set of quotations in use also becomes increasingly familiar for a reader today. The whole nineteenth century had shown little interest, for example, in the opening sentence on history as tragedy and farce. With the notable exception of the Polish sociologist Kasimierz Kelles-Krauz, there was also little interest in the passages on revolutionary imitation that follow.[10] The whole

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[10] Kelles-Krauz falls outside the scope of this work, but see Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, "The Sociological Law of Retrospection: The Law of Revolutionary Retrospection as a Consequence of Economic Materialism," in *Marxism and Sociology: A Selection of Writings by Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz*, ed. Helena

motif of historical repetition, which becomes so important for scholars from the 1970s to the early 2000s, comes to the fore in references to the text only during and after the First World War. The passages on tragedy and farce and the "old mole" both start to appear in political use, in something really like a call-and-response.

The influence of Lenin, the new experiences of revolutionary expectation and defeat, as in Germany from 1918-1923, and the increasingly rapid international circulation of ideas made possible a new and distinctly modernist understanding of the *Brumaire* as an expression of revolutionary experience. "In the three years, 1848-1851," Lenin could declare, "France showed, in a swift, sharp, concentrated form, all those processes of development which are inherent in the whole capitalist world." As a new kind of immediate identification with the text became possible, so did the idea of the *Brumaire* as an intervention in a specific sense, a critical reflection on experience that points a way forward, somewhat as Sperber and Stedman Jones treat it, each in his own way. The Weimar Republic serves as the context for studying this shift.

In the early 1920s, the *Brumaire* was somewhat favored by the left and ultimately by Communists, as in an early analysis of fascism by the leading political thinker of the early KPD, August Thalheimer, in 1923. Taifun Verlag in Frankfurt, the ephemeral press for avant-garde literature that published the next edition of the *Brumaire* in Germany, in the fall of 1924, was covertly sponsored by the Comintern. It appeared in a series of paperbacks that included William Morris, the early materialist art-theorist and feminist

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Chmielewska-Szlajfer, Studies in Critical Social Sciences, Volume 119 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2018); Tim Snyder, "Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz (1872–1905): A Pioneering Scholar of Modern Nationalism," *Nations and Nationalism* 3, no. 2 (1997): 231–50.

Lu Märten, the poet and later East German culture minister J.R. Becher, and French stories translated by Hermynia Zur Mühlen. A copy of this edition in the Berlin State Library is full of penciled annotations from the time, relating the text to recent politics, many of them just reading "SPD!"

The more theoretical uses of the *Brumaire* remained limited, including in Marxist sociologies and discussions of dictatorship and "the state." The 1927 edition by David Riazanov, who made the index for the Dietz edition of 1914, belonged to the period of "relative stability," when the SPD collaborated with Soviet researchers on the editing and publication of Marx. Despite its lack of explicit references to contemporary politics, Riazanov's *Brumaire* was not really politically neutral. It was the only work by Marx in a "Marxist Library" series that included works by Stalin, Lenin, and Bukharin. Nonetheless, Riazanov fell from political favor in 1931 and was denounced in *Pravda* for his "objectivity." His edition of the *Brumaire* belongs to a very short-lived period of contentious but productive collaboration between German socialists and Soviet researchers.

In 1932, as the SPD confronted the terminal crisis of the Weimar Republic, it republished the *Brumaire* for the first time in a decade, with a new preface by the sociologist J.P. Mayer. Mayer stresses that the text does *not* provide analogies to the present situation. Its "actuality" is rather as an example of how to analyze the structure of a critical situation. This idea of the *Brumaire* as a model of how to analyze a situation recalls the original meaning of the work as a picture of the land of revolution, but the "picture" now serves a different purpose, more characteristic of a high-modern,

experimental relationship to the present. This contrasts sharply with the use of the *Brumaire* in Mayer's own party's newspaper, *Vorwärts,* which strongly emphasized historical analogies and even resorted to the notion of "prophecy." It saw Hitler as a "farce" and his political support in Germany as an almost reassuring confirmation of Marx's knowledge. Mayer also imagined a renewal of Marxism at this time, but on a completely different basis, through a rediscovery of the "young Marx" of the Paris manuscripts of 1844, which he saw as in some ways anticipating existential philosophy.

The decision to stop my history here was made with some reluctance. The later history is less relevant to my initial question of how the *Brumaire* survived, because after 1933 its survival was essentially ensured for some time. More important, I think that most of our essential beliefs about the work and its value were formed by 1933. The later history of the *Brumaire,* even the history of editions, is certainly exciting, both intellectually and politically, with many dramatic and surprising moments. To gain insights into the meaning of the text, to provide a basis for a criticism of our own working knowledge, it seemed more useful to stop to consolidate some critical conclusions than to continue to stretch the timeline forward.

Some examples of the kinds of working knowledge that I have in mind will be evident already. I have mentioned the uses of the *Brumaire* in biography, as document of experience, representation of reality, or source of timeless philosophical insights. The *Brumaire* is also still used in teaching and research as an example of historical materialism and a challenge to conceptions of Marx and his conception of history. It has been a key source in debates about the concept of class and particular classes, at various

times from the 1890s to the present. For historically-minded sociologists and sociologically-minded historians, it provides a model for the comparative study of revolutions. The last decades of the twentieth century saw a flourishing of intensive and creative re-interpretations of the *Brumaire* as a whole. It had become, as Donald Reid observed in a survey of its reception, a "site of pilgrimage for those seeking to come to terms with the Marxist legacy, from within and from without."[11]

Alongside these familiar roles for the *Brumaire* in scholarship, some new ones have emerged. Hauke Brunkhorst's *Kommentar*, for Suhrkamp's *Studienbibliothek* edition, first published in 2007, promotes the value of the *Brumaire* for democratic and constitutional theory.[12] The *Brumaire* also still finds some creative use among historians, as in the 2015 collection *Scripting Revolution,* edited by Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein. Its role in the recent "Marx revival," however, still remains undetermined and even peculiarly small. In one recent handbook, entries on "Class Struggle" and "Revolution" do not even mention the *Brumaire,* while the entry on "Democracy" refers to it dismissively.[13] Only the entry on "State" discusses it repeatedly. I aim to challenge this narrow view of the conceptual resources that the *Brumaire* could provide for a "Marx revival." I return to these examples in the conclusion, which also includes a re-reading of the text in light of its history, more self-critical reflections on my concept of a "political

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[11] Donald Reid, "Inciting Readings and Reading Cites: Visits to Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*," *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 3 (November 2007): 545–70.
[12] *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte. Kommentar von Hauke Brunkhorst* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2007), cited hereafter as "Brunkhorst."
[13] Marcello Musto, ed., *The Marx Revival: Concepts and New Critical Interpretations* (Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

history of editions," and some suggestions of new roles that the *Brumaire* may play in our understanding of Marx today.

I. The American Origins of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*

The genesis of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* is unusually well documented in correspondence. It has often been recounted with a heavy emphasis on the obstacles, with much less attention to intentions, negotiations, or aspirations of those involved, who were not only at the mercy of circumstances but also saw an opportunity. On December 16, 1851, Friedrich Engels received a letter from Joseph Weydemeyer in New York City, dated December 1, describing a plan for a weekly newspaper and the promising local circumstances for this venture.[14] It is possible in theory that Marx would have written the *Brumaire* in any case, but the correspondence shows that he was inspired to write it only by news of Weydemeyer's plan. Because this opportunity led him to write the work, I claim that the *Eighteenth Brumaire* has its origins in the United States. It was not a spontaneous response to events in France.

Engels forwarded the letter from Manchester to Marx in London, adding the suggestion that "people there right now are yearning for reasoning and standpoints concerning French history [*Raisonnements und Anhaltspunkten über die französische Geschichte*]," that "something sensational about the situation" would guarantee the success of the plan. Marx should write a "diplomatic-supportive-epoch-making" article.[15]

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[14] MEGA III:4, pp. 512 (JW to FE, December 1, 1851). Marx would later claim, in his preface to the revised second edition of 1869, that Weydemeyer invited him to write a "history of the coup d'état." I discuss this apparently false claim in chapter two.

[15] MEGA III:4, p. 273-274 (FE to KM, December 16, 1851). The word that I translate as "supportive" is *rückenfreihaltend.* This apparently based on the idiom, "to keep the rear free for someone," *jemandem den Rücken freihaltend,* which means to give them security behind the scenes, as for example, when someone does domestic work so that a partner can have a successful career. This suggests the affirmative character of the work that Marx was expected to write.

Marx was so excited about the plan that he wrote to Weydemeyer just three days later, promising a whole package of articles from the leading journalists of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung,* the successful "organ of democracy" that he had edited in Cologne during the revolution of 1848-9, as the staff had been reunited in exile in London. This list included an essay [*Aufsatz*] that Marx claimed to be already sitting down to write, "18te Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte."[16]

Again, it is possible in theory that Marx had, would have had, or should have had this idea in any case, but the evidence supports the view that Marx began to write the *Brumaire* only in response to Weydemeyer's plan for a newspaper, with the additional suggestion from Engels that "people there," in the United States, would want some clarification about how to reason about French history in light of this event. Notice that Engels refers only to a single article, Marx to a single essay, not a series, although in the same letter he promises another series that never materialized, a critique of Proudhon. The goal of the *Brumaire* in particular was to make a strong first impression, to help the newspaper succeed. The suggestion from Engels describes very well the beginning of the work, which is not only dazzling but also about French history in general, not the history of the coup d'état as such.[17]

When Marx sent the first section to Weydemeyer, on January 1, 1852, he still refers to it as a self-contained work and even suggests that, if Weydemeyer's newspaper

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[16] MEGA III:4, p. 276. (KM to JW, December 19, 1851)
[17] The package of articles promised by Marx notably included one by Ferdinand Wolff, "Der Staatsstreich in Frankreich," apparently dealing with the subject apart from Marx. When this was written, however, Marx found it inadequate and did not send it to Weydemeyer: MEGA III:5, p. 5. (KM to JW, January 1/2, 1852)

is delayed for lack of funds, he could give the article to Charles Dana to translate for the *New York Tribune*.[18] This is surprising, because the first section includes a periodization that suggests a longer work to come. Perhaps the periodization can be read as a turning point, with the last sentence of the section as a definitive conclusion: "The refuse of bourgeois society forms finally the *holy phalanx of order* and the hero Crapulinsky enters the Tuileries as the 'rescuer of society.'" The first sentence of section II, sent from London on January 9, suggests a restart. "Let us take up the thread of development again…" A note on the bottom of the manuscript of this section, "Schluss folgt," "conclusion follows," shows that Marx now planned an article in just three parts.

What can explain this growth? One possibility is that other aspects of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte were coming to the fore. Engels wrote to Jenny Marx on January 15 that he had shown one side of his character on December 2, the gambler, but was now increasingly showing another, the "crazy pretender, who regards himself as a predestined redeemer of the world."[19] There were also significant fears of a war, which both Marx and Engels saw as inevitable.[20] The length of the work then expanded steadily and its conclusion was constantly postponed. On January 23, Marx promised two more parts. He sent part III on January 30 and part IV on February 13, when he promised two *more* parts.[21] By then, the fate of the newspaper, which had never been regarded as certain, was definitely in doubt, the question of alternative formats was raised, and it was still unclear

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[18] MEGA III:5, p. 5 (KM to JW, January 1/2, 1852)
[19] MEGA III:5, p. 11 (FE to Jenny Marx, January 14, 1852)
[20] MEGA III:5, pp. 11, 14, 22. (FE to JM, January 14; KM to FE, January 20; FE to KM, January 22)
[21] MEGA III:5, pp. 18, 31, 41. (KM to JW, January 23 and 30; KM and JM to JW, February 13)

when the *Brumaire* would end. On February 20, Marx promised parts V and VI, and he sent part V on February 27.[22] On the same day, Jenny Marx also wrote to Weydemeyer on her husband's behalf to ask him to send *back* the five parts if he was unable to print them. She mentions the possibility of a French translation and the hope that it will be distributed in Germany as well, as it "gives a historical understanding of the most important current event." The *Brumaire* was seen by now as a work that had a distinctive value on its own. The main concern was still to get it out quickly.[23]

By March 17, Marx was trying to publish the *Brumaire* independently in Germany. It was only after he received a rejection from the radical publisher Otto Wigand, dated March 20, that he finally sent the seventh part of the *Brumaire* to Weydemeyer on March 25.[24] In the letter sent with that section, he also congratulated his friend on the birth of a son, imagining the world that the baby would live to see, "when people can travel from London to Calcutta in a week … And Australia and California and the Pacific Ocean!" He adds a thought that may be relevant to the challenges of interpretation today: "The new cosmopolitans will no longer comprehend how small our world once was." This remark does express very well one of the challenges that we face today, to understand the "small" world of the *Brumaire.*

A more detailed composition history could try to explain why the work expanded and how its conception changed in the process. It would not be easy. I will not analyze

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[22] MEGA III:5, pp. 48, 60 (KM to JW, February 20 and 27)
[23] MEGA III:5, p. 496 (JM to JW, February 27)
[24] MEGA III:5, p. 305 (OW to KM, March 20)

this act of composition more closely, but rather try to reconstruct the concerns and interests of these "people there," Weydemeyer and other Germans in the United States, who were assumed at first to be the audience. This will be a new context for the *Brumaire,* different than those that are used in some familiar approaches to the text, such as reading it in relation to other texts by Marx, as one piece of evidence of a greater revolutionary experience or some greater trajectory of his thought, or comparing the *Brumaire* to other accounts of the same events, including our own.[25] I seek to understand the work as an action, but not by focusing on the author.

When Weydemeyer first published the text that he titled "Der 18te Brumaire des Louis Napoleon," it was as the entire content of the first issue of *Die Revolution: eine Zeitschrift in zwanglosen Heften.* The issue includes a brief preface, dated May 1, 1852, that partly serves to introduce this new irregularly published periodical as a whole. It is only three paragraphs long, and only one paragraph directly concerns the *Brumaire*.[26] Weydemeyer introduces Marx as the author of "Revolution and Counterrevolution," the ongoing series of articles about Germany in the English-language *New-York Tribune,* articles now known to have been written by Engels. Just as those "sketch a picture of the revolutionary development and situation of Germany," the *Brumaire* depicts the situation of France. Weydemeyer uses terms from drafting, *entwerfen ein Bild, zeichnen*,

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[25] I have discussed these approaches to interpretation in more detail in my introduction, taking examples from Jonathan Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life* (New York: Norton, 2013) and Gareth Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016).
[26] Weydemeyer's preface is reprinted in MEGA I:11 Apparat, pp. 617-618. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

Schilderung der Verhältnisse, to emphasize that what is at stake is the present, the situation in France at the time of his writing, some five months after Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte's coup d'état of December 2, 1851.

Weydemeyer assumes that this present situation is only vaguely known or misunderstood. The question is not yet, as it often appears to us in hindsight, why a certain event has happened, but rather what has happened, how it should be characterized in greater historical terms. What matters most to Weydemeyer is what has *not* changed. "France is and remains the land of revolutionary energy [*Thatkraft*]," he declares, "and, as much as Germany has taken the lead in intellectual and theoretical development, remains the focus [*Schwerpunkt*] of revolutionary development." This is not a summary of the *Brumaire,* but rather an assertion about reality that Weydemeyer must see as supported by the text. For short, I call this the view of the *Brumaire* as a picture of the land of revolution.

In the first part of the chapter, I support this way of thinking about the *Brumaire* by reconstructing the German-American discursive context of its original publication. Weydemeyer himself draws a drastic contrast between his own affirmative view, that France "is and remains" the land of revolution, and the pessimistic assessments of certain "leaders of petit-bourgeois democracy." These other revolutionaries took the course of events in France, especially the results of a plebiscite on December 21, showing overwhelming national support, to mean that France could no longer be a paradigm or practical center of revolutionary organization. This contrast between Marx and other more pessimistic assessments of the situation is rarely considered by scholars today. I

interpret the original political significance of the *Brumaire* in relation to competing views of France in use by German democrats, in particular.

In the second part, I consider the evidence of reasons for the failure of the *Brumaire.* I argue that its affirmative view of France was a liability, but insofar as it only concerned a fleeting situation, between the immediate success of the coup d'état and the consolidation of a stable regime, the text had no obvious claim on posterity in any case, except perhaps as evidence of what Marx thought at that moment. In fact, I argue, the *Brumaire* and other writings by Marx from the revolutionary period posed challenging problems for retrospective interpretation, even in the relatively short term. I interpret the use of the *Brumaire* in *Herr Vogt* (1860) as an attempt to create a historical record, which ultimately also involves articulating a more enduring concept of Bonapartism. I analyze this as an attempt to solve the problem of historical interpretation that is suggested to us by Marx himself, in his musing about "how small our world once was."

Picturing France: Weydemeyer and the Democratic Campaigns of 1851-2

Knowledge of the current situation in France, Weydemeyer claims, is the only way to undermine certain "jeremiads with which the leaders of petit-bourgeois democracy, embarrassed in their expectations by 2 December 1851, prostitute themselves incessantly before foreigners." He alludes here to ongoing efforts by German democrats in England, Switzerland, and the United States to prepare for the next revolution in Europe by seeking new international alliances. Weydemeyer does not mean that the

Brumaire is an argument against these campaigns. At least formally speaking, in his preface, these "jeremiads" are only given as a drastic example of misrepresenting the situation in France for dubious political purposes. Weydemeyer only draws a contrast with the aims and message of the *Brumaire.* More subtly still, by recalling the earlier "expectations" of these others, Weydemeyer suggests that the "picture" concurs with their own earlier investment in France.

Although the remarks are fairly obscure for a reader today, they concern a central question in the interpretation of the *Brumaire,* its relationship to radical democracy in its time. In the immediate context of Weydemeyer's attempt to start a newspaper, this relationship is epitomized in his competition with a local rival, Karl Heinzen, who tried to start his own newspaper, *Janus,* at precisely the same time. Heinzen is a familiar figure to biographers of Marx and historians of the German-American "Forty-Eighters," but his response to events in France is not known and provides a useful basis for comparison to the *Brumaire.* In order to understand this rivalry, it is necessary first to have at least some impression of the potential readership that Weydemeyer and Heinzen were competing to attract, and for our specific problem, some idea of the role that France played in their political reasoning.

The best-known organization of German radicals in New York City at this time is the *Sozialistische Turnverein,* founded in June 1850 by some 36 members of an earlier circle of gymnasts, the *New Yorker Turngemeinde,* over tensions between the "Greens,"

or the most recent immigrants, and the more established "Grays."[27] The new group met regularly at the Shakespeare Hotel, at William Street and Duane, whose owner was a well-known friend of new immigrants and radical causes.[28] In early September, the gymnasts took part in a small demonstration of solidarity with some French allies that can be reconstructed in detail from competing accounts in the hostile *New York Herald* and the sympathetic *Tribune.*[29] This tiny event is deservedly forgotten, but it provides a remarkably rich example of the roles that France played in political reasoning and debate in this milieu. It involved many figures who had some knowledge of Marx already and would be likely readers of the *Brumaire.*

With about two hundred people, the march set out from the Shakespeare Hotel, marching down Broadway to a series of French anthems, the *Chant du Départ*, the

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[27] Grays were older, more established, leading what Hermann Schlüter calls "bourgeois" lives. Greens were not only more radical but also often impoverished. Hermann Schlüter, *Die Anfänge der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung in Amerika* (Dietz: Stuttgart, 1907). For a more detailed account of the founding of the *Turnverein* that supports Schlüter, see *Zur Feier des Funfzigjährigen Jubilaums des New York Turn Vereins in der New York Turn-Halle* (1900), pp. 6-7

[28] The name of the hotel, like the name of the playwright, is spelled in various ways in the press of the time. A later illustration depicts a sign that reads "Shakspeare," but contemporary advertisements use the "e." Art and Picture Collection, The New York Public Library, "The Shakspeare [i.e. Shakespeare] Hotel" (1882). The owner, Eugen Lievre, was a frequent patron of radical causes, who would be remembered even after his death nearly fifty years later for his hospitality to newly arrived Forty-Eighters. "Eugen Lievre," in *Der Deutsche Pionier: Erinnerungen aus dem Pionier-Leben der Deutschen in Amerika*, Heft 1, 1885, p. 47. According to this obituary, Lievre died in relative poverty in New Jersey. The *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* misidentifies Lievre as French; he was from the Bavarian Palatinate.

[29] "Socialist Banquet at Hoboken," *New York Herald,* September 10, 1850; "City Items: The Socialist Banquet at Hoboken," *New-York Daily Tribune,* September 11; "Candidates for Mayor," *New York Herald,* September 15. The story was also picked up from the *Herald* by several European newspapers, which often added their own hostile or mocking comments, turning a tiny spectacle far away into justifications for political repression. *Journal des débats,* September 25, 1850; "Demokratische Bankette als Barometer demokratische Pläne," *Neue Münchener Zeitung,* October 26, 1850. For the Bavarian state newspaper, the event showed what *would* have been said at a more recent gathering of "amnestied Bavarian patriots [the newspaper inserts '(!)' here]," in Nürnberg, if they had been able to speak freely. The story also ran in a few other newspapers in Bavaria, including *Die Bayerische Presse* (October 26) and the *Bayerisches Volksblatt* (October 27).

Marseillaise, and the *Chant des Girondins*, under a large red flag with the extended motto *Liberté*, *Egalité*, *Fraternité*, *Solidarité*, and *Union Socialiste*. It crossed the Hudson for a banquet at Lamartine Cottage, a humble French restaurant in Hoboken. The French president of the banquet was a man named Ayguesparse.[30] He began with a toast to the sovereignty of the people and quickly clarified his meaning. The true "friends of the people" were all in prison or exile, their ideals maligned and misrepresented. In a familiar formulation of the time, he declared, "We are called red, as if, to the example of those of 1793, we were red with blood. Yes, we are red, but from patriotism and humanity…"[31]

Ayguesparse was followed by the German president of the banquet, Germain Metternich, a well-known revolutionary from Mainz who had helped found the *Sozialistische Turnverein*.[32] Metternich mentioned the socialist duty to "learn ourselves and where it is necessary to hate in order that fraternity may exist." This important

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[30] I assume that this is the same man called "Daigaharste" in a report on the "French republicans" for Garibaldi. The two articles mention seventeen men by name. Most of those with French names are hard to identify with certainty. Following the spellings used by the *Tribune* and the *Journal des débats*, these include Ayguesparse, Cormier (father and son), Menétrier, Lesprit, Bazin, Frontier, and Deviercy. Two men named Pierre Frontier and Eugene Deviercy were minting gold currency together in San Francisco by 1853. The two Cormiers, also mentioned among the French republicans for Garibaldi, are listed as later activists in New York City and Hoboken in Michel Cordillot et al., *La Sociale en Amerique: Dictionnaire biographique du movement social francophone aux États-Unis* (Paris: Éditions de l'Atelier, 2002). The same book also lists another possible match, a Belgian known only as Lesprit, as the leader of a later memorial in Chicago, for Felice Orsini and Giuseppe Pieri, executed in 1858 for attempting to assassinate Napoleon III. Some of those identified in the American press as "French," including Ayguesparse himself, may be Belgian. Almost all of the Germans who took part left more significant historical traces, as journalists or activists in local political societies. Besides the six Germans mentioned below, "Dr. Jonassohn" is probably Louis Jonassohn and "Rosa" is probably Rudolph Rosa. I have not yet been able to identify "Sorg." Friedrich Sorge arrived in New York City only in the spring of 1852.

[31] This argument about the meaning of "red" evokes a famous remark by Lamartine and a riposte by Blanqui: see Klaus Deinet, "Die narzißtische Revolution," in Gudrun Gersmann and Huburtus Kohle, eds., *Frankreich 1848-1870,* pp. 15-18.

[32] For glimpses of Metternich in revolutionary action, see Jonathan Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals: The Democratic Movement and the Revolution of 1848 - 1849*, 1. print (Princeton, N. J: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993), 102, 112. He had been active in 1848 in Frankfurt and in the 1849 insurrection in Baden, and a member of the Communist League, the secret society associated with the *Communist Manifesto*.

question of what they hated came up in several later speeches. Sigismund Kaufmann, the spokesman or speaker (*Sprecher*) of the *Turnverein*, denounced those in the Provisional Government who had betrayed the February Revolution and predicted that "we shall have again all that was rifled from us."[33] The newspapers have him either predicting or calling for the guillotine. The *Herald* reports responses in the crowd; "No, no…" "Yes, yes; it is necessary…" In both accounts, Ayguesparse disavows the remark. The "true socialist" would win through "pure humanity." Benjamin Maas, a doctor and another member of the *Turnverein*, developed this theme, calling for secular education and a socialist catechism for children.

Maas was followed by Ignaz Koch, a former priest in the democratic *deutschkatholische* movement led by Johannes Ronge. Koch's speech particularly impressed the *Tribune*. Declaring that history is "nothing but the struggle of classes, divided into two parties," he extemporized on "the progress of Socialism since the beginning of Christianity," denouncing Pius IX and Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte for putting down the Roman Republic. He also denounced two figures mentioned by Ayguesparse as "friends of the people," Alexandre Ledru-Rollin and Louis Blanc, as "they also are Bourgeoise [sic]; they, in the same manner as every aristocrat, have their saloons [sic] receive their company in fashionable dress…" Despite the signs of contention, the *Tribune* concludes with a rousing call for "one single and general Republic," to "great applause" and a toast to "Union Socialiste." The *Herald* ends on a

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[33] He mentions Lamartine, Garnier-Pages, and "some other members of the Provisional Republic." Barely twenty-five years old, Kaufmann had been driven into exile for his activities with the *Turnverein* in Frankfurt. He would eventually establish himself as a lawyer.

less inspiring note, with a talk by a Mr. Bazin about a book on the rights of labor, by Alphonse Esquiros, and a request for money for the band.

The Germans in this group had some knowledge of Marx already, including personal contact and access to some of his writings.[34] Their banquet shows how and why they tried to "picture" the situation in France, how essential it was for defining their own political relationships and representing their shared political views in an effective public way. It also shows that this imagining was hard work. They invoked questions of class and causality, including grand narratives of class struggle, ideas about the class identities of politicians and parties, and so on, but in ways that appear fairly incoherent by the standards of mainstream journalism, let alone Marxist journalism or later scholarship. The typical representative of so-called petit-bourgeois democracy, for example, Alexandre Ledru-Rollin, is "bourgeois" because he acts like an "aristocrat." This is supposedly just as true of the socialist Louis Blanc. These kinds of conflicts over people and parties that have been elevated to symbols in international political thinking are parts of various "narratives," including a vague revolutionary "script" that involves the guillotine, certain ideas about the recent course of events, even the whole history of Christianity and the open horizon of Enlightenment, but these narratives are largely unmoored from any criteria of validity. The example is meant to show the potential value

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[34] Metternich and Koch were probably both members of the original Communist League. One of the commissaires, August Kruer, edited the *Staats-Zeitung,* the New York agent for Marx's short-lived journal in London, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung: Politische-Ökonomische Revue.* Maas is also mentioned in later correspondence as a "follower of the 'Marx clique.'" When Joseph Weydemeyer arrived in the fall of 1851, he would make contact especially with the *Turnverein,* which would frequently publish his articles in its newsletter. Stanley Nadel, "From the Barricades of Paris to the Sidewalks of New York: German Artisans and the European Roots of American Labor Radicalism," *Labor History* 30, no. 1 (January 1, 1989): 47–75.

of a "picture," emphasizing the potential value of information and depiction as such. This can be opposed to the view that the value of the work must lie in "unsettling" dominant representations, "unmasking" the figures represented in the text, or performing some similar operation on a particularly stable representation of reality that is supposed to precede it.

Joseph Weydemeyer's letter about his newspaper plan, dated December 1, 1851, carefully specified his potential audience and its subject matter.[35] It would belong to the "emigrant press as such." It was not conceived as a mainstream or long-term political enterprise, like the established *Staats-Zeitung.* It would avoid American politics, which were in a confusing state of crisis at this time over slavery. It was also not a workers' newspaper, like Wilhelm Weitling's *Republik der Arbeiter*. It would specifically target German revolutionary emigrants and the issue that mattered to them, namely, the prospects of the revolution in Europe. The single most conspicuous topic that Weydemeyer meant to address was Lajos Kossuth, who arrived in the United States on December 4 to huge acclaim, verging on popular mania, provoking national debates about the prospects of revolution in Europe and the possibility of American intervention.[36]

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[35] This was Weydemeyer's own idea, contrary to the suggestion from Marx that it would be faster and cheaper just to reprint some of their party's earlier writings as pamphlets. Marx refers, in particular, to "a kind of pocket library in the form of small booklets such as those produced by Becker in Cologne." MEGA III:4, p. 245. Hermann Becker was a lawyer and publisher who had begun to republish a "collected essays" by Marx, a project that was interrupted by Becker's arrest. Becker had also published, for example, a translation of a pamphlet by Ledru-Rollin, defending his protest of June 13.

[36] For succinct and contrasting accounts, see Tibor Frank, "'… to fix the attention of the whole world on Hungary': Lajos Kossuth in the United States, 1851-2," and István Deák, "Kossuth: The Vain Hopes of a Much Celebrated Exile," both in *The Hungarian Quarterly* 43:166 (2002)

Before hearing back from Engels, Weydemeyer wrote directly to Marx, describing some setbacks in a letter dated December 10. He had lost a promising patron due to westward migration. He was seriously considering a similar option himself, an opportunity to work as a surveyor, and he would have to decide within weeks. This may explain some of his haste to get the newspaper started. The newspaper edited by Karl Heinzen, the *New-Yorker Deutsche Zeitung,* had been sold to a typesetter and declined in quality. The letter concludes by noting fundraising efforts by other German revolutionaries, a very common topic of discussion in the correspondence of Marx and Engels and in the press of the German migration. These were a central political controversy of the time that still has recurring independent interest for specialists.[37]

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[37] They are a particularly old topic in German-American history and come up in many biographies of "Forty-Eighters." C.F. Huch, "Revolutionsvereine und Anleihen," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Pionier-Vereins von Philadelphia* 18 (1910): 1–18; Julius Jr. Goebel, "A Political Prophecy of the Forty-Eighters in America," *Year-Book of the German American Historical Society of Illinois* XII (1912). More recently, see Ansgar Reiß, *Radikalismus und Exil: Gustav Struve und die Demokratie in Deutschland und Amerika*, vol. 15 (Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004); Sabine. Freitag, *Friedrich Hecker : Two Lives for Liberty* (St. Louis, MO: St. Louis Mercantile Library, 2006); Daniel Nagel, *Von republikanischen Deutschen zu deutsch-amerikanischen Republikanern: ein Beitrag zum Identitätswandel der deutschen Achtundvierziger in den Vereinigten Staaten 1850 - 1861*, Mannheimer historische Forschungen 33 (St. Ingbert: Röhrig Univ.-Verl, 2012). Other studies focus more narrowly on the campaigns as a distinctive experience of exile. Sabine Freitag, "'The Begging Bowl of Revolution': The Fund-Raising Tours of German and Hungarian Exiles to North America, 1851-1852," *Exiles from European Revolutions: Refugees in Mid-Victorian England*, 2003, 164–184; Rosemary Ashton, *Little Germany: Exile and Asylum in Victorian England* (Oxford [Oxfordshire]; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Christine Lattek, *Revolutionary Refugees: German Socialism in Britain, 1840-1860* (London ; Routledge, 2006); Maurizio Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile: Italian Émigrés and the Liberal International in the Post-Napoleonic Era* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Angela Jianu, *A Circle of Friends Romanian Revolutionaries and Political Exile, 1840-1859* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011). See also Christian Jansen, *Einheit, Macht und Freiheit: Die Paulskirchenlinke und die deutsche Politik in der Nachrevolutionären Epoche 1849-1867* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2000), although it is not focused on London. They also come up in histories of internationalism and British working-class politics and in studies of dynamics of repression and policies of asylum. Arthur Rosenberg, *Democracy and Socialism: A Contribution to the Political History of the Past 150 Years* (Beacon Press, 1939); Alwin Hanschmidt, *Republikanisch-demokratischer Internationalismus im 19. Jahrhundert: Ideen, Formen, Organisierungsversuche* (Husum: Matthiessen Verlag, 1977); Gregory Claeys, "Mazzini, Kossuth, and British Radicalism, 1848–1854," *Journal of British Studies* 28, no. 3 (1989): 225–261; Margot C. Finn, *After Chartism: Class and Nation in English Radical Politics 1848-1874*

The Central Committee of European Democracy was founded in the summer of 1850 by Giuseppe Mazzini, Alexandre Ledru-Rollin, and the Polish revolutionary Albert Darasz, with Arnold Ruge joining shortly after.[38] Its unofficial organ was a journal first published in Paris as *Le Proscrit: Journal de la République Universelle*, later *La Voix du Proscrit.* Manifestos published there were widely translated in the British radical press and elsewhere as the views of a party often just called "the European Democracy."[39] In the first issues, articles by Ledru-Rollin, Charles Delescluze, and Martin-Bernard excoriate France for losing touch with its revolutionary tradition, while articles by Darasz and Ruge try to assert the revolutionary potential of Poland and Germany. Inspired by Mazzini's idea of raising an "Italian national loan," German refugees in London later formed two small but visible groups to support the "next" revolution in Europe.

On July 4, 1851, the poet Gottfried Kinkel issued a "Call to the Germans in the United States for Participation in the German National Loan for the Establishment of the Next Revolution." On August 15, Ruge and Johannes Ronge announced a competing German Agitation Society (*Deutsche Agitationsverein*), promoting revolution using "all means of agitation available within the boundaries of English law." They were joined by

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(Cambridge University Press, 2003); Howard C. Payne and Henry Grosshans, "The Exiled Revolutionaries and the French Political Police in the 1850's," The American Historical Review 68, no. 4 (1963): 954–973.

[38] A good summary of the ideas that initially animated this group is a document written by Mazzini in exile in Geneva in the summer of 1849, immediately after the French intervention that defeated the Roman Republic, "Toward a Holy Alliance of the Peoples." Giuseppe Mazzini, *A Cosmopolitanism of Nations: Giuseppe Mazzini's Writings on Democracy, Nation Building, and International Relations* (Princeton University Press, 2009), 117 ff.

[39] After two issues, *Le Proscrit* fell victim to a new French law requiring monthlies to pay securities, but it was reinvented in October as *La Voix du Proscrit*, published in Saint-Amand, in Nord. Howard C. Payne and Henry Grosshans, "The Exiled Revolutionaries and the French Political Police in the 1850's," The American Historical Review 68, no. 4 (1963): 954–973, p. 954

Franz Sigel, Joseph Fickler, and Amand Goegg, who had come to prominence in the revolution in Baden.[40] The differences between these two groups have never been entirely clear and may just have been strategic. By addressing Germans in the United States, Kinkel and the "Emigration Club" may have meant to avoid potentially endangering Germans at home or in exile in Switzerland, whose right to asylum at this time was precarious.[41] The Agitation Society, as its name suggests, was more antagonistic, intending to use funds for printing revolutionary propaganda. The Agitation Society remained at first in London, determined to maintain contact with the Continent.

Encouraged by a donation from New Orleans and supported privately by Mazzini, Kinkel embarked on an American fundraising tour in September, 1851, hoping to raise two million dollars. In his December 10 letter, Weydemeyer mentions that the Agitation Society is now sending over an emissary to work against Kinkel, but that Kinkel was now completely overshadowed in turn by Kossuth. Weydemeyer was late to mail this letter, and on his way back, he ran into a welcoming demonstration for Kossuth. Some of the socialists from the Hoboken banquet apparently participated, as a group that called itself "United European Democracy," with Germain Metternich, as chairman. This was a vastly larger event than their banquet just one year before, involving many more groups.

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[40] International solidarity had a pragmatic aspect for these republicans of southwestern Germany. During the last great uprising in Germany, the "Imperial Constitutional Campaign," in the spring of 1849, they had appealed to Ledru-Rollin for military assistance against Prussia, when their cause was popular in Alsace. Their envoys in Paris had joined his protest against the intervention in Rome. On the revolution in Baden and its appeal to the French left, see Jonathan Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals: The Democratic Movement and the Revolution of 1848-9* (Princeton, 1991), pp. 408-411.

[41] This is my own interpretation of a conflict that involved many issues.

The *Tribune* describes the sponsors as "a body who call themselves the European Democracy, composed of foreigners from Italy, Germany, Poland, Austria, France and other Central European States."[42] The Mazzinian newspaper, *Italia e Popolo,* claims a parade of seven thousand people, with four bands of different nationalities. The Franco-American republican *Courrier des États-Unis* notices the participation of the *Turnverein*.[43] Along with flags of Poland, Hungary, and Italy, the flag most prominently displayed was "the red flag of the Universal Republican party." This seems to have been a different red flag than the one paraded the previous fall. It had the words "Socialist Union" (in the middle) and "Universal Republican Liberty, Unity, and Fraternity" (around the sides), but the words "Equality" and "Solidarity" were not mentioned in the newspaper report. Still Kossuth took the opportunity to disavow socialism as a "political measure, which measure may be different, according to the circumstances of different countries." A friend explained to Weydemeyer that there was growing frustration with the French socialists in the group.

Weydemeyer was skeptical about the prospects of American support for Kossuth and believed that the "European democrats" (his quotation marks) misunderstood the dynamics of conservative power in Europe, especially overestimating the significance of Russia. "Why should the neutralization of Russia matter in the end," he asked, "when the *Schwerpunkt* of counter-revolution lies in England?" This idea of England as the *Schwerpunkt* of counter-revolution would be essential to his idea of France as the

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[42] "Kossuth in New-York," *New-York Daily Tribune,* December 11, 1851.
[43] "Kossuth et les démocrates européens," *Courrier des États-Unis,* December 11, 1851.

Schwerpunkt of revolution. He proceeded with his plan, now hoping to win over those who had supported Heinzen as "the most radical that appeared here." He issued an offer of shares (*Aktien-Zeichnung*) and set up an *Aktien-Komitee* of better-known Germans in the United States to guarantee his credit, such as Eugen Lievre, the owner of the Shakespeare Hotel.[44] In Weydemeyer's offer of $600 in shares, he promises that his weekly will represent "the most resolute revolutionary party, the one that was recognized by its main organ, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung,* edited by Karl Marx in Cologne." It will provide the "clearest possible picture," not only of European "class struggles" but also "changes in the industrial and commercial relations of the various peoples and classes … through which revolutionary explosions are prepared."[45]

As Weydemeyer was preparing to explain how revolutions are prepared, it seemed to Karl Heinzen that one was already exploding in France. He received a letter from Ruge, dated December 4, that described his reading the first reports telegraphed from Paris to the London *Times*, published already in its late edition on December 2, and more news in the *Globe:* a state of siege in Paris, legislature dissolved, universal suffrage restored, leaders of the detested "Party of Order" arrested. The French people and the army, Ruge declared, must now "take matters into their own hands."[46] This seemed to vindicate his choice to remain near to the action. "I regret that Kossuth had not shared mine and Mazzini's perceptions of the situation in France," Ruge concludes. "I regret that

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[44] MEGA III:4, pp. 276 and 526
[45] MEGA I:11, p. 607.
[46] (The first-hand reports that he is citing are not so confident.)

Kossuth now swims across the ocean, instead of discussing recent events with Ledru Rollin."

Ruge's comrades in the Agitation Society, Sigel, Fickler, and Goegg, also wrote Heinzen at the same time. Goegg quoted Ledru-Rollin: "Whoever doubts the outcome of this battle," he is supposed to have said, "does not know the French people, and especially the Parisian workers."[47] These were not just the fever-dreams of a few revolutionary exiles. "The grand drama of 1852 has been opened," the New York *Tribune* declared when it received the news, "even before the year itself has begun." It assumed that such a "flagitious traitor" was doomed. Bonaparte would only unite the divided republicans and discredit his family's name for good. Karl Heinzen decided that it was a good time to jump back into the newspaper business.

By December 24, a few days after the news from France had first reached the United States, Heinzen published an undated *Extrablatt,* an "extra sheet" or special issue, promoting *Janus*.[48] The eight-page sheet is devoted entirely to the news from France, summarized in an editorial note under the headline, "First Act. First Scene." The news is still inconclusive, Heinzen admits, but the *Kaiserschnitt* (Caesarian operation) would bring the "world revolution" of 1852 into existence:

> After a worn-out revolution, the great uncle, who impressed all parties, could risk and carry through a coup d'etat. However, if the little nephew, who all parties hate and condemn, at the beginning of a much more powerful revolution, could overturn the whole constitution in a mere step, and, in a lowly monkey-show,

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[47] *Janus,* January 3.
[48] *Extrablatt des "Janus,"* n.d., included in the bound volume of issues at the Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York City. The item "Spätere Nachrichten mit dem 'Baltic'" begins, "Yesterday, the 23rd of December..." Heinzen used the very same publisher that Weydemeyer would use for *Die Revolution,* the *Deutsche Vereins-Buchhandlung,* at 191 William Street,

> stamp out [*ausstempeln*] the whole country with a personal will as the expression of popular sovereignty, then there would be no more logic in history, no more laws of development.[49]

Like the famous opening passage of the *Brumaire,* which Marx was writing at about the same time with several weeks' more information, Heinzen contrasts the "great" uncle and the "little" nephew, but he definitely does not contrast the two revolutions in the same way. The revolutions of 1848 are "much more powerful" and just beginning. In this way, his use of the dramatic metaphor creates a great sense of suspense.[50] The rest of the issue mostly just reprints the letters from his revolutionary friends, providing a tantalizing taste of the exciting transatlantic correspondence that would appear in *Janus.*

The first official number of *Janus* appeared in two parts, on January 3 and 7. The January 3 issue is almost entirely an open letter from Heinzen to Kossuth, dated December 15. Heinzen especially tackles Kossuth's ideas about nationality. Lacking sufficient power or wealth for independence, he argues, Hungary could only become free as a part of a greater German republic. He goes on to analyze the logic of other potential alliances. The British want order and dependent markets on the Continent. Even if Kossuth is popular in the United States, how could a country with its own fugitive-slave law be expected to oppose Russian tyranny in Europe? Kossuth must join the European revolution, with Germany and France. Heinzen tries to address apprehensions about French socialism by distinguishing "healthy socialism" from "communism," although he adds that the latter is just a "specter," sowing confusion, division, and fear but posing no

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[49] In modern German, *ausstempeln* usually means "clock out" in the sense of leaving a job, "punching out" at the end of the day. My best guess is that Heinzen means invalidating a postage stamp.
[50] As in the passage from Marx, Heinzen's metaphor is not entirely coherent. It seems, for example, that the "monkey-show" is contained with the great historical drama.

real threat. Heinzen added only a brief note to this letter after learning of the coup d'état: the threat of a French dictator allied with "Pope and czar" might persuade England to support revolution after all.

The January 7 *Janus* begins with a dispatch from Ruge, dated December 16, admitting that "democracy in France overestimated its progress" but still staking his own honor on that of the French people. A letter from Fickler blames the lack of an uprising on socialists who thought the struggle "only concerned the bourgeois." Fickler now appeals to Americans, "whose moral conviction and political-economic relations also must make them feel very insulted and threatened by the universal oppression of the people of Europe." After these letters were written, news of the first results of the plebiscite arrived along with new refugees from France who brought more bad news. "The French nation has gone to the dogs," reports one letter, dated December 24, in the January 14 *Janus*. "The workers of Paris have voted for the criminal *en masse*… *Communism* has made them stupid, cowardly, and base." The same issue includes the news that Fickler and Goegg would come to the United States for a congress, supposedly to resolve disagreements with Gottfried Kinkel.[51] There is also an article warning of a new newspaper that promotes the "fairy-tales of the sophist Marx, reworked from French models, about 'class struggle.'"

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[51] On Fickler and Goegg's campaign, Sabine Freitag, "'The Begging Bowl of Revolution': Fund-raising Tours of German and Hungarian Exiles to North America," in Freitag, ed., *Exiles from European Revolutions* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), pp. 176-7; on the conflict over "agitation" in London, Christine Latteck, *Revolutionary Refugees: German Socialism in Britain, 1840-1860* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

These are the "embarrassed expectations" that Weydemeyer would mention in his foreword to the *Brumaire.* Recall that he does not respond by defending communism but rather by reasserting that France is still the land of revolution, "as much as Germany has taken the lead in intellectual and theoretical development." This clearly addresses a specific form of argument that is not much remembered today but could hardly be more important for understanding the conflict between the communists and the democrats at this transitional moment. The basic idea was that, if the French supported Bonaparte so completely as it seemed they did, new kinds of international alliances were clearly needed. Practically speaking, despite the far greater prominence of Mazzini and Kossuth as individuals, this made Germany appear to be now the "focus," as France had once been—or so the German democrats now argued, in trying to mobilize support. I have noticed Heinzen's argument to Kossuth that Hungary could only be free as a part of a greater (presumably federal) German republic.

A week after Heinzen's first small attack on Marx and his "French models," *Janus* published a long front-page article with a headline that mocked the language of Weydemeyer's prospectus: "The Most Resolute and the Most Resolute of All." It ridicules the sad appearance of Weydemeyer's first issues and attacks at some length the "sophist" Marx and his theory of class. The party was so "resolute," Heinzen joked, that it was even scared to say its own name, "communism." Heinzen went on to publish a far more outspoken document by August Willich from the Communist League, "the most resolute of all," who was now allied with Kinkel. The article combines many lines of attack in a concentrated, entertaining, seemingly devastating way.

Heinzen argued that the concept of "class," as used by Marx, confused social and political terms. A privileged aristocrat or an indentured serf is a "class" in a defined political sense, but anyone may change from "bourgeois" to "proletarian" by bad luck. If "workers" includes only factory workers, Heinzen added, the "class struggle" was pitifully small. If Marx excludes the *Lumpenproletariat* from his "army," how much must a person own to count as a "worker"? Heinzen then turned to the campaigns. As "resolute" as these Marxists were, he argues, another party is even more "resolute," namely that of August Willich. Heinzen reprinted an indiscreet revolutionary "program" by Willich for a transitional dictatorship by a people's army. Kinkel himself may have no party program at all (he was "as objective and multifaceted as Shakespeare"), but he could be judged by the company he kept.

On February 4, Marx and Engels were unexpectedly attacked from another direction, in the *Tribune,* where they were contributors. The context was a critique of the two revolutionary campaigns, by Ludwig Simon, a former representative of the left in the Frankfurt Parliament, living in Geneva at the time. Doubting Ruge's claim to represent Germany, Simon favors Kinkel's approach, seeking "actual means" and a connection with the "great body of German exiles, especially those in Switzerland," but he mistrusts Kinkel's alliance with the communist Willich, "who once went with Marx and Engels, and afterward blew the same horn with the *Egalitaires* (Louis Blanc)." Like Blanc and Blanqui, Marx and Engels want "perpetual dictatorship," "reject universal suffrage with contempt and mockery," and in the case of revolution, would "postpone as far as possible (as was done in the revolution of February) the return to self-government of the (stupid!)

people." Whenever Ruge and Mazzini champion popular sovereignty, they are "assailed by the party of Marx and Engels."

The *Agitationsverein* congress was led by a Philadelphia group that called itself the *Allgemeiner Europäischer Revolutionsverein* and a *Deutsche Demokratische Verein* from New York. Turner clubs from Baltimore and Philadelphia took part, but the New York *Turnverein* did not. The dozen or so other groups from the region that took part mostly just called themselves *Revolutionsvereine*. It was resolved to form an *Amerikanischer Revolutionsbund für Europa*, calling for the "destruction of monarchy and the establishment of a republic," "universal mass suffrage and the recall of representatives by majority vote," and "abolition of the standing army." It supported "agitation," a revolutionary fund, and military training for members. The *Agitationsverein* was dissolved, and a new congress was planned for New York on May 17. [52]

In March, *Janus* began reorienting and gradually adapting to non-revolutionary radical politics. On March 3, it published another front-page article on conditions in Germany, and the foreword to Ruge's new philosophical program, dated January, "The Lodge of Humanism."[53] "The French are in the fetters of the priests and their own military vanity," Ruge declared. "And who shall now rescue the sacred flame of mental freedom, from which everything else follows? Who but we, the Germans?" Drawing on

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[52] C.F. Huch, "Revolutionsvereine und Anleihen," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Pionier-Vereins von Philadelphia* 18 (1910): 1–18. *Philadelphia Ledger*, February 27; *National Intelligencer*, March 1, 1852.
[53] Arnold Ruge, "Die Loge des Humanismus," *Janus,* March 3-23. Quotations are from the translation in Arnold Ruge, *New Germany* (London: Holyoake and Co., 1854).

his distinctly German revolutionary experiences in the revolutionary freethinking clubs known as *freie Gemeinden*, Ruge laid out a detailed vision of a "humanized society" that would only be possible in a "social and democratic republic" with an all-encompassing cultural apparatus to guarantee the rule of reason. Free discursive communities would be the core of what Ruge calls a "system of practical freedom," to ensure the sort of "modern" consciousness that was lacking in France. Discussions in the humanist "lodge" would help to realize a distinctly German idea of freedom, prophesied by Kant, Fichte, and Hegel. In terms that are familiar enough, Ruge would "correct" Hegel with this "system of practical freedom," with institutions that would foster a rational public sphere.

"Learning is like gymnastics," Ruge writes, "to be organized as an intellectual rivalry."[54] Ruge's vision was indeed one of cultural revolution, rooted in the radical republicanism of non-domination.[55] This precluded "the whole military system and its organized slavery"; "command is ... to be eradicated from all social relations," including "the abolition of domestic slavery, engendered by hire and service," "abolishing labor for hire." Now "individuals in their capacity of landlords, capitalists, paymasters, private speculators, and servants, cease to be met with. All on an equal footing become labourers, capitalists, and speculators." To the surprise of Marx and Heinzen both, Ruge concluded,

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[54] This comment calls to mind a comment by Morris Hillquit about the form that Turner societies took in the United States, where they no longer had a clear paramilitary purpose. "In the United States most of these societies set apart some of their meetings for the discussion of social and political problems," Hillquit writes, "an exercise which they styled 'mental gymnastics.'" Morris Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* (New York; London: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1903), 169.
[55] Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005).

"True individualism, or assertion of full personality in all relations, engenders true communism."

Some of Weydemeyer's struggles with *Die Revolution* are best understood in relation to this process of democratic expectation and adjustment. He announced the new paper in the January 1 issue of the *Turn-Zeitung,* the biweekly newsletter of the *Sozialistisches Turnerbund.* This was a recent national organization that claimed more than one thousand members in eleven cities, mostly in the large New York *Turnverein* and other large groups in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati.[56] Besides announcing the newspaper, the January 1 *Turn-Zeitung* contains an article by Weydemeyer, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," a kind of adaptation of the *Communist Manifesto* that manages to avoid the controversial word "communism." "It was the proletariat," it begins, "which in the developed lands of Europe eked out [*erkämpfte*] a victory for the bourgeoisie … they have learned, in a word, to feel themselves as a class that can achieve their victory only with industry, not against it."

For Weydemeyer, "class consciousness" means an enlightened self-interest that transcends class prejudice and distinguishes the revolutionary proletariat from the old *Kleinbürgertum* and artisans like the communist tailor Wilhelm Weitling, who see the bourgeoisie and industrial development as a threat. It hardly occurs to Weydemeyer to defend the idea of dictatorship as such. Citing English and French precedents, he just takes it to be a part of revolution. The dictatorship of the proletariat will not be a

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[56] "Statistische Nachrichten," *Turn-Zeitung* No. 1, November 15, 1851.

"vandalizing brutality." It may even "rescue the whole inheritance of the bourgeoisie, because its own prosperity depends on the further development of the latter," and replace "the old [the *Manifesto* has "old bourgeois" here] society" with "an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

The same issue of the *Turn-Zeitung* also includes the first installment of an anonymous serial republication of Engels's *Peasant War in Germany*.[57] But contributions from London did not arrive in time for the first sample issue of *Die Revolution,* dated January 6. It was made up of writings by Weydemeyer and a part of an 1850 article by Marx on the trade crisis of 1845-7, with an announcement of promised contributions from London.[58] A second issue dated January 13 is more reprints and reworked material, including an excerpt from the *Communist Manifesto* (part III). The long attack on Weydemeyer, Marx, and the concept of class that appeared in *Janus* the next day may well have been effective, as no third issue of *Die Revolution* appeared.

In the *Turn-Zeitung,* however, Weydemeyer still had access to a large and influential group of political activists in various cities, who would be very important in any efforts to organize Germans in the United States. The first part of a long critique of Ledru-Rollin and the Central Committee of European Democracy, "A Petit-Bourgeois-Democratic Program," ran in the January 15 *Turn-Zeitung* along an anonymous critique of the "Kinkelians" and the "Rugeians," shortly before the two groups were to hold their congresses. "When revolution calls, we will follow," the anonymous article promises.

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[57] Joseph Weydemeyer, "Die Diktatur des Proletariats," *Turn-Zeitung* No. 3, January 1, 1852.
[58] MEGA I:11, p. 610-11. The excerpt is from the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* review, May-Oct 1850 issue.

"Will we have Kinkelians or Rugeians for leaders? We will see, but we have little faith in either."[59] When the February 4 article in the *Tribune* linked Marx to Louis Blanc and Kinkel as a would-be dictator, Weydemeyer and his collaborator Adolf Cluss wrote to Marx at once explaining the whole situation, confessing that the weekly had been suspended but proposing that the *Brumaire* should appear as a pamphlet, with a preface attacking Ludwig Simon. They clearly hoped to link the *Brumaire* to an escalating transatlantic argument.

Weydemeyer also published a three-part article on "Revolutionary Agitation among the Emigration" in the March, April, and May, laying out the position that would be mentioned briefly in his preface to the *Brumaire,* that France is the *Schwerpunkt* of revolution. Briefly, the main support for reaction on the Continent is Great Britain, not "insignificant Russia," as the "European democrats" generally believe. Just like the French revolution, i.e., the Napoleonic wars, the "second great revolution" will be against England. While the bourgeois revolutions that overthrew feudalism could have a national scale, the proletarian revolution cannot, because it is impossible to overthrow the bourgeoisie in any particular country without at the same time attacking British dominance. The "subordinate revolutions," like those striving for Hungarian and Italian national independence, supposedly have the same interest.

The whole course of the revolutions of 1848-9, according to Weydemeyer, shows the need for these heterogeneous forces to be concentrated at one crucial *Schwerpunkt.* Germany cannot expect to play this role, and the coup in France does not change that

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[59] "Die deutschen Congresse in Cincinnati und Philadelphia," *Turn-Zeitung* #4, January 15, 1852.

fact. The key condition for realizing his apocalyptic vision, verging on world war, is a crisis in the British-dominated world market, breaking structures of international power.[60] This distinctive idea of revolutionary "concentration," with the British empire as the target, lies behind Weydemeyer's view of France as *Schwerpunkt*. It is not obvious which elements here are Marxian, and which are an original synthesis of opinions about trade, international relations, and war, drawing heavily on analogies to the Napoleonic era.

Later in the series, Weydemeyer quotes from a recent circular by Mazzini, published in March, 1852, "The Duties of Democracy," undeniably a "jeremiad," in the most militant sense of the word.[61] Calling for "action, unified action, European, incessant, logical, bold," Mazzini blames "talkers" (*discoureurs*) for the defeat of French democracy, and socialist sectarians in particular, in a series of sentences beginning "J'accuse."[62] The French socialists had responded with an even longer string of paragraphs beginning "Nos accusons M. Mazzini…" Although I take Weydemeyer's remark about "leaders of petit-bourgeois democracy" to be directed mainly toward Germans, Mazzini's dispatch may epitomize the form of negative and excoriating democratic literature that Weydemeyer calls "jeremiads." The depiction of socialists and

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[60] Joseph Weydemeyer, "Die revolutionäre Agitation unter der Emigration (I)," *Turn-Zeitung* 6, March 1, 1852.
[61] Joseph Weydemeyer, "Die revolutionäre Agitation unter der Emigration (III)," *Turn-Zeitung: Organ des socialistischen Turnerbundes* 8, May 1, 1852.
[62] Weydemeyer quotes from Mazzini's circular, *Des devoirs de la Democratie,* apparently from a February 11 speech in London. *Des Socialistes Fran*çais a *M. Mazzini* (Brussels: Librairie de J.B. Tarride, 1852). The latter pamphlet is ascribed to Louis Blanc in Anne-Claire Ignace, "Giuseppe Mazzini et les démocrates français : débats et reclassements au lendemain du « printemps des peuples »," *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle. Société d'histoire de la révolution de 1848 et des révolutions du XIXe siècle*, no. 36 (June 1, 2008): 133–46 fn. 29.

democrats in the *Brumaire* is far more sympathetic than their depictions of one another and can even be seen as conciliatory in comparison.

A Qualified Failure: Explaining Non-Reception

The rivalry between Heinzen and Weydemeyer did not involve much back-and-forth. Both mostly focused on presenting their own points of view. There was one final exchange, however, that significantly influences Weydemeyer's preface and has some interest, as it shows how and why the material conditions of textual production played a role in political arguments, even overshadowing seemingly more "substantive" questions about France and revolutionary strategy. It includes an early attempt by Weydemeyer to distinguish the *Brumaire* and Marx's work more generally from mere journalism. This offers some insight into Marx's reputation at this time and a distinctive ethics of political literature in the German migration.

After Ludwig Simon's attack on Marx and Engels in the *Tribune,* Engels (writing as Marx) restarted the series "Revolution and Counterrevolution" with an article harshly criticizing the German National Parliament in Frankfurt. Engels next took up "the foreign relations of the German Revolution." That topic reaches a climax on April 9 with the Habsburg re-conquest of insurgent Vienna, from October 30 to November 1, 1848. In this context, Engels alludes to his party's earlier position on the subject of Hungarian national independence. "Our paper, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*," he claims, "has done more than

any other to render the Hungarian cause popular in Germany, by explaining the nature of the struggle between the Magyar and Slavonian races."

This passing remark provoked a last attack from Heinzen that Weydemeyer mentions in his preface to the *Brumaire.* A second-page "miscellany" section of the April 13 *Janus* begins by noting the remarkable circulation of the *New-York Daily Tribune,* nearly 80,000 at the time, and its proceeds of $20,000 in advertising in the prior three months. In contrast, Heinzen plausibly claims, the emigrant press did not always make enough income for bread, let alone for paying correspondents. "Germans in America are, as newspaper readers, no Americans," he smartly observes, "and, what is worse, the majority are no longer Germans any more."

Immediately following this item is another that begins, "The communist Karl Marx, who rewarms the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in the *New-York Tribune…"* Heinzen quotes the passage about the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and its reports on the revolution in Hungary, but contends:

> He forgets to say … that all these dispatches and labors [*Arbeiten*] on the Viennese and Hungarian revolution were the work [*Werk*] of Herr Tellering, now living in New York, who supplied them at the risk of his life ... and that Herr Marx gave him no honorarium for them other than ingratitude, while he is not ashamed now to make political and pecuniary capital from the work of others. Yet another communist masterpiece by that conscienceless intriguer…!

Heinzen again mocks Marx for the "nonsensical class divisions, which, despite all of the concessions that he makes for place and proportion, he smuggles in and imposes on history," as if the "class of the Magyars rose up against the class of the Croats!"

This attack on Marx may help to explain why Weydemeyer's preface begins with a careful account of the humble material basis of his venture. Although his weekly

newspaper has been temporarily suspended due to a lack of capital, he explains, he will print material intended for the weekly as a series of pamphlets under the same title, using sales of each pamphlet to fund the next. The *Brumaire* is the first of these *zwanglose Heften.* Like the unpublished work that he has on hand, he promises, Marx's work has more than just a fleeting interest, such as might be lost through delays in publication. Weydemeyer hardly suggests here that the *Brumaire* would have a lasting value, long into the future. Remarkably, his priority is to persuade the reader that it *still* matters, several months after its composition. Correspondence confirms what may also be suspected, that Weydemeyer hoped the *zwanglose Heften* would attract new partners for the weekly. He was still considering publishing a third issue of the newspaper, polished enough to serve as a sample issue or *Probeblatt,* in late May.[63]

Weydemeyer's last paragraph heaps personal insults on "a certain Herr Tellering," "a literary highway-robber … 'Referendarius from Berlin and Vienna,' as he recently advertises himself like a market-crier." (Tellering had taken out an advertisement, printed in English in a German-American newspaper, offering services in "translation & interpretation," and as a teacher of "English, French, German & Classics.") He slightly misrepresents the allegations against Marx as a charge of "plagiarism." Tellering seems to have accused Marx of economic exploitation, while Heinzen added that Marx was now seeking to make both "political and pecuniary capital" by referring back to Tellering's articles.

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[63]Adolf Cluss to Karl Marx and Wilhelm Wolff, 28 Feb-1 Mar, 1852, MEGA III:5, p. 276, recounting Weydemeyer's difficulties in raising funds, describes the *Brumaire* as "propaganda" for the weekly,

Weydemeyer declares that the "original insights" and "classicism," *Klassizität,* of Marx's writing set him so far above the "heap of political *Literaten*" that he is not obliged to address the allegations "even with a syllable." It is unclear to me what qualities of "classicism" exactly Weydemeyer means here. He regrets not having the space for a closer criticism of Heinzen, "who like Falstaff anxiously avoids the field of battle, the field of principled debate, once he fails to take down his opponents with his customary rodomontades and Bramarbasizing [*bramabarsirenden*] bluster."[64] He concludes, "Herr Heinzen does not measure up to the great men in his own party; a party journalist, however, always provides an excellent measure of the party."

In the same month that *Die Revolution* was relaunched, in May, 1852, an anonymous article in Wilhelm Weitling's *Republik der Arbeiter* estimated that there had been 28 attempts to start German newspapers in New York City in the past two years. Twenty-three had failed, counting repeated attempts to launch the same publication, perhaps lasting no longer than Weydemeyer's ill-fated weekly newspaper.[65] The author added that *Janus* was dying, and the new *Die Revolution* was struggling to be born, adding them prematurely to the list of failures. The editors of all these failed publications, the author supposed, "belong to that class of businessmen that know the needs of the

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[64] The verb *bramabarsiren* is from Bramarbas, the name commonly used in German for the comic character of the "boastful soldier."

[65] "Deutsche Zeitungen in New-York," *Republik der Arbeiter,* May 29, 1852. Remarkably, three of these attempts were by Heinzen, not counting *Janus,* and four more were associated with him in some way. One was by his stepbrother, two were by an unnamed "Heinzenian," and one was an attempt by a "Kossuthian" to relaunch a Heinzen paper.

people only through intuition and from books." Their considerable literary talents, it seemed, were not enough to produce a newspaper in America that would be recognized as usefully instructive [*ein anerkannt nützliches belehrendes Blatt*].

This is a self-satisfied but plausible explanation for the limited success of the *Brumaire* in the United States, given the original meaning of the *Brumaire* and the broader vision of Weydemeyer's newspaper, to clarify the political situation and conditions for revolution in Europe. This was knowledge that could seem to have a practical value only for the few who were actively participating in debates about revolutionary action. The practical value of the text could be doubted in a European context as well. Otto Wigand's rejection of the proposal to publish the *Brumaire* shows that, while censorship was a main concern, it still left some room for critical judgment. "The risk which one runs with the state would be in the case at hand a fully useless one for me, that is, irrational," Wigand wrote, "as also for the cause, which will not be changed at all through a text in German."[66] While censorship clearly made Wigand very cautious, he was apparently still estimating risks and potential gains, both economic and political.[67] His remark about the practical usefulness of a text in German may suggest that he did not see how or why to change German views of France. The work could only matter, he seems to assume, in some other context, perhaps as an attempt to influence

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[66] See MEGA III:5, p. 305. Wigand published in 1852 Simon Kaiser's *Französische Verfassungsgeschichte von 1789-1852.*

[67] Censorship was also discussed by others later, in the fall of 1852, when Marx again sought a German publisher. Hermann Ebner responded from Frankfurt on September 11 that it would probably be impossible in the political circumstances, encouraging Marx instead to work on the English translation. Stephen Naut wrote from Cologne on September 14 with a similar impression, agreeing with Lassalle that Marx's name alone would be the main problem, and suggesting that only Campe or Wigand would take the risk. Lassalle wrote again on September 23, suggesting Heinrich Matthes in Leipzig.

French politics or to reach an international audience that did not read German. His complaint that publishing the *Brumaire* would be "useless" concurs with Weitling's complaint about the emigrant press in general, that it was not "usefully instructive."

Some of the only known references to the *Eighteenth Brumaire* in print at the time of its publication were by Joseph Weydemeyer. In an anonymous article by Weydemeyer in the July *Turn-Zeitung,* for example, he cites the *Brumaire's* discussion of economic crisis in part VI (pp. 226-7) in support of the argument that, so long as markets were stable, agitation among the emigrants was foolish. Drawing on a letter from Marx, Weydemeyer attributes the economic stability to the expansion of the world market, especially in India, but he adds that this expansion will only make the crisis worse when it comes. This version of the "crisis theory" much more closely resembles theories that are commonly ascribed to Marx himself than does Weydemeyer's earlier article on the revolutionary explosion, with its positive attempt to explain why France "is and remains" the revolutionary *Schwerpunkt,*

There were some efforts to distribute the *Brumaire* in several American cities with significant German populations, including Baltimore, Cincinnati, and Washington, D.C.[68] In one letter to Marx from Washington, Adolf Cluss tries to explain the *Brumaire's* lack of success. Its factual basis was incontestable, and the facts were so clearly connected as to make it seem hard even to imagine how chaotically they had "buzzed around" [*umherrsurrten*] in some minds in the past: "Not a single one of the pugs has dared to bark at them." He praised its clarity above all, in fact how effortless Marx made it to

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[68] MEGA I:11, pp. 686-690

move through confusing material. Cluss also shared an interesting impression of another reader, that his interest in Marx was growing, the more all the other factions declined both intellectually and "psychically," which I take to mean, as they lost their courage and morale. But sales were poor, and Cluss gave some plausible reasons why that was so. The majority of Germans who came to Washington for work had little leisure time for reading, even if they found time for drinking and singing. The enlightened ones [*Aufklärlinge*] saw no hope for France, while the great mass of readers who slobber all over the Great Men were too uneducated to have taste for merely good literature.

On August 11, 1852, *Janus* published an anonymous article on "The Population of France," citing recently published data suggesting a slowing rate of increase in the population, as an argument against "the still always circulating opinion that the French nation even today is still the most lively [*lebenskräftigste*] and full of potential for the future [*zukunftsreichste*]."[69] Could this be a covert response to the *Brumaire* as an argument for the "revolutionary energy" of France, focusing especially on its argument about the revolutionary potential of peasants, the crux of the issue in theory? It certainly shows how these concluding arguments of the *Brumaire,* and the way that Weydemeyer framed the text as a whole, related to continuing discussions of the relative political vitality or energy of France and other countries, especially Germany. When one young follower of Marx, Jakob Huzel, approached Heinzen in person to ask if he had read the

[69] "Die Bevölkerung von Frankreich," *Janus,* August 11, 1852, p. 4. The source for this article is a census report by Bonaparte's Minister of the Interior, Persigny.

Brumaire, however, Heinzen responded, "no; but he had already read things by Marx, and if you read one thing by him, you have read it all!!!"[70]

One agent who distributed the *Brumaire* was the Czech immigrant Vojta Náprstek, a self-described "book, art, and music dealer" in Milwaukee. He advertised the *Brumaire* for sale in his anti-clerical newsletter, the *Milwaukie Flug-blätter,* published in May or early June.[71] The first "issue" of this *Flug-blätter* is just a single printed sheet with a translation of an article from the freethinking *Boston Investigator* about the trial of Galileo, mainly intended to promote books for sale, including sixteen "other liberal-minded [*freisinnig*] writings," two guides to American law for emigrants, and Alexander von Humboldt's *Kosmos*. In this broad category of "liberal" or "freethinking" writings, the *Brumaire* appears alongside biographies of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine by the communist Hermann Kriege, Wilhelm Weitling's *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit,* Schlosser's *Weltgeschichte,* and the satirical newspaper *Leuchtkugeln*, formerly in Munich, which published its final issues in New York in 1851. Most of the rest of the titles are outspoken philosophical or historical writings against Christianity, especially against Catholicism.

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[70] MEGA III:5, p. 482

[71] Náprstek has a prominent place in Czech-American historiography and in the early intellectual history of Milwaukee, a city that was just beginning its rise. See Moritz Wagner*, Reisen in Nordamerika in den Jahren 1852 und 1853* (Leipzig, 1854). Naprstek mentioned in Wisconsin's *Deutsch-Amerikaner*, p. 169, with some discussion of the *Flug-Blätter*, founded c. late May or June. See also Rudolph A. Koss, *Milwaukee* (Milwaukee, Wis: Schnellpressen-Druck des "Herald," 1871), p. 354 ff., on the founding of the *Flug-Blätter*. Digitized copies of the *Flug-Blätter* can be found via the website of the Czech National Museum, http://www.digitalniknihovna.cz/nm/periodical/uuid:9b438c20-c7ef-11de-91b1-000d606f5dc6

Milwaukee at this time was growing explosively, due to German and Irish migration, and Náprstek's little business also grew.[72] The *Flug-blätter* became a popular weekly with a circulation in the thousands, largely devoted to mocking Catholicism with words and cartoons. The *Brumaire* is still advertised in later issues, as the list that grew to include, for example, German editions of Spinoza and Volney's *Ruins of Empires,* Heinzen's *Janus* and Mathilde Anneke's *Frauenzeitung*, which translated American pioneers of women's rights like Susan B. Anthony. Moritz Wagner downplays the success of this counter-cultural business and draws an unflattering picture of the local *freie Gemeinde*, no doubt Naprstek's intended audience, who met on Sundays to sing songs of freedom, read poetry, and hear sermons against religion. Wagner saw them as less inspiring than the Church that they sought to overthrow and less popular, he claims, than the local *Arbeiterverein,* which was also secular but focused on practical benefits such as mutual aid.

In early May, Marx met with the major distributor of German-language books in London, Trübner, about distributing the book in London and in Germany. Copies of the New York edition were sent to the London booksellers Delf & Trübner, who were supposed to send copies to Julius Campe. Marx seems to have discussed the book with the historian Eduard Vehse, for example, who tried to obtain it through Campe.[73] It is not

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[72] Moritz Wagner described the character of the *Lateinerfarmer* or "gentleman farmer," the *Bildungsbürger* who took up farming for the first time. Wagner also claimed that German settlers in Wisconsin were more resistant to the "assimilating force of the Anglo-American race" than their countrymen in New York or Pennsylvania, or in older cities like Cincinnati or St. Louis, more "true to their nationality, their speech, and morals."

[73] Manfred Kobuch, "Begegnungen Eduard Vehses mit Weerth, Heine und Marx im Jahre 1852 und die Datierung eines Marx-Briefes," in Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch 9. (1986), S. 268–286. The author of a massive *History of German Courts since the Reformation,* published by Campe, Vehse was an ideal reader of the

clear, however, that Campe actually distributed the book.[74] Campe was certainly willing to publish radical books.[75] One example is a response to the coup d'état by the militant democrat (best remembered today for his anti-Semitism), Wilhelm Marr, titled *Anarchy or Authority*. Marr's work also provides some interesting contrast to the *Brumaire.*

Written as a series of letters, Marr's work is supposed to promote the "fearless self-criticism" of the "democratic party," hoping that "the veil will be torn from the eyes of German minds [*sic*]." Marr does not expect the book to banned, he writes, "because the principles from which I proceed have too little basis in the great masses," and because he tries to explain parties and action as the result of inner necessity and without using provocative language. Marr admits one exception to this rule: "only where I spoke of the so-called 'Gotha' party was I not the master of my sentiments, because with these *traitors out of doctrinaire speculation* hate can and must be expressed, because the silence of contempt is not appropriate." Unlike the *Brumaire*, which only discusses France, Marr draws general principles from events in France that are then used to make anti-bourgeois, anti-parliamentarian, ultimately anarchistic arguments about German politics.

Brumaire. He had worked with Arnold Ruge on the *Deutsche Jahrbücher* and had several friends in common with Marx, including Heine. He was also acquainted with the French historians Jules Michelet and Augustin Thierry.

[74] Campe may be the "extremely radical bookseller, to whom I offered the distribution," mentioned in the preface to the second edition of 1869, who is supposed to have "replied with truly moral horror at such 'untimely impertinence.'" Otto Wigand's surviving reply to Marx does not contain the words "untimely impertinence." I take the phrase *äußerst radikal thuender* to mean "radical-acting," not in the sense of being pseudo-radical, but rather, in the sense of doing radical things.

[75] A list of titles for sale is in Wilhelm Marr, *Anarchie oder Autorität?* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1852)

Another contrast is in the way that Marr handles the same opening thought about historical repetition. "*C'est fini!* In less than fifty years, to have suffered through an epoch from Caesar to Romulus Augustulus, in less than four years to live through a negative parody of the great revolution of 1789-1805 …" In sharp contrast to Marx, Marr understands the event as "the nail in the coffin of that part of Europe whose soul is France." Like Heinzen before him and other democrats after, Marr saw this as completely shattering the logic of a cultural history:

> The history of Western Europe has ceased to be cultural history [*Culturgeshichte*], it has become a game of chance for hustlers [*Glücksritter*]. The historian will become a mere registrar [*Registrator*], who simply commits the falling rubble to a book. Each sparrow that pecks away the mortar between the stones … will have just as much right to become a historical personality as the man who may have pounded against the old walls…[76]

This recalls the similar remark by Heinzen, before the fact, that a successful coup d'état would be at odds with the very logic of history. And it seems to me an essential consideration, that Marx was not only competing with other attempts to explain events in France, or the mere defeat of the revolution, but also with a more fundamental perception that a greater logic of history, essential for reasoning about politics, had been suddenly invalidated. Another catastrophic view was epitomized early on by Gustav Diezel's *Deutschland und die abendlandische Civilisation* (Stuttgart, 1852), which prophesied a coming war of "Romance" and "Germanic" races.[77]

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[76] Marr, *Anarchie oder Autorität,* p. 6

[77] For this and the below, see Harald Biermann, *Ideologie Statt Realpolitik: Kleindeutsche Liberale und Auswärtige Politik vor der Reichsgründung*, Beiträge Zur Geschichte Des Parlamentarismus und der Politischen Parteien, Bd. 146 (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2006).

Writing for his political and literary journal *Die Grenzboten,* Gustav Freytag also described the coup d'état as "just the beginning of an adventurous, wild, and disastrous future," but he had the impression that the German public was simply curious about the event, not even wholly willing to condemn it as a crime.[78] Freytag saw this as having to do with attitudes toward the National Assembly, which was seen as corrupt and dysfunctional, dominated by factions that pursued their private interests at the expense of the nation. Even if the coup d'état was illegal, the crime might be exonerated if it led to better governance in the future. The new regime might even benefit Germany, for example by countering British influence on the Continent. But Freytag himself was deeply skeptical that order had been restored. "Who is still so gullible as to say," he concluded, "that the revolution is over?" The range of views criticized in his sketch, however, would largely prevail among German democrats and liberals in the 1850s and 1860s.[79]

An emigrant in New York is supposed to have done a French translation, intended for a democratic daily in Brussels, but its fate is unclear.[80] An English translation was done around September by Wilhelm Pieper, a former student revolutionary and member of the Communist League, and parts of a manuscript survive. In a critical memorandum

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[78] Gustav Freytag, "Louis Buonaparte und die öffentliche Meinung," *Die Grenzboten* (Leipzig), 10. Jahrg., II Semester, Bd. IV, pp. 427-434.
[79] Summarized by Biermann, *Ideologie Statt Realpolitik*, 53–60. Another possibility was that France could ally with Great Britain against a greater German enemy, Russia.
[80] MEGA III:V, p. 468. The translator, Hochstuhl, had the idea of sending it to *La Nation.* Hochstuhl is not identified by his full name in MEGA but is likely Alphonse Hochstuhl (1823-1875), a far-left member of the French National Assembly, expelled in January, who seems to have migrated to the United States the same month. *La Nation* (Brussels), January 11 and 24, 1852, and https://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/sycomore/fiche/(num_dept)/10861

on the missing first chapter, Engels judged Pieper to be competent in principle but careless, noting some passages that were causing trouble. The manuscript is a translation of chapters II and III. It is fairly competent, even in handling idioms and slang, with minor errors and stylistic flaws. Some word choices are notable. Near the beginning of chapter two, *bürgerlichen Monarchie* is "constitutional monarchy," not "bourgeois monarchy," and later on *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* is "commonwealth." At one point, where the German has *Bourgeois-Herrschaft,* Pieper has "middle-class rule." Pieper also sometimes chooses French expressions for German, rather than English ones. For example, while *Kleinbürgern* can be "shopkeepers," the adjective *kleinbürgerlich* is "petit-bourgeois" (in quotes); the German *im Grunde* (at root, in essence) becomes *au fond;* a reference to the idea of a play of constitutional powers [*Das Spiel*] becomes "the 'jeu.'" *Geburtshelfer* is *acchoucheur* (not "man-midwife"). Sometimes Pieper adds his own little poetic touches, as in a paragraph alluding to Thetis, where he uses "gilded clouds" for *Wolkenhimmel* and "moist grot" for *Meer,* phrases maybe borrowed from poetry from the time.[81]

The only surviving review of the 1852 edition of the *Brumaire* was in a survey of literature on the coup d'etat, by Georg Eccarius, published in the Chartist *People's Paper* from September 25 to December 18. Eccarius positions the text as an argument about the future of France, opposing "shortsighted and ignorant views on the change in the public destinies of France since the 2nd December," on the "character and consequences of the

[81] "Gilded clouds" is common; I find the odd phrase "moist grot" (i.e., wet grotto, a sea-cave) only in John Milton Harney's *Crystalina: A Fairy Tale* (1816).

coup d'état." Eccarius writes as a worker: "We are certainly no partisans of Mr. Bonaparte … but … we rejoice in his temporary triumph—because it secures the triumph of *our* principles, the triumph of *our* class." He promises "a gradually-progressing and yet all-encompassing criticism" of competing points of view. The first is a pamphlet by a forgotten ally of Ledru-Rollin, Xavier Durrieu, at this point in exile in Switzerland; Eccarius then considers two more reflective accounts, one from a standpoint of "current traditional ideas," Victor Hugo's *Napoleon le Petit,* and one that interprets events as proof of the "truth or necessity" of socialism, Proudhon's *Social Revolution.* Marx will take up the same comparisons in his preface to the revised edition of 1869, so I will discuss what Eccarius says about them later. For Eccarius, the *Brumaire* is the only account that "has at once satisfied history, and the want of the present generation to understand the revolutionary movement in which it finds itself engaged." In this respect, it is "not merely the first, but the only competent version of the history of the Bonapartist Usurpation." In his view, that "objective impartiality… wrongly supposed by many people to be the most important requisite in a historian," is not possible, but it is also not desirable. According to Eccarius, the success of Marx is due precisely to "his adhesion to a party," the "revolutionary party of the working class." After June, 1848, this party was "not immediately involved in the struggle, and yet … by its future, must finally become the supreme arbiter." The revolutionary party of the working class is imagined as a kind of court at the end of world history.

In December, another former member of the Communist League, Jakob Schabelitz, in Switzerland, expressed interest in publishing the *Brumaire* but wanted first

to publish Marx's brochure on the Cologne Communist Trial. This was a revealing choice. The latter belonged to a well-established genre of political literature and described events in which Marx himself was implicated. A minor character in the *Brumaire*, the prefect of police in Paris, Pierre Carlier, worked with a Berlin counterpart, Wilhelm Stieber, to produce evidence of a "Franco-German plot," in which Marx's own writings, including the *Communist Manifesto*, served as evidence. The brochure was more directly relevant than the *Brumaire* to ongoing arguments among refugees about Marx and his politics. It referred directly to attempts by democrats such as Heinzen and Simon to link Marx to Willich and Kinkel, and it openly defended Marx's communist views, which are mainly absent from the *Brumaire*. Its extensive remarks on the *Manifesto* emphasize its difference in principle from other revolutionary "agitation." Marx strongly suggests here that the text itself was composed to avoid prosecution by developing a new concept of communism that did not conform to juridical categories. In positing the collapse of the Prussian government as historically inevitable rather than a goal of "agitation," it attempted to avoid the moral and legal arguments that could be made against the democrats. Marx also argued that, because the communists did not aim to form a new government, their organization was unattractive in principle for "romantic conspirators" and "ambitious demagogues." When that brochure was seized at the border, Schabelitz abandoned the idea of publishing the *Brumaire.*[82]

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[82] Schabelitz claimed in March 1853 that *Enthüllungen über den Kommunistenprozess zu Köln* was "not a pamphlet [*Flugblatt*], for distribution among the masses," but a 92-page *Broschüre,*" "a *critique* ... for *educated readers,* especially for the *juridical* public," in Germany and especially in Prussia, intended for legal sale. He supposedly turned to smuggling to avoid further losses, only after copies were unexpectedly seized. (Letter from an unidentified newspaper, in Marx/Engels Papers, Inv. nr. A 42.)

Revolution in Retrospect: The *Brumaire* as Evidence of Prior Views

Marx wrote often about domestic and international politics in France as they developed in the 1850s and sometimes took up themes from the *Brumaire,* but his most important articles on France focused on a new topic, the Crédit Mobilier. His journalism took on an increasingly global scale, as continental Europe seemed to shrink in significance. He rarely reflected on the revolutions of 1848 in retrospect, let alone on his own writings from that period. His great speech for the fourth anniversary of the People's Paper, in 1856, begins by referring to the "so-called revolutions of 1848" as "but poor incidents—small fractures and fissures in the dry crust of European society." This description of what many scholars see as the defining political experience of Marx's whole life, not to mention a major event in nineteenth-century European history, recalls his remark from four years earlier about the "new cosmopolitans," who would not understand "how small our world once was."

Marx uses the geological metaphor, however, to express the idea that these small "fractures and fissures" still had a profound value for historical self-understanding, as they revealed "oceans of liquid matter, only needing expansion to rend into fragments continents of hard rock," in fact, the "secret of the nineteenth century," the "emancipation of the Proletarian." Here Marx opposes his view of history to what he calls "modern pessimism." Pessimism was one of the major philosophical standpoints of the late nineteenth century, especially in Germany, by virtue of its popularity, its academic

influence, and its enduring claim to philosophical attention.[83] In its most radical form, pessimism was the view that life is not worth living; it involves more suffering than happiness, as Schopenhauer argued, and it is not even possible to make progress toward the ideals that are supposed to make life meaningful. Marx refers to a specific variety of pessimism, that the nineteenth century is an epoch of mounting cultural contradictions, in which stunning progress in art and knowledge accompanies an apparent decline in morality and society, what Marx calls an unresolvable "antagonism between the productive powers and the social relations of our epoch." This description of a rival view anticipates the well-known phrase that Marx would use to characterize epochs of social revolution in the preface to the 1859 *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,* as conflicts between productive forces and relations of production. In this example, Marx's view of history is distinguished from an alternative less by the factors that he sees at work in history than by his view about the nature and consequences of their interaction.[84]

As Marx shifts from describing the past, the revolutions of 1848 as evidence against the worldview of "modern pessimism," to the present, he also turns from natural-scientific metaphors to a literary allusion. He reformulates the "old mole" remark from the *Brumaire* as a response to the modern pessimist. In the *Brumaire,* the "old mole" allusion expresses the idea that the revolution is making the executive power appear stronger while undermining its moral basis. It combines two opposed ideas of the time,

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[83] Frederick C. Beiser, *Weltschmerz: Pessimism in German Philosophy, 1860-1900* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[84] Notably, "productive powers" here apparently include the capacities to produce art and knowledge.

the idea of revolution as a mole and the idea of Europe as Hamlet, unable to act, in the new and strange idea of a European "Hamlet" that jumps up and applauds the French revolutionary "old mole." This possible standing ovation in the future is not necessarily a symbol for a future European revolution. I take it to mean only that, under certain conditions, the French revolution would be retrospectively approved or celebrated rather than deplored and disavowed. In the *People's Paper* speech, every element of the allusion is changed. "In the signs that bewilder … the poor prophets of regression," Marx says, "we do recognise our brave friend, Robin Goodfellow, the old mole that can work in the earth so fast, that worthy pioneer—the Revolution."

Here it is no longer Europe that approves the revolution in the future but Marx and "we" who greet the "old mole," with supposed recognition in present signs of the times. Marx also replaces the past-tense *gewühlt* that was supposed to be cheered in a possible future with the modal present, drawn from the original English, "can work." He also adds a new part of Hamlet's next line, "worthy pioneer." The most bizarre transformation is that Marx now identifies the "old mole" from *Hamlet* with Robin Goodfellow, best known as Puck, from *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* The two names of Puck incidentally belong to different folk beliefs. As "Robin Goodfellow," the creature "frights the maidens," makes their chores more difficult, and misleads or harms "night travellers." It thins the milk so it is harder to churn into butter, or "labors in the quern,"

making the grain harder to grind in a hand mill. In contrast, "Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck / You do their work, and they shall have good luck."[85]

The broader argument about pessimism and technology may help to explain the specific use of the bad-luck name, as a "friend" who appears in the signs of misfortune. Here Marx seems to adapt his idea from 1852 to the new context of the struggle against modern pessimism. The new image also noticeably combines elements from tragedy and comedy. Marx concludes with a sophisticated variation on the classical image of history as a *Weltgericht*, as invoked in the *People's Paper* review of the *Brumaire* by Georg Eccarius, in which the revolutionary proletariat prefigures the judge at the end of history. Marx ends his oration with a chilling allusion to the *Vehmgericht,* described as a medieval "secret tribunal" that would "revenge the misdeeds of the ruling class."[86] He concludes by distinguishing history itself as judge from the historical agent: "History is the judge—its executioner, the proletarian."

The only conspicuous reference to the *Eighteenth Brumaire* in print between the first edition in 1852 and the second edition in 1869 is by Marx himself, in his 1860

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[85] It is possible that Marx was inspired here by Helen Macfarlane, who rendered the opening sentence of the *Communist Manifesto* as "A frightful hobgoblin stalks throughout Europe." Her translation was certainly known to Marx and may have been familiar to some in his audience as well. What is less well known than her translation of this sentence is that Macfarlane was also the first English translator of Hegel. For an inspired rediscovery, see David Black and Ben Watson, "Helen Macfarlane: Independent Object," *Radical Philosophy 187* (Sept/Oct 2014).

[86] I assume that Marx's source was Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*. On the literary and historical sources, see Patrick Bridgwater, *The German Gothic Novel in Anglo-German Perspective* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2013).

polemic *Herr Vogt.* The book was far from obscure to its time.[87] Today, it is read only by some specialists, as evidence of Marx's political views at a significant moment in the history of German liberal and democratic thought or as an example of his rhetoric.[88] But there has rarely been much appreciation for *Herr Vogt* as a work of historical interpretation. Few other books by Marx engage so closely with textual evidence. None attempts to explain an individual's actions in such minute detail. In a standard form of political interpretation, *Herr Vogt* is located in debates about "the German question," at the time of the French war with Austria in northern Italy in 1859. The war spurred a new wave of nationalist mobilization and brought many former revolutionaries of 1848-9, as well as many of their former opponents, back to public life, in new formations that anticipate the politics of the next several years, including the worker's movement.[89]

Although *Herr Vogt* certainly has its origins in arguments about the war that were deeply influenced by differing attitudes toward German unity, those originating

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[87] Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life*, 346. To Jenny Marx, it provided "endless pleasure and delight." Ferdinand Lassalle called it "magisterial," Wilhelm Wolff, a "masterpiece." Engels (Dec. 19, 1860) called it, "of course, the best polemical work you have ever written. It's simpler in style than the Bonaparte and yet just as effective where this is called for." For its impression on a worker in the original Communist League, see Friedrich Lessner, "Errinerungen eines Arbeiters an Karl Marx: Zu dessen zehnjärigen Todestage, 14. März 1893," in Lessner, *Ich brachte das Kommunistische Manifest zum Drucker* (Dietz, 1975), p. 167.

[88] Christian Jansen, "Politischer Streit mit harten Bandagen: Zur brieflichen Kommunikation unter den emigrierten Achtundvierzigern—unter besonderer Berücksichtung der Kontroverse zwischen Marx und Vogt," in Jürgen Herres and Manfred Neuhaus, eds., *Politische Netzwerke durch Briefkommunikation* (Akademie Verlag, Berlin, 2002); Christine Lattek, *Revolutionary Refugees: German Socialism In Britain, 1840-1860* (Routledge, 2006), pp. 177-183. Understanding Herr Vogt in this context is central to Jonathan Sperber, "Karl Marx the German," *German History* Vol. 31, No. 3 (September 2013), pp. 383–402. Terrell Carver takes *Herr Vogt* as an example of a "politics of sarcasm," in Terrell Carver (2010), "Marx and the Politics of Sarcasm," *Socialism and Democracy*, 24:3, 102-118.

[89] Beck, "Working-Class Politics at the Crossroads," in *Between Reform and Revolution: German Socialism and Communism from 1840 to 1990*, ed. David E Barclay and Eric D Weitz (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1998), 64.

arguments do not provide a good basis for interpreting the work. One problem is that *Herr Vogt* hardly mentions contemporary Germany. Insofar as it is about contemporary politics at all, *Herr Vogt* is about politics in Switzerland, even local politics in Geneva. The climax is an analysis of Vogt's attempt, together with others on the left of the Swiss Radical party, to influence negotiations over the French annexation of Savoy in the spring of 1860.[90] It was advertised in the *Börsenblatt für den deutschen Buchhandel* as a *Charakteristik* of Vogt and his associates, "with biting humor, full of drastic but always classical citations." This use of the word *Charakteristik* is derived from the idea of a "science of judging the character of men and their actions correctly."[91]

This kind of judgment was fundamental to common nineteenth-century conceptions of history. It is was *the* aim of history in the historicist tradition, as theorized by Wilhelm von Humboldt and summarized by Frederick Beiser: a "characteristic" was "an account of the specific character of a person, event, nation, epoch or culture … the *principium individuationis*, i.e., that central principle from which all its distinctive traits flow."[92] At root, *Herr Vogt* can be understood as a struggle over character in this

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[90] For an example of a close historical interpretation in terms of Swiss politics, see Jacques Grandjonc and Hans Pelger, "Gegen die „Agentur Fazy / Vogt. Karl Marx' „Herr Vogt" (1860) und Georg Lommels „Die Wahrheit über Genf (1865). Quellen und texgeschichtliche Anmerkungen," Marx-Engels-Forschungsberichte Heft 6 (1990). Grandjonc and Pelger are (rightly, I think) criticized for their own use of sources in Jansen (2002).

[91] This is the definition by Adelung, cited by Franceso Rossi, "Die Charakteristik: Prolegomena zur Theorie und Geschichte einer deutschen Gattung—nebst komparatistischer Bemerkungen," *Scientia Poetica: Jahrbuch für Geschichte der Literatur und Wissenschaften*, Vol. 21, Issue 1 (2017). As Rossi describes in detail, the concept of *Charakteristik* was taken up in German philosophy by the mid-eighteenth century, including into hermeneutics, and later in romantic literary criticism, most notably by the brothers Schlegel. In criticism, it was perhaps at its height in the *Vormärz*. It was a concept that Marx and his critics used elsewhere. An important example from about this time is Rudolf Haym, *Wilhelm von Humboldt: Lebensbild und Charakteristik* (1856)

[92] Frederick C. Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 169.

individuating sense, as the two antagonists try to construe one another's actions in different terms. Because of the extensive evidence that is interpreted in the course of this *Charakteristik,* however, much of the book has little directly to do with Vogt at all. This was also supposed to be a source of its appeal. The rest of the advertisement emphasizes its material about other emigrants, "as it appears for the first time in print, already guarantees the book a large circulation." It also "subjects the diplomatic history of the last ten years, especially the cession of Savoy and Nice, to a sharp critique, grounded in citations from archival documents, which will awaken the liveliest interest." An anonymous "political writer of recognized significance" claims that the book "will serve later historians as a compendium for the history of the last ten years."

The *Eighteenth Brumaire* is cited near the beginning of *Herr Vogt,* at the end of a section called "Die Schwefelbande." This is the first of two sections concerning Vogt's claim that Marx led "a clique of refugees … whose members were, in their time, known among the Swiss emigration as the *Bürstenheimer* or the *Schwefelbande*."[93] Marx approaches this claim with humor but also with an interpretive method: a tasteful epigram, a brief characterization of the supposed authority, textual criticism of two versions of the claim, the presentation of competing evidence about the meaning of *Schwefelbande* or "Sulfer Gang," and speculation about Vogt's motives for misrepresenting the past. In that last step, *um den gerechten Groll begreiflich zu machen,*

[93] The original articles are reprinted in Carl Vogt, *Mein Prozess gegen die Allgemeine Zeitung* (Geneva, December 1859).

in order to make comprehensible the justified grudge that led Vogt to make a false claim, Marx quotes two passages from the *Brumaire* together.

One describes the Society of 10 December, the supposedly charitable organization that took its name from the date on which Louis Bonaparte was elected president of France in 1848. The other is from the final passage in the work, describing the regime and its effect on perceptions of the "state machine," an effect that Marx describes as profanation:

> Hounded by the conflicting demands of his situation, compelled at the same time, like a prestidigitator, to keep the eyes of the public on himself through constant surprises … Bonaparte … infringes on everything that seemed untouchable to the revolution of 1848 … while at the same time strips the halo from the state machine, profanes it, makes it at once nasty [*ekelhaft*] and comical [*lächerlich*].

This passage strongly recalls the *Communist Manifesto,* in which the bourgeoisie has "stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured," and "everything holy is profaned [*entweihen*]." Profanation in the *Manifesto* has nothing directly to do with the state and has nothing nasty or comical about it. The effect is to see one's own position in life (*Lebensstellung*) and relationships soberly, *mit nüchternen Augen.* The idea here is undoubtedly also that Bonapartism exposes the "state machine" as it is.[94] This is a different idea than "corruption" in the old sense of a negative moral effect on society at large or the more modern sense.[95] It connotes the exposure of political secrets, a

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[94] The use of "profane" here also recalls its meaning in Roman law, as bringing something sacred into private use. Giorgio Agamben, "In Praise of Profanation," in *Profanations* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).
[95] As Marx observes earlier, "corruption" was especially the charge of the revolutionaries of February, 1848, which overthrew the prior July Monachy. William Fortescue, "Morality and Monarchy: Corruption and the Fall of the Regime of Louis Philippe in 1848," *French History*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (2002).

revelation of formerly privileged knowledge. His idea was that the Bonapartist state was "compromising and self-compromising," that it will not be able skillfully to conceal the secrets of government but will perpetually expose them. This can be contrasted to the idea that many later readers imagine, based on their own experience of reading him, that Marx is the one doing the unmasking.

Reviews of *Herr Vogt* convey how important this idea of political discretion was for readers at the time. One review by another German in London, Heinrich Beta, in one of the leading literary journals in Germany, the *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes,* does not even mention Carl Vogt.[96] It focuses entirely on the material that the book contains about others. *Herr Vogt* shows that Marx has been sneaking around, snatching up and copying letters for the past ten years, "the first among all of the Vidocqs and Stiebers."[97] These famous detectives are "lambs in comparison" to Marx. While the police were incompetent and obvious, Beta claims, revolutionaries in the early years of exile had never suspected that the real Devil was one of their own. Marx was indiscreet and unforgiving. "Every man, not only refugees, writes sometimes in ten years in private something nonsensical or hasty, reckoning on the discretion of friends and the washing-away of the stream of time." To gather up these bits and blunders [*Schnitzel und Schnitzer*] is a "dirty joke" [*Zote*], "nasty [*ekelhaft*] history." After comparing Marx to the

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[96] H.B., "'Herr Vogt' von Karl Marx," *Magazine für die Literatur des Auslandes,* 30 Jg., No. 2 (January 9, 1861).

[97] The memoirs of Eugène François Vidocq were popular, even groundbreaking in the detective genre, and Marx knew them well. Wilhelm Stieber, the head of the Berlin police, was the co-author of a two-volume study of communist conspiracies, who had been instrumental in jailing Marx's allies, including Friedrich Lessner, in the "Cologne Communist trial" of 1852.

police and to the Devil, Beta compares him to a monkey that attacks with poop, hitting friends and foes alike. Marx is making a new and uselessly divisive use of what should be historical waste. Yet Beta also calls the book "masterful calumny," Marx a "master of constructive denunciation." By "constructive," he must mean that it has a carefully made structure.

Another critical review shows a similar focus. The author, identified only as "Abt," was a harsh critic of Vogt who had been looking forward to Marx's work but was outraged to discover that it included several unflattering sentences about himself. Abt's close criticism of these several sentences is sixteen pages long. To explain why he has wasted "so much time and paper on disproving Marxish attacks that refute themselves by their great scurrilousness," Abt tells an anecdote about how the text circulated. He had first shown *Herr Vogt* to another journalist named Löwenthal, in order to denounce its lies about himself. The two journalists then got in an argument about other things, and Löwenthal bought a copy of the pamphlet for himself and showed it secretly to one of Abt's friends. Now Abt had no choice but to try to clear his name.

The example of *Herr Vogt* in general shows the dilemmas that the *Brumaire* and the revolutionary period more broadly posed as evidence in political arguments in retrospect. The reviews show a certain pressure to forget divisive arguments, foolish expectations, and compromising actions of the past, to present a more respectable and inspiring picture of democracy at a time of new political potential, even as they clearly attest to a continued curiosity and concern about what we might call old gossip. The tension between historical curiosity and a modern democratic optimism influenced the

interpretation of Marx from the start and still does today. So did—so does—the fact that Marx quotes only from the end of the *Brumaire*, not recalling the original meaning of the work as a picture of the land of revolution.

II. *The Eighteenth Brumaire* in German Socialism, 1863-1878

The long quotation in *Herr Vogt,* in 1860, was one of the only references to the *Brumaire* in print in Germany before the revised second edition, published in July, 1869, by Otto Meissner in Hamburg.[1] There may also be an allusion to the text in a pamphlet by Moses Hess, based on speeches in Cologne and Düsseldorf in the summer of 1863.[2] Hess was promoting the new worker's organization founded by Ferdinand Lassalle, the *Allgemeine Deutsche Arbeiterverein* (ADAV), which called for mass suffrage and state-supported producers' cooperatives.[3] His pamphlet *Rights of Labor* argued that political rights were due to workers by virtue of their productive contribution to society.

For Hess, this was the principle of the French revolution, when all the producers, "from the most ingenious minds down to the most mechanical workers," claimed their rights against the "unproductive" nobility and clergy. (What makes the "ingenious minds" productive is supposed to be that they are useful for society.) The principle was first realized in February, 1848. "All the world was surprised by this unexpected bolt of thunder," Hess writes, "and even our revolutionary socialists (the most revolutionary at

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[1] Marx also refers to the *Brumaire* in passing, as evidence of his opposition to Bonapartism, in a letter relating to the "Vogt affair" that was published in a Hamburg newspaper, *Die Reform.* "Statement to the Editors of *Die Reform,* the *Volks-Zeitung* and the *Allgemeine Zeitung*," MECW 17, p. 4.
[2] Moses Hess, *Rechte der Arbeit* (Frankfurt: Reinhold Baist, 1863)
[3] *Rechte der Arbeit* was given to members of the ADAV for free and seems to have been important in the founding efforts of the organization. Lassalle recommended close and repeated reading, in tandem with his own primer on political economy, the *Arbeiterlesebuch*. "The more often you read them and think through them," he promised, "the more fruitful and new consequences will you develop out of your own thinking." On the distribution of this pamphlet and a good discussion of the movement's other literature at the time, see Bert Andréas, "Zur Agitation und Propaganda des Allgemeinen Deutschen Arbeitervereins 1863/64," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 3 (1963): 297–423.

least on paper) later agreed with the judgment of German philistines that the February revolution was a mere 'surprise' and a pure 'ambush.'"[4] Marx uses the same two words (*Überraschung, Überrumpelung*) to describe the February revolution in the *Brumaire*.

Other details suggest that Hess is referring to Marx. "If it is true that all great political revolutions have their basis in socio-economic class-contradictions," he writes, "it is none the less true that only energetic [*thatkräftige*] nations, like the French in the modern world, like the Romans in the ancient, bring the class-contradictions to class struggles, the powerful *social* element also to *political* dominance."[5] Hess also seems to allude to Marx in an argument about contemporary France. For Hess, the February revolution was no failure. It was the starting-point of an ongoing political process of modernization. The old premise that France is the *Schwerpunkt* of a European revolution is reasserted more abstractly: "Deshalb ist und bleibt Frankreich der politische Vorkämpfer in der modernen Entwicklung der europäischen Geschichte."[6]

Modern Caesarism [*Cäsarenthum*] is "a protest against the existing organization of society and the authentic *dissolution process* [*Auflösungsprozess*] of that organization." The needs of the modern proletariat cannot be met with bread, circuses, and military booty, only "by a transformation [*Umgestaltung*] of our current mode of production, for which the dictatorship of the propertyless is *not* the definitive political form." Marx had no monopoly on the terms "mode of production" or the concept of a dictatorship of the proletariat, but it seems likely that Hess is alluding to him again here.

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[4] Hess, *Rechte der Arbeit,* p. 8
[5] Hess, *Rechte der Arbeit,* p. 18
[6] Hess, *Rechte der Arbeit,* p. 18

Hess alludes to Marx only occasionally, without mentioning him by name, and perhaps only because he is addressing workers in the Rhineland, where Marx and the Communist League had their base of support. His broader arguments about France in particular were really directed toward the left wing of the liberal *Fortschrittspartei* and its affiliated labor organization, the *Verband deutscher Arbeitervereine* (VDAV), the main rivals of the ADAV.[7] The relatively simple roles of France as an example in arguments in this context did not imply any new relevance for the *Brumaire.* Journalists who supported the VDAV often accused Lassalle of promoting ideas that had been tried in France and failed, or were suited to France but not to Germany.[8] In particular, France illustrated the supposed uselessness of mass suffrage without mass education. Hess was fairly unusual among Lassalleans in responding to such arguments with a positive view of France, rather than trying to draw the distinction more clearly. The one-sided and generally superficial roles of France in these kinds of arguments show its diminished role in German political reasoning and imagination, relative to the time of the *Brumaire.*

The only conspicuous interest in the *Brumaire* in Germany in the early 1860s came from Wilhelm Liebknecht, a younger revolutionary who had become close to Marx

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[7] Gary P. Steenson, *"Not One Man! Not One Penny!": German Social Democracy, 1863-1914* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1981), 6–14. Beck, "Working-Class Politics at the Crossroads." This "left wing" of the Fortschrittspartei included Leopold Sonnemann, the founder of the liberal *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Friedrich A. Lange and Ludwig Büchner. The economic theorists of the VDAV included Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch. The ADAV and the VDAV represented about 4500 and 17000 members, respectively, at the middle of the decade. Jürgen Schmidt, "Global Values Locally Transformed: The IWMA in the German States, 1864-1872/76," in *"Arise Ye Wretched of the Earth": The First International in a Global Perspective*, ed. Fabrice Bensimon, Quentin Deluermoz, and Jeanne Moisand, Studies in Global Social History, Volume 29 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2018).

[8] Dan Simon, *Das Frankreichbild der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung 1859-1865*, 1. Aufl, Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte, Universität Tel Aviv (Gerlingen: Bleicher, 1984), 178–215. One of the founders of the VDAV, Leopold Sonnemann, even linked Lassalle to French imperialism in Mexico and Indochina: p. 192.

in exile in London. Liebknecht brought copies of *Herr Vogt* and the *Brumaire* with him to distribute when he returned to Berlin in September, 1862. He joined the small Berlin circle (*Gemeinde*) of the ADAV in October, 1863, and recommended the *Brumaire* to other Lassalleans in Berlin, including Sophie von Hatzfeldt, the close friend of Lassalle who played a central role in the struggles to define his legacy after his death in a duel in 1864. Liebknecht also probably drew on the work in lectures for a much larger independent trade organization, the *Berliner Buchdruckergehülfen-Verein,* the association of printer's assistants. He mentioned the idea of a new edition of the *Brumaire* to Marx several times in 1864 and 1865, but it did not become a priority at this time.

The prior study of the publication history of the second edition of the *Brumaire* interprets these efforts by Liebknecht as evidence that the *Brumaire* had become timely again, in an internal struggle to define the political strategy of the German worker's movement. This was far from the case, and the interpretation rests on many assumptions that can hardly pass for current in scholarship today, including an exaggerated contrast between "Lassalleans" and "Marxists" that was typical of East German and Soviet scholarship, and the related idea that the second edition of the *Brumaire* was a kind of covert attack on Bismarck.[9] Such assumptions are not useful for interpreting the history and political significance of the second edition. The question matters because, in this edition, Marx added a preface with a major new interpretation of his work.

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[9] Natalja Kudrjaschowa, "Zur Geschichte der Zweiten Deutschen Ausgabe von Karl Marx' Schrift 'Der Achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte' von 1869," *Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch* 6 (1983).

Various parts of this preface have been influential at various times and remain so, but scholarly debates and assumptions about the *Brumaire* are particularly influenced by one remark. "I show," Marx writes, "how the *class struggle*," his emphasis, "created circumstances and conditions that allowed a grotesque mediocrity to play the hero's part." This is not false, but it is only apparent at moments in the *Brumaire*, hardly elevated to a thesis, and really only one of many valid descriptions of what Marx shows here, not necessarily the most appealing or useful. Weydemeyer's preface of 1852 did not mention class struggle, even as he discussed the concept with Marx and critics like Karl Heinzen. Class struggle is mostly absent in Marx's journalism in the later 1850s, with its focus on foreign policy and war.[10] It is mostly absent from *Herr Vogt,* and even from the preface to the 1859 *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.*

The main goal of a political interpretation of this edition of the *Brumaire* must be to clarify the meaning of this self-interpretation. Does Marx emphasize the role of class struggle in his work for some reason related to the new political context of the second edition? I argue that he does, but that the political significance of this new description must be seen as heavily and precisely mediated, as a part of the preface as a whole. In particular, I interpret the remark about class struggle in relation to the surprising new intention, at the end of the preface, to influence language. Marx hopes that the new edition of his work will help to abolish a word that had become widespread in Germany in recent years, "Caesarism." Although this remark about "Caesarism" is well known to

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[10] Domenico Losurdo, *Class Struggle: A Political and Philosophical History*, Marx, Engels, and Marxisms (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 10–12.

specialists, it is rarely considered closely or literally, as something that a new edition of the *Brumaire* might do.

This statement of intention is the basis for my interpretation of the edition as a whole. It offers a precise and realistic view of how the work may aspire to a new political significance through an influence on an emerging political vocabulary. This hope to influence new and contested political vocabulary can be contrasted to the original meaning of the work as discussed in chapter one, as a picture of a situation that supports a prior view of France as the land of revolution. It can also be contrasted to a traditional idea of pragmatic history as relevant to political debates because it offers comparisons and contrasts to contemporary social and political phenomena, some piecemeal or wholesale insights into social and political phenomena or situations that are supposed to recur in history. Finally, it can also be contrasted to simpler attempts to use historical arguments directly to adjudicate more entrenched political vocabulary, like "fascism," to take a recent example.

The first half of this chapter considers the political background to Liebknecht's earlier attempts at republication, from 1864 to 1869. A neglected manuscript copy of the first edition, made by Sigfrid Meyer, a young disciple of Marx in Berlin in about 1865, records some revisions that Marx made already at that time, most notably to the opening paragraph on history as tragedy and farce. When Marx returned to the text later, however, in late 1868, he made many more changes, mostly deletions, with one particularly clear aim. He removed remarks that describe Bonaparte as having an absolute power over society, as completely dominating the bourgeoisie in particular. These later changes to the

text reflect profound changes in the political circumstances. The word "Caesarism" took on a new urgency after the Prussian victory over Austria in 1866 and especially in the two years before the Franco-Prussian War. In this period, Liebknecht and his allies used "Caesarism" to attack militarism and the pro-Prussian followers of Ferdinand Lassalle. By 1869, Liebknecht defined the position of social democracy in opposition to "Caesarism," the "military and police state" and the coming of "war of the Caesars." In this context, I propose, Marx's wish to abolish the word expresses distance from this rhetoric as well as from the earlier, more benign uses of the word. The wish to help abolish a word that has come to play such divisive roles can be seen as a conciliatory gesture, as an attempt to reconcile Liebknecht with the Lassalleans and to reformulate his anti-Prussian rhetoric.

The second half of the chapter considers the revisions to the text more closely, as well as the reception of this edition. The challenging interpretive question, raised a century ago, is whether the revisions should be seen as significantly altering the meaning of the *Brumaire,* for example by correcting earlier errors of judgment or moderating political positions from the revolutionary period. I take the more charitable view that they do not, that Marx in fact attempts to preserve the original meaning and prevent the possible misunderstanding of the text in new circumstances. The reception of the text may have been somewhat influenced by the new preface, but reviews of this edition and later mentions of the text, up to the anti-socialist laws of 1878, show little appreciation for the claim that class struggle enabled a "grotesque mediocrity to play the hero's role." By 1878, other interpretations become evident. The conservative "state socialist"

Johannes Huber already took the *Brumaire* as a prime illustration of Marx's conception of history. What it depicts above all, he claims, is the unprincipled and selfish character of the bourgeoisie.

The Eighteenth Brumaire and "Caesarism," 1862-1869

When Wilhelm Liebknecht joined the Berlin circle of the ADAV, it was very small, with just about 20 members. Most were workers, with shoemakers forming the core, but there were also two doctors and a book dealer.[11] Liebknecht also began to give lectures at a much larger independent trade organization, the *Berliner Buchdruckergehülfen-Verein*, which had about 450 members, or by its own estimate, more than a third of the printer's assistants (or journeyman printers) in Berlin.[12] The group was well aware of the working conditions in its trade in France and sometimes referred to them when campaigning for a new pay scale and the revision of anticombination laws in Germany.[13] *Der Correspondent,* the Leipzig newsletter of the

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[11] Andréas, "Zur Agitation und Propaganda des Allgemeinen Deutschen Arbeitervereins 1863/64," 297. Four of the five founding members were shoemakers, but the group came to admit at least a few, like Liebknecht, who were not workers at all. According to Eduard Bernstein, *Die Geschichte der Berliner Arbeiter-Bewegung* (Berlin: Vorwärts, 1907), p. 111, the group had grown to about 50 members by the time Liebknecht joined, and to 200 by November, before collapsing again in February, 1864, to just thirty-five. This intimate circle was completely different in kind than the local *Arbeiterverein*, which had about a thousand members and supported the *Fortschrittspartei*.

[12] On the Berlin *Buchdruckergehülfen-Verein,* counted as one of the first unions in Germany, see Ulrich Engelhardt, *"Nur vereinigt sind wir stark": die Anfänge der deutschen Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1862/63 bis 1869/70* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1977), 155–99. *Der Correspondent,* 1. Jg., No. 49 (December 4, 1863), estimates its membership at between 500 and 600, as does the Berlin correspondent of the *Northern Star,* on October 25, 1864, describing one meeting with 400 members present.

[13] In August, 1863, for example, the Berliner Buchdruckergehülfen-Verein published a statement to printshop owners about the need for a new pay scale, in light of dramatic increases in rent and other costs of living since 1848. The complaint compared their living conditions to those of their counterparts in Paris.

national organization of printers. specifically denied that such efforts represented a revival of the revolutionary spirit of 1848. They were instead a response to the more recent and rapid changes in economic conditions.[14] The printer's assistants in Berlin seem to have been at best ambivalent about the Lassallean movement and its middle-class agitators. One described the ADAV as a "comical ragbag [*Sammelsurium*] of workers and non-workers."[15]

In the first year of the ADAV, Marx and Engels tried to influence the organization independently and through Liebknecht, without openly supporting or opposing it. For example, they sent Liebknecht a statement on Poland to distribute in November, 1863, to counter Lassalle's pro-Prussian politics.[16] When the unexpected death of Lassalle after a duel in August, 1864, left the survival of the ADAV in doubt, however, Liebknecht saw an opportunity for Marx to assert leadership. Lassalle's close companion, Sophie von Hatzfeldt, also turned to Marx and Liebknecht for help in consolidating and defending the legacy of her late friend. Liebknecht first mentioned the idea of republishing the *Brumaire* in this context, in the postscript to a letter to Marx in late September, 1864. He had mentioned the work in a conversation at Hatzfeldt's house, in Berlin, he writes, and

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See also Paul Schmidt, "Pariser Buchdrucker-Angelegenheiten," *Der Correspondent,* 1 Jg., No. 24 (June 12, 1863); Engelhardt, *"Nur vereigt sind wir stark,"* p. 187.

[14] "Rückblicke auf die socialen Bestrebungen der Arbeiter, insbesondere der Buchdrucker, im Jahre 1862," *Der Correspondent,* January 16, 1863.

[15] Footnote in *Der Correspondent,* 1. Jg., No. 49 (December 4, 1863).

[16] Jenny Marx to Liebknecht, "About 24 November 1863," MECW 41, p. 586. Engels wrote to Marx in June, 1864, that Liebknecht would "spring surprises on Izzy [Lassalle]" and eventually "enlighten the workers at large" about him.

none of his friends there had heard of it before. He asked Marx to send a copy, adding, "Perhaps a new edition could be made. The sale of the *Vogt* is going very well."[17]

Marx did not respond to this suggestion. He was focused on the search for a successor to Lassalle, responding to attacks on Lassalle, and the plan to launch a party organ in Berlin, the *Social-Demokrat*. The first issue of the newspaper, published in December, 1864, promoted the idea of Marx as a founder of the German worker's party, calling itself a successor to the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of 1848-9, as the first newspaper since then to represent the "whole German worker's estate," combining the democratic demand for a unified German *Volksstaat* with a specific defense of worker's interests.[18] The affiliation was essential for Marx because he claimed to represent Germany in the new International Workingmen's Association.

For Marx and Liebknecht, the political event of the day was the American Civil War. The *Northern Star* gave a dramatic account of one meeting of the printer's assistants, where a lecturer, presumably Liebknecht, spoke on the topic. Germans were invested in the American cause, the correspondent claimed, because of mass migration, repulsion by slavery, and the belief that a strong United States was in the interest of the cause of liberty in Europe. Thus "the cause of the North … was the cause of liberty, not simply for the black man, but also for the white … the cause of progress throughout the globe."[19] Here as in other radical arguments of the time, the United States played much of

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[17] Wilhelm Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel mit Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels*, ed. Georg Eckert (The Hague: Mouton, 1963).
[18] The program is printed in the *Probeblatt* of the *Social-Demokrat,* December 15, 1864.
[19] "Germany and America," *Northern Star,* October 25 and 26, 1864.

the role that France had once played in political imagination and reasoning. The various roles of France in Liebknecht's political journalism of the time are much more subdued, without any comparable symbolic significance.[20]

In early December, Liebknecht asked again for copies of the *Brumaire*, now claiming that it could be republished in Switzerland and that Hatzfeldt was very enthusiastic [*sehr begeistert*] about the idea, although she had not read the work itself yet.[21] Clearly the *Brumaire* was now seen as supporting the cause of the ADAV, in some way in keeping with the idea of Marx as a founding figure, but its republication was not urgent. Marx sent the Countess a copy with revisions, but then wrote her a few weeks later sharply to forbid republication after she mishandled a letter that he had sent her. The letter had appeared in a radical newspaper, the *Nordstern* in Hamburg, with some condescending remarks. Marx did not want to be associated with the newspaper and may have been embarrassed to seem dependent on the Countess.

The word "Caesarism" was prominent in German liberal politics at this time. In early January, 1865, as political parties looked forward to the convening of the Prussian parliament, the front page of the liberal *National-Zeitung,* on January 2, 1865, had the headline, "Parliamentarism or Caesarism?" These were the only two forms of modern government, it claimed, and only the first was possible for Germany. Bismarck was

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[20] The topics of Liebknecht's journalism included French support for the Prussian position in Schleswig-Holstein; the September Convention, in which France withdrew its troops from Rome; and even James Fazy in Geneva, the Bonapartist villain in *Herr Vogt*. Wilhelm Liebknecht, *Leitartikel und Beiträge in der Osnabrücker Zeitung: 1864-1866* (Hildesheim: Lax, 1975).

[21] Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel mit Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels*. It is possible that the *Brumaire* was supposed to be relevant in Switzerland in particular, where J.P. Becker in Geneva was promoting both the ADAV and the International. Meyer & Zeller in Zürich had published several pamphlets by Lassalle, but the unnamed Swiss publisher mentioned here may have been Becker himself.

falsely following the French example, trying to mobilize workers against the liberal bourgeoisie. The Coburg *Allgeimeine Deutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung,* an organ of the left wing of the liberal *Fortschrittspartei,* made a similar argument against the *Social-Demokrat* and its ideal of a unitary *Volkstaat*. A democratic Germany could only be a *Bundesstaat* like Switzerland or the United States. Mass suffrage without education makes workers into "draft horses for the state-wagon of neo-Prussian *Cäsarenthum.*" It is an anti-bourgeois, anti-liberal strategy copied from Paris.[22] This was a version of an international liberal argument, condemning "Caesarism" as exploiting and perpetuating popular ignorance.

The debate about "Caesarism" gave rise to a notorious series of articles by the editor of the *Social-Demokrat*, J.G. von Schweitzer, who tried to defend some aspects of so-called Caesarism, such as its capacity for effective social action, and gave the appearance of supporting Bismarck. These "Bismarck articles" led Marx, Engels, and Liebknecht, as well as their Swiss ally J.P. Becker, to resign.[23] Now Liebknecht adopted the word "Caesarism" to distinguish himself from the *Social-Demokrat,* for example, in a speech to the printers' assistants on February 28.[24] The Prussian government was moving

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[22] The article was republished in the *Social-Demokrat* with ironic comments, highlighting a passage that seemed to call for censoring the *Social-Demokrat. Beilage zum "Social-Demokrat,*" January 4, 1865.
[23] These articles immediately established themselves as a defining moment in histories of German socialism and held that position for a long time in later historiography. Eugen Richter, *Die Geschichte der Social-Demokratischen Partei in Deutschland seit dem Tode Ferdinand Lassalle's* (Berlin: T. Lemke, 1865), p. 20ff. Gustav Mayer, "Zum Verständnis der politischen Aktion Lassalles," *International Review for Social History* 3 (January 1938): 89–106; Sinclair W Armstrong, "The Social Democrats and the Unification of Germany, 1863-71," *The Journal of Modern History* 12, no. 4 (1940): 485–509.
[24] In the *Osnabrücker Zeitung* on February 18, he also wrote, "Aus der Erklärungen des Herrn von Bismarck geht hervor, daß der preußische Cäsarismus allen Ernstes die socialistische Karte auszuspielen gedenkt." Liebknecht, *Leitartikel und Beiträge in der Osnabrücker Zeitung*.

toward Caesarism or "already there, only one calls the thing with a German name, *Volkskönigthum.*" Far from a modern form of government, it was "absolutism or Caesarism *pur et simple.*" Liebknecht was particularly concerned with an illiberal rhetoric of class struggle used by the right: "'A parliament,' goes the favorite phrase, 'represents only the interests of a class. The king represents the entire people…'" He observed, "The feudal ruling classes know to talk much about the destitution of urban workers …. They are silent about the destitution of rural wage-workers, which is at least as great…"[25]

The public discussion of Caesarism entered a new phase, however, only in the spring of 1865, when Napoleon III published his own *Histoire de Jules César.*[26] Even before the book appeared, Liebknecht denounced a preface that was published in the *Moniteur* as "the most brazen and clumsiest glorification of despotism that has ever been attempted."[27] It revealed "the intellectual poverty of the Emperor Bonaparte and of Caesarism in general," clearly meaning Bismarck as well.[28] The Emperor's aim was to present a more positive idea of Caesarism as forward-looking leadership, characteristic of the reforming phase of the Second Empire, opposed to the ideas of Caesarism as the "rule of the sword" or as simply exploiting popular ignorance. Caesars were "luminous beacons, dissipating the darkness … throwing light into the future." The true sign of a

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[25] Republished from the *Nordstern* in Eugen Richter, *Die Geschichte der Social-Demokratischen Partei in Deutschland seit dem Tode Ferdinand Lassalle's* (Berlin: T. Lemke, 1865), fn., p. 30-32
[26] Melvin Kranzberg, "An Emperor Writes History: Napoleon III's Histoire de Jules César," in *Teachers of History; Essays in Honor of Laurence Bradford Packard.*, ed. H. Stuart Hughes (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1971); Claude Nicolet, "Caesar and the Two Napoleons," in *A Companion to Julius Caesar*, ed. Miriam Griffin (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 410–17.
[27] March 6, 1865, in Liebknecht, *Leitartikel und Beiträge in der Osnabrücker Zeitung*.
[28] March 13, 1865 in Liebknecht.

man's so-called greatness was even "the empire of his ideas, when his principles and his system triumph in spite of his death or defeat..."[29] This benevolent view of "Caesarism" was also at stake in one important response to *The History of Julius Caesar* that was probably known to Marx, Walter Bagehot's article in the *Economist*. Here "Caesareanism" is a form of government in which a "Benthamite despot" claims to provide the greatest good to the greatest number. France is "the best finished democracy that the world has ever seen," with an efficient and competent bureaucracy to provide popular welfare, also promoting free trade, infrastructure, and industry, even if this comes at the "painful" cost of political repression, corruption, an unstable dependence on the abilities of a single man, and a neglect of other economic needs, such as the availability of credit.[30]

Liebknecht wrote to Marx on April 8 again about republishing the *Brumaire: "La Vie de César* has made the moment convenient."[31] Marx was willing but Liebknecht could not find a publisher, blaming the "cowardice of people here." When this came to nothing, Marx claimed to be relieved, hoping someday to include the work in an essay collection. These weak attempts at publication show that the *Brumaire* was not "timely"

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[29] *History of Julius Caesar,* Vol. 1. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1865), p. xii., xiv.
[30] Walter Bagehot, "Caesarianism as it Now Exists," *The Economist* (London), March 4, 1865. For more on Bagehot, see Georgios Varouxakis, *Victorian Political Thought on France and the French* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave, 2002). Helena Rosenblatt, *The Lost History of Liberalism: From Ancient Rome to the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 164.
[31] The history of the 1869 edition done for the relevant volume of the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe*, published in 1983 and mainly concerned to explain the revisions to the text, begins here, "in 1865, as Wilhelm Liebknecht, after the break with the Lassalleans, began an active struggle for a right tactic of the worker's party." Kudrjaschowa, "Zur Geschichte der Zweiten Deutschen Ausgabe von Karl Marx' Schrift 'Der Achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte' von 1869." It mentions Liebknecht's earlier effort to publish the *Brumaire* in tandem with Hatzfeldt only in a footnote.

yet, even if it influenced Liebknecht himself. Apart from the fact that it concerned only a moment in the past, the role of France in political thinking was again overshadowed by the United States, as after the assassination of Lincoln. In May 1865, the Berlin circle of the ADAV sent their condolences to Andrew Johnson for the assassination of Lincoln, describing again the Civil War as "*a struggle of free labor against slavery*, the *actually* free labor, which is in full possession of political rights … the state of Franklin and Lincoln … has made effective most of the *rights of labor,* and the example that it gives us will not be lost."[32]

After the break with the *Social-Demokrat,* Liebknecht continued to deny attempts by his opponents to distinguish "Marxists" from "Lassalleans."[33] Although the political significance of the *Brumaire* for him at this time is nowhere exactly explicit, the fate of France after 1848 was for him a warning of the dangers of mass suffrage without a strong party organization. As he argued in a debate about mass suffrage on June 19, France in 1848 was supposed already to have had an experienced, organized, "worker's estate in the modern sense." In Germany, with its small and increasingly divided movement, hardly even a worker's party, the outcome of what Bismarck promised for Germany, "general suffrage from above," would be even worse.[34] This one-sided interpretation of the historical example as a warning is not wholly supported by the *Brumaire,* which posits that the peasantry in France was not organized or educated but could develop a

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[32] "Address of the Berlin Branch of the 'Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiter Verein': An den Präsident der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika, Mr. Johnson," Leo Baeck Institute Archives, LBI Manuscript Collection (AR 778).
[33] Richter, *Die Geschichte der Social-Demokratischen Partei in Deutschland*, p. 44.
[34] Richter, p. 46

revolutionary consciousness through struggles for control of police, schools, or churches. Liebknecht was expelled from Berlin shortly afterwards.

Liebknecht's departure from Berlin may have compelled the Berlin circle to study Marx for themselves in a new way. In one letter to Liebknecht from late October 1865, Sigfrid Meyer wrote that he had received "das manifest" from August Vogt, a shoemaker and former member of the original Communist League. Meyer claims that he "had received the *Brumaire* to read," but he still asks for the name of a book dealer that could provide "the 18 Brumaire and the 3 texts about Palmerston."[35] He also longs for the earlier collaboration of Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family.* He does not mention economics here. His attention focuses instead on the pre-revolutionary critique of Bruno Bauer, on the *Manifesto,* and political writings of 1852-1856. The Berlin circle is also said to have propagated *Herr Vogt* and the Inaugural Address of 1863.

Meyer's notebook must date to this time, to late 1865 or early 1866.[36] Labeled "18 brumaire" on the cover, it is mostly a copy of the whole *Brumaire*, including most of Weydemeyer's foreword, with its claim that France "is and remains the land of revolutionary energy." (Meyer did not copy the first paragraph on Weydemeyer's newspaper and his plans for the new series.) Some details of the text are unusual. A note on the first page has, incorrectly, "published February 1852," although the date of

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[35] Sigfrid Meyer to Wilhelm Liebkecht, October 25, 1865, in Wilhelm Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel mit deutschen Sozialdemokraten*, ed. Georg Eckert, vol. 1 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1973), 116–18.
[36] The notebook is in the Friedrich A. Sorge Papers ("Correspondence"), Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

Weydemeyer's foreword, May 1, is copied below. The first pages of the manuscript do not perfectly match the first edition. In the first sentence, it has *das eine Mal als Tragödie, das andere Mal als Farce,* omitting the words *große and lumpige* before *Tragödie* and *Farce*. Two passages have also been carefully crossed out.

The only explanation that I can see for the discrepancy in the first sentence and the deletions is that Meyer was duplicating a copy of the *Brumaire* corrected by Marx*,* presumably the one that he sent to Berlin in late 1864. This would be consistent with the extreme rarity of copies of the *Brumaire,* the role of Liebknecht in the Berlin circle, and the fact that Meyer had access to a copy of the *Brumaire* that he could not purchase for himself. This was not his usual practice, according to Friedrich Sorge, who many years later wrote a brief portrait of Meyer and August Vogt as "pioneers of the First International in the United States." "Wherever he could purchase something written by Marx, he took it, unconcerned about the cost, and studied it with amazing diligence," Sorge writes, covering the margins with notes, "*Herr Vogt* alone with more than one hundred."[37] For Sorge, who came into the possession of the notebook after Meyer's death, Meyer's copying out the *Brumaire* was another example of this dedication.[38]

If the manuscript is a careful copy of the text as revised by Marx in late 1864, it shows that he made much lighter revisions at first than he did later on. It does not include the very significant changes that Marx later made to the last section. Although I have not

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[37]Friedrich Sorge, "Zwei Pioniere der Internationalen Arbeiter-Association in den Vereinigten Staaten," *Pionier: Illustrirter Volks-Kalender für 1899* (New York: New Yorker Volks-Zeitung, 1899), p. 61-2

[38] This remark leaves no doubt about the provenance of the notebook. Meyer's handwriting is also distinctive, a neat cursive easily legible for a modern reader, unlike the "old German script" common at the time.

compared the whole notebook, line by line, to the first and second editions, the only changes that I see are to the second sentence, removing the words "great" before tragedy and "lowly" before farce, a deleted passage in the paragraph that follows, and a deleted paragraph shortly after. The changes are similar but not identical to those that Marx made when he revised the text for publication several years later.

The first edition of the *Brumaire* begins with a much longer paragraph than the revised version that most readers may know from later editions and their translations. Following the original letter from Engels, it belabors the contrast of "tragedy" and the "farce" at a length, in sentence fragments that end with exclamation points. In the revised version, after the sentence on tragedy and farce, there is a sentence fragment that begins, "Caussidière for Danton, Louis Blanc for Robespierre," etc., and ends simply, "the nephew for the uncle." In the first edition, it is a long exclamation, "the London constable with the first best dozen debt-laden lieutenants for the little corporal with his round table of marshals!" This is followed by another drastic exclamation: "The eighteenth *Brumaire* of idiots for the eighteenth *Brumaire* of genius!" These passages are not yet removed in the Meyer manuscript.

In the revised edition, the paragraph ends with a sentence, "And the same caricature in the circumstances, under which the second edition of the eighteenth Brumaire is issued!" In the first edition, this sentence ends with a period and is followed by a long illustration of the strange idea of a "caricature in the circumstances," comparing certain circumstances at the time that Marx was writing to those of 1799. The

interpolations in Terrell Carver's translation helpfully clarify some allusions that have become somewhat obscure today:

> The first time France was on the verge of bankruptcy, this time Bonaparte is on the brink of debtor's prison; then the coalition of the great powers was on the borders—now there is the coalition of Ruge-Darasz in England, of Kinkel-Brentano in America; then there was a St Bernard [Pass] to be surmounted [when Napoleon defeated the Austrians in 1800], now a company of policemen to be dispatched across the Jura [Mountains to demand republican refugees from the Swiss]; then there was a [battle of] Marengo to be won and a lot more, now there is a Grand Cross of the Order of St. Andrew [from the Tsar] to be gained and the esteem of the Berlin [newspaper] *National-Zeitung* to be lost.

"Ruge-Darasz" and "Kinkel-Brentano" allude to the attempts at transatlantic mobilization discussed in the previous chapter. The next sentence alludes, as Carver notes, to the precarious position of refugees in Switzerland and the threat of police action against them. This whole passage is crossed out in the Meyer manuscript, and Marx would remove it also when he revised the text in 1868.

How should this change be understood? I reason from the simple decision to remove "great" and "lowly" from the sentence on tragedy and farce. What is wrong with these adjectives? In my reading, the problem is not with the traditional aesthetic judgment that tragedy is "great" and farce is "low," but with the implication of this judgment in the context of a metaphor about history. It would imply that a tragic revolution was somehow "great," the extreme violence and ultimate defeat of the French revolution somehow preferable to the more benign and even educational "farce" of 1848.

Removing "great" and "lowly" before "tragedy" and "farce," I propose, helps to prevent this confusion of aesthetic and historical-political judgment. Following this reading, Marx removed the passage on "caricature in the circumstances" because it seemed to venerate Napoleon Bonaparte while mocking the dire situation of revolutionaries in his own time.

The same logic may help to explain the second crossed-out passage in the Meyer manuscript, although it is *not* removed in the edition of 1869, the beautiful but also potentially pejorative passage comparing the revolutionary imitation of the past to the beginner in a language, who always translates it back into a mother-tongue.

Meyer's notebook also includes copies and excepts of several minor texts by Marx and Engels. "The Festival of Nations in London" is a report by Engels on a celebration of an anniversary of the First French Republic, first published in 1846 in the *Rheinische Jahrbücher zur Gesellschaftlichen Reform.* Here the young Engels elaborates on the positive meaning of the French revolution for communists, not as a "bourgeois" revolution, but as a Jacobin revolution, as a social and democratic attempt to destroy inequality, and as an enduring symbol (as of 1845) for democrats and communists of all nations. The part copied out by Meyer concludes, "we repudiate the word 'foreigner' — it shall exist not in our democratic vocabulary." Meyer also copied *Two Speeches on Free Trade and Protective Tariffs*, a pamphlet of speeches by Marx from 1848 that had a preface by Weydemeyer, also copied here. Finally, he excerpts an 1853 pamphlet against Heinzen, *Der Ritter vom Edelmütigen Bewusstsein.* The student's interest in arguments from the revolutionary period already seems to have an archival character, like that of *Herr Vogt* itself.

In 1866, August Vogt and Meyer republished the *Communist Manifesto* for the first time. The same year, Meyer emigrated to New York City, and Vogt came shortly after. By that fall, Meyer had joined a Lassallean circle on Spring Street and the Communist Club, an educational society founded in 1857. According to the later account

by Friedrich Sorge, then the president of the Communist Club, its members contributed funds to help Meyer's friend Vogt come to the United States.[39] Sorge's account, written thirty years later and for a distinctly "commemorative" purpose, may not be reliable in every detail, and it is certainly idealized, perhaps even a fantasy of intellectual community. Still, it is based on a somewhat plausible distinction of intellectual abilities. I have already noted its description of the student Meyer as having a voraciously bookish character, acquiring texts and studying them closely. He describes August Vogt in noticeably different and more philosophical terms.

Vogt was supposed to have internalized the principles of the *Communist Manifesto* and "assimilated them in highly intelligent ways, so that he was equal to any opponent in the bourgeois camp, and what he lacked in talent as a speaker, he richly replaced through the depth of his conception and sharpness of argumentation." Vogt was clearly also a reader, especially of philosophy. Sorge recalls a "historical confrontation" with the work of Joseph Dietzgen and the mode of thinking based in sense-impressions, in which Vogt referred to the work of Giordano Bruno. Some years later, when an author from *Vorwärts* quoted Sorge's characterization and suggested that he might have exaggerated Vogt's abilities, another man who had been close friends with Vogt in New York between 1871 and 1873, Louis Cohn, vouched for Vogt's "excellent talent for logic and dialectic," with which he "threw every opponent into the sand," including "bourgeois democrats" and other socialists and communists.[40] Cohn describes Vogt as "a *thoroughly*

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[39] Friedrich Sorge, "Zwei Pioniere der Internationalen Arbeiter-Association in den Vereinigten Staaten," *Pionier: Illustrirter Volks-Kalender für 1899* (New York: New Yorker Volks-Zeitung, 1899), p. 61-2
[40] "Karl Marx und August Vogt," *Vorwärts*, December 12, 1913.

formed philosophical mind from the Hegelian school," again recalling his skillful exegesis of Dietzgen. Marx himself, Cohn adds, had praised Vogt's economic knowledge, even calling him the only man in America at that time who understood him. In these memories of Meyer and Vogt, each in his own way is *supposed* to maintain connections to history (on the one hand) and philosophy, here perhaps including economic theory (on the other). The two men may even have served in retrospect as symbols of a desired interaction between philosophical argument and historical interpretation as such.

The Prussian victory over Austria in the summer of 1866 was the occasion for the founding of the *Deutsche Volkspartei* and the allied Saxon *Volkspartei*, which Liebknecht and August Bebel would represent in the new parliament of the North German Federation. While German liberals now rallied behind Bismarck, the word "Caesarism" was now used emphatically by the democratic parties of southwestern Germany and Saxony. "Everyone is talking about Caesarism now," wrote the national liberal Ludwig Bamberger, "and God knows, for many thousands, the term can apply to everything."[41] For Bamberger, the term meant popular rule through a genius, the fulfillment of revolution in a bond between democratic military leaders and the proletariat against the liberal middle class.[42] The anti-Prussian use of "Caesarism" by the south-German parties,

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[41] Ludwig Bamberger, "Alte Parteien und neue Zustände," in *Gesammelte Schriften,* Bd. III (Berlin: Rosenbaum & Hart, 1895), p. 328. The articles were first published in the *Rheinische Zeitung* in the fall of 1866, then edited by a former member of the Communist League, "Red" Becker. It seems likely that Marx read them.

[42] Bamberger, "Alte Parteien," p. 334. Bamberger traces the contemporary currency of the term to Auguste Romieu but adds that other supporters of Bonaparte "worked out the thing at length." He mentions the Bonapartist lawyer Raymond-Théodore Troplong, "one of the prominent jurists who rallied to Louis Napoleon," according to Melvin Richter, "Tocqueville and the Two Bonapartes," in *Dictatorship in History*

however, was just a form of outdated *Kleinstaaterei*, stuck in a conflict with a form of Prussian conservatism that no longer existed.[43]

On August 8, 1867, Liebknecht wrote to J.P. Becker in Geneva, "With propaganda on purely social lines, like that desired by the official Social Democrats in Berlin, we would play into the hands of the common enemy of all honest German democrats, socialists, and patriots, namely Prussian Caesarism. That must not happen at any price."[44] In November, Louis Kugelman worried that Liebknecht's use of the term in the *Reichstag,* "if not from the standpoint of social development, must degenerate into petty anti-Prussian teasing." Marx saw "some grounds for Kugelmann's censure."[45] He suggested that Engels advise Liebknecht on how to combine social and political agitation, calling this a failure of dialectic. Still there is little to suggest that word "Caesarism" as such caught Marx's attention.

In the course of 1868, especially late in the year, as a Franco-Prussian war became a realistic possibility, the word took on a more definite and divisive meaning. On January 4, 1868, the first issue of the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt*, an organ of the *Deutsche Volkspartei,* declared a "life-and-death war against that rotten politics, the end goal of which is to enlarge Prussia and shrink Germany." It prophesied a "decisive battle with

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and Theory: Bonapartism, Caesarism, and Totalitarianism, ed. Peter Baehr and Melvin Richter, Publications of the German Historical Institute (Washington, D.C. : Cambridge, UK ; New York: German Historical Institute; Cambridge University Press, 2004), 98.

[43] Bamberger, "Alte Parteien," pp. 331, 335

[44] As quoted in Roger Morgan, *The German Social Democrats and the First International, 1864-1872* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), 125. The epithet was also used in Becker's newspaper, *Der Vorbote*, the German-language organ of the International. For example, *Der Vorbote,* Jg. 2, No. 4 (April 1867), pp. 52-7; No. 6 (June 1867), pp. 85, 90.

[45] MECW 42, p. 477 (KM to FE, Nov 27, 1867, reading Liebknecht, *Was ich im Berliner 'Reichstag' sagte*)

Caesarism" in France and Germany, against "'state-building' annexation politics."[46] This idea of a united struggle against Caesarism gradually fed into the idea of internationalist resistance to the coming "war of Caesars." Liebknecht made this connection at the VDAV's Nuremberg Congress of 5-7 September 1868, when he invoked the sequence 1848-1851 to show the inseparability of political and social struggle and called for an uprising in the case of a "war of the Caesars."[47] This escalation in the use of the word, with prognostic implications, is essential context for the 1869 preface and, I propose, also the revisions that Marx made at this time.

Liebknecht's position was a cause of tension within his own party and with other parliamentary representatives, as well as with Schweitzer's ADAV. Marx tried to maintain a public neutrality in the German question and between the two parties, avoiding impressions of an anti-Prussian bias. Liebknecht wrote to Marx on September 20 about publishing the *Brumaire* in the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt.* On September 21, Engels wrote to Marx independently asking him also to send copies to Liebknecht, claiming that Schweitzer also intends "to push out Wilhelmchen, Bebel, and consorts [from the International], and be able to appeal to something in writing from you for this purpose." Liebknecht also invoked Marx while denouncing Schweitzer and Caesarism in the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt* on September 26. Marx sought to repair his relationship with Schweitzer in a long letter on October 13.

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[46]*Demokratisches Wochenblatt* (Leipzig) January 25, February 1, and February 29.
[47] Dieter Groh and Peter Brandt, *"Vaterlandslose Gesellen": Sozialdemokratie und Nation, 1860-1990*, 1. Auflage, (München: C.H. Beck Verlag, 1992), 13.

Insofar as it is related to this rivalry, Marx's later wish to destroy the word "Caesarism" takes some distance from Liebknecht's rhetoric toward Schweitzer. The word was certainly also taken up from other anti-Prussian points of view. By the end of 1868, the pro-Austrian *Allgemeine Zeitung,* which had given the word its first real currency at the time of the war in northern Italy, counted "Caesarism" as one of many terms from Roman antiquity that had become "familiar to everyone now," like "patrician," "senate," "tribune," and "proletariat."[48] In the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt,* however, the word increasingly implied a distinct prognosis. Its first article for 1869 claims that a truly national war between France and Germany was not possible, only a war between two enemies of the people, "Napoleonic Caesarism" and "Bismarckian Caesarism."[49]

There were traces of other interest in the *Brumaire* at this time. The January 12 *Börsenblatt für den deutschen Buchhandel* includes an advertisement from Puttkammer & Mühlbrecht, a book dealer specializing in "Staats- und Rechtswissenschaft," seeking a number of publications by Marx, from the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of 1848-9 to *Herr Vogt,* including the *Brumaire.* Albert Eichhoff in Berlin offered to pay for the right to republish the *Brumaire,* but Marx first gave Meissner the option to publish the work instead.[50] Meissner was reluctant but agreed, he specified, out of loyalty to Marx, not out of special interest in the *Brumaire* or belief in its commercial value. Marx sent him a

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[48] *Allgemeine Zeitung* Beilage, December 13, 1868
[49] *Demokratisches Wochenblatt,* January 2, 1869
[50] MECW p. 211. (KM to FE, January 29, 1869.)

printed copy with his corrections at the end of January.[51] After this decision to republish the *Brumaire* in German, there were some further discussions of the prospects of a French translation, perhaps to be published in Belgium.[52] On May 11, Marx complained to Ludwig Kugelmann that Meissner was delaying publication, "until the time for a possible effect has passed."[53] It is unclear from this letter what "possible effect" he means.

Liebknecht's views about "Caesarism" at this time were expressed in a May 1 speech to the *Berliner Demokratische Arbeiterverein* that would be published as a programmatic pamphlet, *On the Political Position of Social Democracy*. Liebknecht repeatedly compares France to Prussia, to prove the inseparability of socialism and democracy while opposing the form of suffrage in the North German Reichstag. The war of 1866 was for Germany what December 2 was for France. The Reichstag proves the "ignorant overestimation of the universal right to vote, which, mainly relying on Lassalle's authority, has become a formal idolatry." The right can exploit mass suffrage because the people, especially the peasants, are wholly *willenlos*: "How few, in the present police state, in the state of intellectual and military conditioning [*Dressur*], are intellectually and materially independent?"[54]

This kind of warning against mass suffrage, as exploiting popular and especially rural ignorance and passivity, does not find legitimate support in the *Brumaire*. It is above

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[51] MECW p. 279 (KM to Ludwig Kugelmann, May 11, 1869)
[52] MECW pp. 231-233 (KM to Ludwig Kugelmann, March 3, 1869), on the opposition in Paris and a resurgence of historical interest in the revolution of 1848 and the coup d'état; MECW, pp. 238 (FE to KM, March 7, 1869) and pp. 243-4 (KM to FE, March 20) on the prospects of a French translation.
[53] MECW, p. 279 (KM to Ludwig Kugelmann, May 11, 1869)
[54] Liebknecht's speech was first published in the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt* in July and August, 1869 and was republished as a pamphlet that went through many later printings.

all this liberal view of the people that I take Marx to be opposing when he emphasizes the role of class struggle in his work and with his remark about "Caesarism." Liebknecht also saw Bismarck as playing a simple "double game," as sometimes appealing to the bourgeoisie, sometimes to workers. He understood "modern Caesarism" as "essentially resting on the exploitation of class contradictions." When his speech was published a few months later, Marx privately criticized it on this point, distinguishing a more real collaboration with the bourgeoisie and a false appeal to workers.[55] That is, he believed that conservatives would not actually support certain measures, like the Factory Acts. He also complained that Liebknecht's political ideal was vague, variously represented by Great Britain, Switzerland, or the United States. The preface to the *Brumaire* is dated June 23. By this point, Liebknecht and an opposition within the ADAV were already taking steps to form a new socialist party.

[55] MECW, p. 343 (KM to FE, August 10, 1869)

The 1869 preface begins by dating the composition of the *Brumaire* precisely, recalling its origins in Weydemeyer's plan to start a "political weekly," and the decision to change the format.[56] The fact that Marx did not have a copy of the *Brumaire* when he wrote the preface, having sent his only copy, with his corrections, to Meissner, may explain some small errors. Marx calls it the "second" issue of a "monthly," although it was the first issue of an irregularly published serial. For the more accurate dating of the rest, he probably relied on his correspondence. He does not mention his own attempt to publish the *Brumaire* in Germany. He refers instead to an "extremely radical" book dealer who responded to his offer to sell Weydemeyer's edition with "truly moral dismay at such 'untimely impertinence.'"[57] Marx does not mention the competing views of the situation in France among democrats that Weydemeyer had used to explain the meaning of the text as a picture of the land of revolution, or any other original discursive context or political aim.

Marx takes the paragraph as a whole to prove that the text arose "under the immediate pressure of events," emphasizing that the situation was still not stable and clear as he was writing. He adds that its republication is due "partly to demand from the

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[56] The claim that Weydemeyer "invited me [*fordete mich auf*] to write a history of the coup d'état" is not strictly true. Again, on December 1, Weydemeyer wrote to Engels about his plan for a newspaper, and Engels, two weeks later, suggested that Marx write about the coup d'état. But the verb is accurate if it is taken to mean "prompted," not "invited" in a direct sense.

[57] I interpret the phrase *äußerst radikal thuender* here to mean that the bookseller actually did very radical things, not (as one translation has it) "affected extremely radical airs." This exchange is not in his correspondence.

book trade, partly to the urging of my friends in Germany." This is confirmed by correspondence. Marx took no initiative here, other than revising the text and adding the preface. His own positive judgment of the work is only relative to two works on the same subject "at about the *same time,*" his emphasis, by Victor Hugo and Proudhon. Here Marx carefully reformulates certain ideas about the work as history from Georg Eccarius's 1852 *People's Paper* review. Eccarius had compared the *Brumaire* to three other pamphlets on the coup d'état, identifying each one with a distinct political standpoint and arranging them in a critical series.

The first was by a democratic writer, an ally of Ledru-Rollin, Xavier Durrieu.[58] Eccarius had praised Durrieu's account for its "great probability," "simple truth," especially in its sketches of Bonaparte's accomplices.[59] What it lacks is any grasp of the reasons for the democrats' own lack of popularity. "No, if the people had the choice ... they would have been right to prefer Bonaparte," Eccarius even writes, "to that band of officious mourners, who have buried Revolution to get the right of lamenting over it."

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[58] Xavier Durrieu, *Le Coup d'État de Louis Bonaparte, Histoire de la persécution de décembre* (Brussels: J.H. Briard, 1852). On Durrieu and his work, see Adrian Jenny, *Jean-Baptiste Adolphe Charras und die politische Emigration nach dem Staatsstreich Louis-Napoleon Bonapartes, Gestalten, Ideen und Werke französischer Flüchtlinge* (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhanh, 1969), p. 214

[59] Eccarius mentions four such accomplices: General Magnan, "the commander of the Boulevard-butchery"; General St. Arnaud, the Minister of War; "Persigny, the Minister of the Interior of to-day, but who lacked the courage to become it on the 2nd December"; and Charles de Morny. Is it possible that Magnan, Arnaud, and Morny are the "three vulgar knights of industry" [*Industrieritter*] by whom, according to Marx, the French were "taken by surprise"? As Hauke Brunkhorst notes in his *Kommentar,* this reference at a key point in Marx's text has long been seen as obscure. He infers from the word *Industrieritter* as *chavalier d'industrie*, "knights of industry," that Marx probably alludes here to some otherwise unmentioned "industrial mentors" of Bonaparte. Brunkhorst, p. 298. Contrast the note in the classic Fernbach edition, "The three swindlers were no doubt Bonaparte, his half-brother Morny, and Eugène Rouher, Minister of Justice from 1849 to 1852." Karl Marx, *The Political Writings*, ed. Tariq Ali and David Fernbach (London ; New York: Verso: Published in association with New Left Review, 2019), 486, fn. 25. The translation of *Industrieritter* as "swindlers" goes back to Daniel De Leon.

This distinctly recalls the language of Weydemeyer ("jeremiads") and some of the *Brumaire* itself. The democratic point of view is in fact the only one to which the *Brumaire* itself responds directly, for example when Marx opposes his own periodization to the democratic concept of a monolithic "reaction." But Marx, in his 1869 preface, omits Durrieu, only noting the two accounts of events that are, in 1869, still "worthy of notice." It seems likely that Durrieu's work was indeed just forgotten, but the fact that Marx does not recall it here may also be seen as another example of the way that the original political context, especially the pessimistic democratic responses to the same events, was lost over time.

Eccarius had presented the other accounts in a series. The supposedly naive democratic perspective is followed by a morally reflective standpoint (Victor Hugo), a critical one (Proudhon), and the "only competent" history, by Marx himself. What Marx says about Hugo in his preface, that he "ascribes to [Bonaparte] a force of initiative that would stand unprecedented in world history," is a close paraphrase of what Eccarius had said about him at great length, that his invective elevated "Napoleon the Little" to the status of "Nero, Attilla, Jeghis Khan, or King Bomba." The point for Eccarius was that, as Marx also suggests in the *Brumaire*, "the Assembly was already dead and decayed ... the laws had ever been suspended ... the systematic suppression of the public liberties had actually left little for the dictator to add." Marx omits this political-historical clarification, which verges again on apology. Eccarius had also gone on to explain Hugo's error in philosophical terms, as a typical example of an ideology of personal agency "laid down by the ruling classes and embodied in their very creeds," obscuring class interests and

struggles in which "the man is the mere temporary exponent of the change." Marx also omits this dogmatic formulation of a theory of history. More subtly, he uses an unusual phrase that Eccarius had not, to describe what Hugo exaggerates, Bonaparte's "power of initiative." This alludes to a debate among socialists. Louis Blanc used *force d'initiative* to describe the political power needed to effect social reforms and was criticized on this point by Proudhon.[60]

Comparing the discussion of Hugo in the 1852 review to the 1869 preface reveals a subtle process of correction and discursive recontextualization, so that the argument serves the critique of the concept of "Caesarism." The same process is evident in the way that Marx reworks the original criticism of Proudhon, and here it is perhaps even more interesting. Eccarius had highlighted and approved Proudhon's "severe, but true judgment" that he had passed on French republicans and democrats, and the "dogma of Mass Suffrage." Marx only comments that Proudhon depicts the coup d'état as the result of an earlier historical development, in a construction that unwittingly becomes apology, an error that Proudhon shares with "so-called objective historians."[61] Here Marx particularly differs from Eccarius, and in ways that appear highly consequential in hindsight.

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[60] See Proudhon, *Système des contradictions économiques*, *ou philosophie de la misère* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1850), pp. 227-229, 231. Proudhon treats the French phrase as arcane. For the German translation, *Die Widersprüche der National-oekonomie,* Bd. 1, trans. Wilhelm Jordan, p. 319.

[61] For a summary of the work by Proudhon that Marx means here, *La Révolution sociale demontrée par le coup d'état du 2 décembre,* see K. Steven Vincent, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the Rise of French Republican Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 200–208. Immediately after the coup, Vincent writes, Proudhon's "distaste for universal suffrage became more pronounced than ever."

As noted in the prior chapter, Eccarius had mocked "that objective impartiality… wrongly supposed by many people to be the most important requisite in a historian." He tried to explain the achievement of the *Brumaire* precisely in terms of its author's "adhesion to a party," the "revolutionary party of the working class," appealing to the openly teleological notion of this party as the future *Weltgericht,* holding court at the end of history. Now the phrase used by Marx, "so-called objective historians," emphasizes that those called "objective" were not, but it avoids any devaluation of objectivity as such. This argument goes back at least to the *German Ideology* manuscripts, where the "so-called objective historians" include Ranke as well as Hegel and are treated in the past tense, as having made the error of "conceiving of historical relationships [*Verhältnisse*] separated from activity," ignoring that historical circumstances and social relations are also created by human activity.[62]

Eccarius had taken Marx to represent the party of the revolutionary proletariat, a party supposed to play no role in the events that are depicted but to judge them as if in the future. In contrast, Marx emphasizes the role of class struggle *in* the work: "I show how

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[62] "Die sogenannte *objektive* Geschichtsschreibung bestand eben darin, die geschichtlichen Verhältnisse getrennt von der Tätigkeit aufzufassen." This is a marginal note to remarks about Max Stirner in a passage that describes the Hegelian philosophy of history as the "purest expression" of a distinctly German historiography. Inge Taubert und Hans Pelger, eds., *Die Deutsche Ideologie, Marx-Engels Jahrbuch 2003* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004), p. 33. I notice that Heinrich Heine also uses the uncommon phrase "so-called objectivity" in a 1838 text about women in Shakespeare. "So-called objectivity," he writes, "is nothing but a dry lie; it is not possible to depict the past without lending it the color of our own feelings," and "because the so-called objective historian indeed always directs his words to the present, so he writes unwittingly in the spirit of his own time." For Heine, historical truth requires, beyond exact knowledge of facts, also knowledge of the impression that each fact made on its contemporaries. Communicating that impression is poetic work.

the *class struggle* in France created circumstances and relationships that made it possible for a mediocre and grotesque personage to play the hero's role."

The novelty of this description should be emphasized. Weydemeyer had not mentioned class struggle. Eccarius did but in a different way. The use of the text in *Herr Vogt* did not involve class struggle. Hess was concerned with class struggle but not with its role in the *Brumaire.* In hindsight, if this is a valid description of what Marx shows in the *Brumaire,* it is only one possible description, not one that has any particularly strong claim over any one of a number of others. Many scholars today may be happy to throw it overboard. An interpretation of its original role in the context of the preface as a whole may also clarify what is at stake in such a choice for our own understanding of the *Brumaire* and its author. I take the description of the work in terms of class struggle to anticipate a likely misunderstanding. Liebknecht and many others had interpreted the lessons of France in 1848-1851 as warning against the dangers of mass suffrage without a strong party organization, especially given the supposedly passive and easily manipulated nature of the rural population.

By emphasizing the explanatory role of class struggle, Marx effectively precludes this anti-peasant and thus also anti-democratic interpretation of his work, an interpretation that implies a kind of tension between democracy and reason that is supposed to be overcome by party organization. Although hardly similar to Ruge's humanistic interpretation in 1852, that the French are "in the fetters of the priests and their own military vanity," Liebknecht's idea of peasants as *willenlos* is challenged by the *Brumaire* in the same way. No single class explains the *possibility* of Bonaparte, in

Marx's argument; only the form and contingent course of their struggles does. There is a further implication that is potentially troubling for uncritical advocates of class struggle: like any truly historical factor, Marx suggests here, it is an unpredictable phenomenon that may enable unintended and undesirable phenomena.

At this point in his preface, Marx makes a comment about revisions, to which I will return. More important is his claim that his final sentence has been realized: "But when the imperial mantle finally falls on the shoulders of Louis Bonaparte," he wrote, "the bronze statue of Napoleon will come crashing down from the top of the Vendome Column." The decline of the Napoleon cult, Marx claims, began with an 1857 history of Waterloo, by a French exile in Brussels, Lieutenant-Colonel Jean-Baptise-Adolphe Charras, translated into German in 1858.[63] There is supposed to have been since then a total break with French popular superstition that Germans have still failed to appreciate.[64] This should not be interpreted in a prophetic sense, as if Marx predicted the decline and ultimate fall of Bonaparte, but it can be misunderstood in another way as well, as predicting a decline of popular Bonapartism. I take him to be referring here only to a rupture with traditional popular belief [*Volksglauben*], in "French literature ... historical research, criticism, satire, and wit," not yet to the disillusionment of popular superstition itself, by the very different mechanisms that he describes at the end of the text.

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[63] Colonel Charras is mentioned in passing in the Brumaire itself, in a list of parliamentarians rounded up during/after the coup). For a brief biography, see Marc Vuilleumier, "Charras, Jean-Baptiste," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* (HLS), https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/009935/2003-11-12/

[64] My aim here is only to interpret the passage, not to assess its truth. I do not consider here the vast scholarship on the legend or myth of Napoleon and his historical representation in the early nineteenth century. I take Marx to be mainly concerned here with a change at the level of "literature," including historical scholarship, that amounts to a rupture with popular belief.

The concluding passage is the one that has concerned me most, with its wish to destroy the word "Caesarism." The surface reading of this passage is that Marx only protests here against a "superficial historical analogy," one that does not take into account the difference between ancient and modern class struggle, that the former involved only "the free rich and the free poor," while a modern class struggle involves "the great productive mass of the population." This is not wrong, but again, why is this objection not just pedantic? Those who used the word "Caesarism" could easily qualify their use of the word, as Bagehot does, for example, making it clear that they are describing a modern phenomenon. But in these formulations, for Bagehot as for Liebknecht, the population is still conceived in the *way* that the Roman slaves are imagined in history, as "a purely passive pedestal for the combatants." The thematization of class struggle finally serves the intention of destroying a word in political use.

Marx claims that his revisions preserve the meaning of his work, in fact preserve what he calls its "particular coloring." I interpret this to mean that it would diminish its value as evidence of his own impressions and political position at the time. The claim that his revisions are limited only to correcting "printer's errors" and removing "allusions that are now no longer intelligible," however, is not often regarded as credible. While most of the changes are deletions, some also involve replacing words or revising whole passages. Moreover, only a few involve "allusions" in a simple sense, although *Anspielungen* can be taken more broadly, as hints, clues, suggestions. These changes are not at all distributed evenly throughout the text, as if Marx had just meant to correct these

obscurities throughout. There are important changes also to the first section, some of which have been discussed already, but the changes focus most heavily on the end.

Many of these changes are complex and hard to know how to interpret. How we explain what Marx is doing will depend in part on our understanding of his original meaning. The best approach, I think, is to start with those changes that seem the most simple, like removing the word "great" before tragedy and "lowly" before farce, then to use these to explain those that are more obscure. Of course, this is a speculative method. It is always possible to interpret even simple changes incorrectly, and on that basis, to misinterpret all the rest. Or there may just not be any such logic to the corrections overall. All I claim is that my approach is better than those that others have actually taken, which are not really very sophisticated. They generally involve the idea that Marx retrospectively moderated certain "revolutionary" passages in his text to conceal his own errors of judgment at the time and give them a more "developmental" sense.

Opposing any such views of Marx as "correcting" himself, I take the contrary position that he was concerned to defend the original political meaning of his work as a picture of the land of revolution. In support of this hypothesis, one pattern in the revision is particularly striking. In multiple places, Marx alters his description of the Bonapartist regime in the same way, downplaying its power over French society. A first example is a sentence in part I that seems to pose the main question of the whole text, the passage beginning, "It is not enough to say, as the French do, that their nation was surprised." In the first edition, this is followed by a sentence alluding to rape: "A nation and a woman are not forgiven the unguarded hour, in which the first best adventurer can do violence to

them and appropriate them to himself." Marx removed the last part of this phrase, *und sie sich aneignen konnte*, so that the violence or rape is no longer equated with possession.

This change corresponds to several in chapter VII. Near the beginning of this chapter, after a brief review of the narrative of successive defeats, Marx removed this passage (175.3-6): "The social and democratic republics experienced defeats, but the parliamentary republic, the republic of the royalist bourgeoisie was destroyed [*ist untergegangen*], like the pure republic, the republic of the bourgeois-republicans." As in the first case, the triumph is made less decisive. The longest deletion in the text (176.1-177.2) elaborates on this remark about the destruction of the "royalist bourgeoisie," again describing the fall of the Second Republic as "the definitive and complete collapse of bourgeois rule." Considered in isolation, this may appear to be just a drastic overstatement, which Marx now wanted to conceal, but it is a part of a larger pattern of qualifying Bonaparte's power over society, even in his victory, making it appear less absolute, less decisive. This is just the opposite of what he should be expected to do, according to the theory that his aim was to "correct" an overly optimistic assessment of the prospects of revolution.

Marx removes a sentence about the executive, "The one power of the old state was thus only freed from its limitations, becoming an unlimited absolute power."[65] In another sentence claiming that the state seemed to have won "independence with respect to society," Marx removes a final clause, "and to have brought it into submission." This

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[65] MEGA I:11, 177.37-9. Other examples of deleted passages include the following. "Just as under Napoleon there was scarcely any excuse for freedom, so under the second Bonaparte there was no longer any excuse for servitude." (179.27-9)

change closely parallels the change to the earlier sentence about rape. He also removed this sentence that follows: "The independence of the executive comes through clearly when its head no longer needs ingenuity, its army no longer needs glory, and its bureaucracy no longer needs moral authority in order to justify itself."[66]

All these recall the criticism of Victor Hugo for exaggerating Bonaparte's "force of initiative." This relatively clear intention may help us to interpret other changes that are more subtle, like the change in tense in one important sentence. "Society now seems to have fallen back behind its starting point," the first version reads; "in fact it had first to create for itself the revolutionary starting point, the situation, the relationships, the exclusive conditions for the development of a real modern revolution."[67] The verb "had to create," *hatte zu schaffen,* allows for the possibility that the "starting-point" was in fact created in the course of events. Marx changed this to the present tense *hat zu schaffen*, "has to create." This leaves no room for doubt. The "starting-point" still had to be created at the time that Marx was writing the *Brumaire*.[68]

A more complex change that may be illuminated in this way is in the passage about the meaning of republic in Europe and the United States. In the first edition, the defeat of the June insurgents is supposed to have revealed that in Europe "the republic in

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[66] That is, he removes the phrase "and subordinated it to itself," *und sie unterjocht zu haben*, from the first sentence, and the following sentence in its entirety: "Die Selbstständigkeit der Exekutivgewalt tritt offen hervor, wo ihr Chef nicht mehr des Genie's, ihre Armee nicht mehr des Ruhms und ihre Bureaukratie nicht mehr der moralischen Autorität bedarf, um sich zu rechtfertigen." (179.16-19)

[67] The translation here follows Terrell Carver, in *Later Political Writings,* p. 35. "Die Gesellschaft scheint jetzt hinter ihren Ausgangspunkt zurückgetreten; in Wahrheit hatte sie sich erst den revolutionären Ausgagspunkt zu schaffen, die Situation, die Verhältnisse, die Bedingungen, unter denen allein die moderne Revolution ernsthaft wird."

[68] Cf. Gerhard Kluchert, *Geschichtsschreibung und Revolution :Die historischen Schriften von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels 1846 bis 1852* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: problemata, 1985), 346, fn 16.

general only means the revolutionary destruction-form [*Zerstörungsform*] of civil society and not its conservative development-form [*Entwicklungsform*], as, for example, in the United States …" In the second edition, "revolutionary destruction-form" became "political revolution-form" [*politische Umwälzungsform*] and "development-form" became "life-form," *Lebensform*. The sentence is fairly hard to parse in either form.[69]

As I understand it, what is supposed to have been revealed by the June Days is that the political meaning of "republic" in Europe is a class dictatorship, the "unlimited despotism of one class over another." This is supposedly a phenomenon peculiar to "old-civilized lands with developed class education [*Klassenbildung*], with modern conditions of production, and with an intellectual consciousness in which all traditional ideas were dissolved through centuries of work." To call the republic in Europe a revolutionary *Zerstörungsform* of civil society, on this interpretation, would be to say that it breaks up old social and moral ties. The change to "political *Umwälzungsform*" suggests to me that the republic may not be *politically* revolutionary, on the contrary, and that bourgeois or civil society is not just broken apart but rather transformed or overturned.

Again, in the new version, bourgeois society is not so completely destroyed as it was in the first edition. This European republic as class dictatorship and "destruction-form" is meant to contrast with the American republic as *Entwicklungsform* of bourgeois society. Unlike *Zerstörungsform, Entwicklungsform* was a common word in Marx and

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[69] Terrell Carver, in translating the first edition, takes "the revolutionary destruction-form of bourgeois society" to mean "the revolutionary way to destroy bourgeois society." This suggests that the republic in Europe is a kind of means of destroying bourgeois society. I take Marx to mean that civil society is already destroyed with the class dictatorship of the "bourgeois republic," and that in Europe the republic necessarily has this socially-destructive form.

earlier, for example in theology. It implies a form in which society can develop rather than being torn apart, conditions under which the republic fosters bourgeois society rather than leading to its destruction.[70] I notice also that the teleological aspect of the first opposition, destruction versus development, is absent from the second opposition of "transformation" and "life form." This may reflect the intervening influence of Marx's non-teleological interpretation of Darwin.[71] While the passage is undoubtedly hard to parse, again, I contrast my reading with the old socialist one, that the change from *Zerstörungsform* to *Umwälzungsform* was evidence of a moderation of Marx's views, from a more "revolutionary" to a more "reformist" and indeed "evolutionary" standpoint.[72]

Was Marx, as it were, correcting an earlier error in judgement, adapting his earlier work to some later standpoint, to make himself appear more prescient than he was? The line between clarification of an earlier viewpoint and concealing errors is not sharp. Still, I contend, it is both more charitable and more consistent with the evidence to conclude that Marx sought to make his original meaning more clear, to preserve the sense of his overall argument against anticipated misunderstandings, finally placing a new emphasis

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[70] For example, in the canonical formulation, when relations of production are an *Entwicklungsform* of productive forces, this clearly means that they foster their development, as opposed to "fettering" them.
[71] MECW 43, p. 131 (KM to Kugelmann, October 12, 1868), asking about Büchner's *Sechs Vorlesungen über die Darwin'sche Theorie von der Verwandlung der Arten.* Here Büchner uses "Lebensform" simply in the sense of "lifeforms," as in the lower lifeforms that have some things in common with the higher. For a short summary of Marx's non-teleological interpretation of Darwin see Terence Ball, "Marx and Darwin: A Reconsideration," in *Reappraising Political Theory* (Oxford University Press, 1994).
[72] I will return to these interpretations in chapter VI. Briefly, Paul Kampffmeyer interpreted "political revolution-form" as more mild than "revolutionary destruction-form," as a description of "the role of the republic in a dissolving civil society." J. P. Mayer sees the latter also as an "evolutionary viewpoint." Kudrjaschowa reasonably objects that *Umwälzung* does not imply any gradual or limited transition. It means "revolution." I do not agree with her idea that the new formulation, with the word "political," avoids the notion of "spontaneous-destructive action."

on the original meaning of the text as a picture of the land of revolution. In hindsight, Bonaparte's act in December appeared far *more* decisive than it had appeared to Marx and many of his contemporaries at the time. In this respect, the hindsight of contemporaries resembled in some ways the pessimistic interpretations that Weydemeyer had already taken as a contrasting context for the *Brumaire* in 1852. In revising his text to make the contingency more apparent, in historicizing his work in his preface, in emphasizing the role of class struggle in the account and expressing the wish to destroy the word "Caesarism"—at the risk of appearing monomaniacal, I propose that all of this is best understood as an attempt to preserve the original meaning of the *Brumaire* as a "picture" of the land of revolution.

I am not sure that all the revisions can be explained in this way. In the famous "making history" sentence, for example, Marx made one enigmatic change for the 1869 edition. In the original, men make their own history under "immediately existing, given and transmitted circumstances." The word "existing" or "present," "at hand," *vorhanden,* was changed to *vorgefunden,* "encountered" or "discovered." The circumstances that are supposed to matter in the new version are those that are found or experienced in some way. I do not see what this has to do with the series of changes involving the extent of Bonaparte's domination. My position that Marx is preserving his original meaning may also need some further refinement, if it is to be able to explain one of the most important changes to the whole text, concerning the "destruction of the state machine," also remains to be explained.

In the original, Marx writes, "The destruction of the state machine will not endanger centralization. Bureaucracy is only the lower and brutal form of a centralization that is still burdened with its opposite, feudalism." In contrast, "with the loss of belief in a Napoleonic restoration, the French peasant parts with the faith in his parcel, the whole state edifice [*Staatsgebaude*] erected on these parcels collapses, and the *proletarian revolution receives the chorus, without which, in all peasant nations, its solo song becomes a song of death.*" The revised version is certainly more subdued: "With the progressing erosion [*Zerrüttung*] of parcel property, the state edifice erected on it collapses. The state centralization that modern society requires rises only out of the ruins of the military-bureaucratic government machine that was forged in contradiction to feudalism."[73] It is not obvious that this complex and important change can be explained in terms of the broader theory that Marx was clarifying and preserving his original meaning against the potential for anachronistic misunderstanding, but it may still be possible, on a closer analysis of the original view and the revision.

The new edition of the *Brumaire* was finally published around July 20.[74] Engels sent his compliments in a letter on July 24:

> The preface is very good. That, and the book itself, will not make Wilhelm [Liebknecht] happy. The way that democracy, and most of all Social-Democracy,

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[73] Kudrjaschowa also admits that it is "not easy" to explain why Marx would cut a passage that so powerfully conveys the need for an alliance with the peasantry. Kudrjaschowa, "Zur Geschichte Der Zweiten Deutschen Ausgabe von Karl Marx' Schrift 'Der Achtzehnte Brumaire Des Louis Bonaparte' von 1869," 258.

[74] Eckert has "around July 20," in his footnote to Wilhelm Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel mit deutschen Sozialdemokraten*, ed. Georg Eckert, vol. 1 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1973), 281.

> is handled, is not water on his mill at all, but really rather on his head. Now by the way he can't say he has no agitational text: we will see what he does with it.[75]

Engels also wrote a biographical sketch of Marx, published in *Die Zukunft,* that intentionally promoted the new edition of the *Brumaire.*[76] This opposes the view of Lassalle as creator [*Urheber*] of the German workers' party, portraying Marx as the former leader of a "well-organized socialist party among the workers, especially in west Germany." Many former members of the Communist League, Engels claims, laid the basis for Lassalle's organization.[77] Here Engels recommends the *Brumaire* to the "philistine" who had seen Bonaparte as a genius, who now struggles to understand his "insecure" [*haltlose*] position and mistakes. He does not mention any specific argument. In particular, he does not mention the argument about class struggle.

This was generally true in the reception of the second edition. The several reviews in the press vary in length and depth, but none very clearly express the claim by Marx to show that class struggle enabled a "grotesque mediocrity," and those that do misunderstand it or reject it. A reviewer in the English *Spectator*, who calls *Capital* "cruelly unreadable," was only interested in the middle of the book, in the depiction of

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[75] MECW 44, p. 329 (FE to KM, July 25, 1869). Translation modified. Another early recipient of the *Brumaire* was Elisée Reclus, who visited Marx on July 27 and got an autographed copy. Hal Draper, *The Marx-Engels Chronicle: A Day-by-Day Chronology of Marx and Engels' Life and Activity*, The Marx-Engels Cyclopedia, v. 1 (New York: Schocken Books, 1985), 151, #42. Marx also sent copies to Charles Roesgen and "friends in Manchester," MECW 44, pp. 333 and 349 (KM to FE, July 27 and August 17, 1869)

[76] MECW 44, p. 333 (FE to Ludwig Kugelmann, July 28), mentioning his "drawing attention to the 18th Brumaire.")

[77] MECW 44, p. 352 (FE to KM, September 5), Engels noticed that the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt* made edits to remove the claim that Marx was both a forerunner and intellectual *superior* of Lassalle. The newspaper announced the edits with a footnote, claiming to have removed material "that could have insulted here and there."

Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte as president and his struggle with parliament.[78] "Everyone remembers" the February revolution, the Provisional Government, and the June Days, he writes, as well as the December 2 coup itself, but the intervening years were "for many almost a blank." Marx shows how "the struggles of parties … ate out the soul of the Parliamentary Republic." It is claimed that these parties represent classes, but this claim is not emphasized. Some other reviewers, like some later scholars, struggled to distinguish class struggles as Marx understands them from an idea that was already very familiar, that political struggles are struggles of parties, and parties may represent classes. The *Saturday Review* had the impression that for Marx "the 'bourgeois republic' of 1848 is more hateful than the Empire of 1852." Marx is supposed to have portrayed "a war of classes, the strongest of which eventually obtained the upper hand."[79] This is not how class struggle works in the book at all.

A long review in the weekly *Europa: Chronik der gebildeten Welt* described the viewpoint of the *Brumaire* as "opposed to the democratic," contrasting the view of history as class struggle to the ("democratic") view of history as driven by political struggle. According to this reviewer, democracy depends on the *Kleinbürgertum,* a class that for Marx is the least qualified, a mere "transition class." Although class interests may have determined these events in France, this is not typical, the reviewer argues, in the

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[78] "A Glance Back at a Presidency," *The Spectator,* August 28, 1869. According to a note in MEGA, the author may have been John Malcolm Forbes Ludlow, with whom Marx was in contact in April 1869 and to whom he sent a copy of *Capital*. Marx thought that Meissner did little or nothing to promote the book. (KM to FE, August 2, 1869; FE to KM, August 3.) Meissner later included it in a general announcement of his publications in the *Börsenblatt für den Deutschen Buchhandel,* October 18, 1869.
[79] *The Saturday Review,* September 18, 1869, p. 393

broader sweep of history. Respectable people of all political tendencies generally stand on principles, not *Standesinteressen*. Marx is also "not a good judge of men." His depiction of Thiers as a "parliamentarian cretin" is bad, but his representation of Bonaparte as "cleverly-stupid" [*pfiffig-dumm*] is worse.[80] *The Contemporary Review* simply paraphrased the paragraph about Hugo and Proudhon, but this at least included a translation of Marx's own aim, "to prove that to the opposition of classes in France was owing that particular concatenation of events and relations which alone rendered it possible for (in the author's estimation) so mediocre a personage as Louis Bonaparte to play so prominent a part."[81]

The *Westminster Review* reviewed the book belatedly, in January, 1870, in a miscellaneous survey of "Politics, Sociology, Voyages and Travels," alongside books on the causes of pauperism in Scotland, cooperative associations in France, the "German Working Man," and a "Physique Sociale" (by Quetelet), near *Tales of Old Travel* (in China, Japan, West Africa, and Australia), *The Scenery of England and Wales, Pictures of Hungarian Life,* and *Transatlantic Sketches in the West Indies, South America, Canada and the United States*. The brief summary concludes that "the true *clientèle* of the Bonapartes are the small peasant proprietors," due to their "want of habitual co-operation, their degraded and selfish nature, and the general intellectual debasement."[82] This is still a

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[80] *Europa* 41 (1869), Bd. 2, p. 618. A brief note in *Die Post* in Berlin, on September 21, 1869, summarized just the first paragraph of Marx's preface (on its American origins), adding that the new edition "comes just at the right time, because meanwhile the bankruptcy of Napoleonism, whose signs the author had already represented with a sure hand, has come to a head." There may also have been a review in the *Aachener Zeitung*, November 12, 1869, that I have not been able to locate.
[81] *The Contemporary Review* (London), Vol. XII. September-December, 1869, pp. 478-9
[82] *Westminster Review.* v.93 (Jan-Apr 1870), pp. 271-2.

common misreading today. If it was clear to most that Marx had said something about class struggle, there was no agreement about what he had said, and no close interest in his own interpretation of his work, that it showed how class struggle enabled a "grotesque mediocrity."

At almost exactly the same time as the *Brumaire* appeared, the first steps were taken to form a new worker's party. A call for a unity congress, signed by dissident figures in the ADAV and VDAV, was published in the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt* on July 17.[83] The congress at Eisenach, in August, 1869, led to the founding of the *Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei* (SDAP), or "Eisenachers." The program defined its political ideal as the "free people's state," *freie Volksstaat*, including the Lassallean demand for "state support for cooperatives and state credit for free producer's cooperatives with democratic guarantees." The leaders of the new party evidently saw the *Brumaire* as supporting their program, as they tried for some time to negotiate with Meissner to produce a cheaper *Volksausgabe*.[84] Evidently the format and cost of the 1869 edition made it impractical for use as political propaganda.

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[83] Steenson, *Not One Man! Not One Penny!*, 20. This included "a number of leading members from northern Germany," including from Braunschweig (Bracke), Spier from Wolfenbuettel, and Hamburg leaders Geib, Perl, and Yorck. Beck, "Working-Class Politics at the Crossroads," 79.

[84] August Bebel wrote to Wilhelm Bracke on August 30, asking for his and Bonhorst's opinion about some such plan. Bonhorst and Bracke responded that they could guarantee the sale of 1000 copies in a year. The plan was apparently for an edition of 2000, half of which would be given to "Bonhorst etc." at cost. Georg Eckert, "Aus Der Korrespondez Dez Braunschweiger Ausschusses Der Sozialdemokratischen Arbeiter-Partei," *Braunschweigisches Jahrbuch* 45 (1964): 107–49. It is also summarized in Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel mit deutschen Sozialdemokraten*, 1:281–82.

Marx traveled to Germany in mid-September, including through the Rhineland, and reported to Engels, "Everywhere I went people knew nothing about my *Louis Bonaparte.*"[85] In Hanover, he met with Bracke, Bonhorst, and Spier, who told him about the *Volksausgabe* plan.[86] At the same time, Marx sent a copy of the work to Schweitzer, who immediately published an article in the ADAV organ, the *Social-Demokrat*, on October 6. The article quotes the entire preface and, to show "how individual events are handled," an important passage from the text, the long passage about the June insurrection, up to the passage on the meaning of republic. The article cautiously suggests that the work has a "deep philosophy of history [*Geschichtsphilosophie*]," which explains "the views of men and the events of history from material property relations as their defining basis and understands how to identify their true nature accordingly."[87]

One of the first uses of the *Brumaire* in a political argument, however, was against Schweitzer, by Leopold von Bonhorst, one of the leaders of the SDAP, in the new party organ, the *Volksstaat.* The argument concerned the so-called "Basel resolution," a statement of principle at the congress of the International in Basel in September, favoring the abolition of private property in land. On October 15, the *Social-Demokrat* attacked the Eisenachers for joining the international "in order to pass falsely as socialists," having been caught out by their hesitation to back this resolution. Dismissing the party

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[85] MECW 43, p. 354. (KM to FE, September 25, 1869)
[86] MECW 43, p. 358 (KM to FE, September 30, 1869) Meissner also wrote to Marx about it.
[87] "Literarisches," *Beilage zum Social-Demokrat,* Nr. 117, October 6, 1869. "… der tiefen Geschichtsphilosophie, welche die Anschauungen der Menschen und die Ereignisse der Geschichte aus den materiellen Eigenthumsverhältnissen als ihrer bestimmenden Grundlage heraus zu erklären und ihrem wahren Wesen nach zu kennzeichnen versteht."

committee in Brunswick as "straw puppets," the newspaper alleged that the true leadership was Liebknecht, Bebel, and "their backers in bourgeois democracy (Sonnemann, Ladendorf, and so on)." The author (Schweitzer?) dismisses their claim that they opposed the resolution in solidarity with the (Proudhonist) French delegates at the congress. Social democracy means defending both social and political equality; abolishing wage labor and dividing the product of labor; abolishing private property, not only in capital but also in land. The next issue dared the "straw puppets" in Braunschweig, the former members of the ADAV and supposed leaders of the party, to write to the *Volksstaat* in defense of their views.

On October 2, the *Volksstaat* published Leopold von Bonhorst's response to Schweitzer, "The Famous Dictator and One of the Brunswick 'Straw Puppets' in Light of the Basel Resolutions."[88] In explaining their position, he refers to the Napoleonic origins of the French *Parzellenbauern* and quotes the *Brumaire* on their present indebted conditions. The debate hardly seems to have developed from there. On November 3, the newspaper reported that Bonhorst was unexpectedly arrested. Bonhorst's fleeting reference is one of the few traces of evidence of the specific value that the leaders of the SDAP saw in a popular edition of the *Brumaire,* apparently in relation to their policies on rural agitation, a topic of their correspondence with Marx at this time. There is also some evidence of new interest in the *Brumaire* in the International at this time. In Paris, Charles

[88] Bonhorst, "Der famose Diktator und eine der Braunschweiger 'Strohpuppen' im Lichte der Baseler Beschslüsse," *Der Volksstaat*, October 27.

Keller, who was working on a French translation of *Capital*, supposedly interrupted that to do the *Brumaire*, but his translation never appeared.[89]

The negotiations with Meissner apparently broke down because the SDAP couldn't raise the necessary funds. Despite the scattered publicity that it received, Liebknecht claimed in early February, 1870, just to have learned that Meissner's edition had been published, in part because he had been in jail, but also because Meissner had not advertised the edition in the *Volksstaat* or the *Zukunft,* the two newspapers whose readers he needed most to reach. When he heard that the edition was out, Liebknecht claims, he immediately ordered a copy and would promote it in the *Volksstaat*. He was still hoping to raise the funds to buy the thousand copies from Meissner.[90] Finally, in March, the *Volksstaat* reprinted the preface, with a note claiming that the book had "found the fullest confirmation, in all respects, from the subsequent development of things, and gives brilliant proof that the understanding of economic movement provides the understanding of political phenomena, while on the contrary every attempt to explain political phenomena without an understanding of economic movement must degenerate into pure *Kannegießerei.*"[91] The reference to "economic movement" contrasts somewhat with Marx's own language of class struggle as well as the drastic thematization of class conflict in the Lassallean newspaper. This remark is interesting for another reason, too. To say that the *Brumaire* proves the political value of the kind of knowledge presumably

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[89] MECW 43 (KM to FE, December 10, 1869)
[90] Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel mit Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels*, 94. (WL to FE, February 8, 1870)
[91] *Der Volksstaat*, March 16, 1870, Beilage zum "Volksstaat" Nr. 22, "Bücherschau." *Kannegießerei* means political chatter.

provided by *Capital* implies that the political value of that knowledge was *not* evident already, either from *Capital* itself or from political experience so far. This idea of the *Brumaire* as a proof of the political value of Marx's theories would have quite a long afterlife.

The Franco-Prussian War inspired some reconsideration of the 1869 *Brumaire*, from very different points of view. A belated review in the September 1 *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung,* over one year after the book was published, portrayed Marx's revolutionary standpoint as now relegated to the past. It was a "philippic by the old radical," with a "hard republican heart," just a republication of old articles that recalled "certain French encyclopedias of modern times, which appear each year again out of the speculation of their publishers," often with out-of-date information. The next review in the same journal, also negative, is of a recent lecture by Karl Heinzen, "Was ist Humanität?" "Where with Marx a strongly factual, if also brittle and hard presentation excludes [mere] phrases," it concedes, "we encounter with Heinzen very often figures of speech," often directed against Christianity and monarchy.[92]

About one week after the Battle of Sedan, the *Brumaire* was celebrated in the *Mainzer Anzeiger*, a newspaper associated with a tiny but active local section of the First International. The animating figure was Paul Stumpf, a self-sufficient engineer who had first come into contact with Marx in Brussels twenty years earlier and had been a member

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[92] *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, vol. 2 (July-Dec, 1870), p. 573. Nr. 36, 1 September 1870.

of the original Communist League.[93] The newspaper recommends the *Brumaire* to "the friends of an actual historical scholarship, not those who have a taste only for superficial, thoughtless historical works," as having a special interest at the moment for "deeper thinkers." Unlike the bourgeois press and modern *Geschichtsfabrikanten*, Marx had truthfully characterized from the start the "whole impulse of the 'Band of December.'" His "truly grandiose" mode of presentation, pursuing "world history" at the level of its innermost details, makes it all the more regrettable that "the author of 'Capital' seems to have neither the leisure nor the desire to devote himself to writing a 'general world history' comprising all of the people's history."[94]

The *Brumaire* was mentioned just a few times in print in the early 1870s.[95] In one article in the *Volksstaat*, in the summer of 1871, it was quoted in an argument against the founding of independent producer's cooperatives, in accord with the tenth point of the party program, which called for productive cooperatives with "state help." The author, S. Färber in Breslau, quotes a passage on "doctrinaire experiments" from the *Brumaire* to support this (Lassallean) position.[96] This is a passage from part one of the text, printed

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[93] Georg Eckert, "Zur Geschichte der 'Sektionen' Wiesbaden und Mainz der Internationalen Arbeiter-Assoziation," *Archiv Für Sozialgeschichte* 8 (1968): 365 ff.
[94] The review is reprinted in Eckert, 517–18.
[95] Marx did refer to it in one well-known letter responding to the Paris Commune: "If you look at the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire*, you will find that I express, as the next attempt of the French revolution, no longer as before to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *break it,* and this is the condition for every actual popular revolution on the Continent. And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting." MECW 44, p. 131 (KM to Ludwig Kugelmann, April 12, 1871, translation modified). Marx expresses a similar idea in *The Civil War in France*, in a passage also quoted in the preface to the 1872 edition of the *Manifesto*, but he does not refer in those places to the *Brumaire*.
[96] "Produktiv-Assoziationen und Gewerkschaften," *Volksstaat,* July 26, 1871. The newspaper published a response from Th. Yorck on August 12, questioning the use of the citation.

with emphasis, describing one of the consequences of the defeat of the uprising of June, 1848, that workers retreated from politics to various schemes for alternative economic arrangements. The passage was taken to show the need for state supported cooperatives, as in Lassalle's program. Some activists in the International showed an interest in a French translation of the *Brumaire* in 1871 and 1872, including Paul Lafargue in Spain.[97] The idea was also mentioned by leaders of the First International in Belgium.[98] But this idea does not seem to have developed, and a French translation of the *Brumaire* was only realized much later.

One of the more detailed traces of the book in Germany is a report on the SDAP in Münich, which held a lecture and discussion on the book in November, 1872, with about a hundred guests. According to a summary in the *Augsburger Postzeitung*, the book showed, above all, the "stupidity of the people," and that suffrage will remain an illusion, without education of the lower classes. This led to a broader discussion on the following questions:

> 1) Where and what is the "international party"? (Answer: "international" means "binding together the peoples," *völkerverbindend*.) 2) What principles did the communists of the year 1848 defend? 3) By what means is the cult of personality [*Personencultus*] to be eradicated and what does world history teach and what are the interests of the party? 4) To what degree are federalization and centralization an advantage or disadvantage?

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[97] Paul Lafargue to Engels, Oct 2, 1871, in *Correspondence: Friedrich Engels, Paul and Laura Lafargue.* 12. Lafargue to Marx, Feb 1872, asking for a copy of 18B among other works: Inaugural Address and General Rules, Civil War in France, and also Dietzgen. MECW 44, p. 327 (KM to Laura (Marx) Lafargue, February 28, 1872). Marx comments that that some of the statistics in the *Brumaire* were inaccurate, and he apparently intended to correct them before sending the copy to Paul Lafargue.

[98] *Documents relatifs aux militants belges de l'Association internationale des travailleurs: correspondance 1856-1872*. May 26, 1872, Edouard Glaser de Willebrord to KM; June 16, 1872.

It was resolved that the SDAP had to strive for "federalization in combination with centralization," seeing centralization alone as harmful.[99]

The course of the war and the fact of national unification was mooting the major difference between the ADAV and the SDAP. A shared experience of persecution fostered political collaboration, not only in elections but also in commemorations and protests.[100] This was also a period of growth and diversification for the SDAP party press, which began to develop a greater theoretical sophistication.[101] Wilhelm Bracke's pamphlet *Der Lassalle'sche Vorschlag* shows this development and includes yet further discussion of the meaning of the "doctrinaire experiments" passage in the *Brumaire* and its implications for the tenth point of the Eisenacher program. In contrast to its earlier use, the passage is now used to show the *difference* between Marx and Lassalle. *The Lassallean Proposal* was published after the fourth congress of the SDAP in Eisenach, in August, 1873, to support revising the program to remove the tenth point, calling for "state help" for producer's cooperatives. Bracke was certainly familiar with the *Brumaire,* having been involved in the plan for a *Volksausgabe*. It plays only a passing role in his argument, which includes extensive discussion of Lassalle's politics and the "laws of motion of society" as revealed in *Capital.* Still, it is evidence of a sustained discussion of

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[99] *Augburger Postzeitung*, November 14, 1872.
[100] Steenson, *Not One Man! Not One Penny!*, 30. For examples of collaboration in protest, see Franz Mehring, *Die Gründung der deutschen Sozialdemokratie; eine Festschrift der Leipziger Arbeiter zum 23. Mai 1903* (Leipzig: Verlag der Leipziger Buchdruckerei Aktiengesellschaft, 1903), p. 59-60.
[101] While the ADAV tried to retain control through a "central organ" (Hasselmann's *Neue Sozialdemokrat*) even after Schweitzer departed in 1871, the VDAV promoted a local press, while the circulation of the *Volksstaat* grew from about 3100 (1870) to over 6500 (1873). Debates about the party press were the dominant issue at SDAP congresses from 1870 to 1874. The *Volksstaat* was the main forum of theoretical debate with the Lassalleans: Bracke articulated its role in contrast to the more agitational press of the ADAV. Steenson, 28.

a passage in the text in print, a passage that becomes a "commonplace" through repeated quotation and discussion of how it should be quoted. The *Neuer Sozial-Demokrat* responded to Bracke at some length, in "Ein 'ehrlicher' Angriff auf Ferdinand Lassalle," which ran over several issues. In a footnote to another article on September 19, the *Volksstaat* referred again to the same passage, claiming that it would deal with the topic later, after looking up what Marx had written.

These examples of references to the work in print give a strong impression of essentially *ad hoc* usage, completely removed from the supposed original meaning of the text and even from the preface by Marx to the second edition, with its formal interpretation in terms of class struggle. I see little evidence to suggest that the preface distinctly influenced how the text was understood, either in the short term, in reviews, or in the various uses that socialists found for it in political arguments over the next several years. When the ADAV and the SDAP were finally unified at Gotha in 1875, as the SAPD (*Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands*), the party retained core ideas from Lassalle, including the "iron law of wages" and the controversial point on state-financed producers' cooperatives, and also promoted the work of Marx and Engels, certainly without anything resembling an orthodox conception. The old party structure of the ADAV, with its "dictatorial" presidency, gave way to a central executive with strong locals and a local press. One advantage to this was that, as persecution continued and escalated, the party was able to respond with further changes to party structure or by organizing "general socialist meetings."[102]

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[102] Steenson, 31–32.

In 1876, the *Neue Sozialdemokrat* and the *Volksstaat* merged to become *Vorwärts,* edited by William Hasenclever and Liebknecht.[103] An article in the *Probeblatt,* on tariffs and Hungary, by the former Communard Leo Frankel, emphasizes the need to apply "the so-called historical method, as it was taught already by Marx and Engels in the forties (in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*)*,* because there are in economic life no unchanging laws, laws that are the same in all times, but rather only historical laws."[104] In January 1877, *Vorwärts* began to publish the long series of articles against Eugen Dühring, in which Engels elaborated on the materialistic conception of history as one of the two major contributions that Marx had made to scientific socialism. It does not refer to the *Brumaire,* but rather directly to the French Revolution, to illustrate the concept of "bourgeois revolution."

The *Brumaire* was now one of a small set of writings of Marx that were available, within a much larger German socialist literature regularly offered for sale by *Vorwärts*. An advertisement from 1877 includes the *Manifesto, Capital,* the *Brumaire,* and *Civil War in France,* as well as the *Cologne Communist Trial,* and three minor works by Engels, but the same list of some 120 texts in all includes thirteen publications by Ferdinand Lassalle, seven by Bernhard Becker, seven by Johann Most, seven by August Otto-Walster. The *Brumaire* may have been mentioned in *Vorwärts* only once in these years, and only in passing, in an anonymous dispatch from France that I will discuss in

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[103] First issue, October 1, 1876. The SADP also had a literary journal, *Die neue Welt,* and a political monthly, *Die Zukunft,* and the number of newspapers continued to grow from 1876 to 1878.
[104] Leo Frankel, "Die Arbeiter und die Zollfrage," *Vorwärts,* October 1, 1876.

chapter III. In the same period, however, there are occasional traces of serious interest in other quarters, most notably from conservative "state socialists."

One of the first extensive discussions of the *Brumaire* in another book, for example, was in Rudolf Meyer's *Emancipationskampf des Vierten Standes.* Meyer excerpts large parts of the *Brumaire,* running over several continuous pages. He quotes roughly the first half of chapter VII, depicting the situation of the peasants, before interjecting, "This depiction by Marx is precisely masterful. Small property must be strengthened also in Germany, if the monarch wants to have a counterweight against liberalism." Meyer then continues to quote several more pages, on the incoherence of the "idées napoleoniennes" and their inevitable failure. He concludes that Marx's prediction had been "realized to the letter."[105] The *Brumaire* was also conspicuously mentioned in an essay on the philosophy of socialism in the *Allgemeine Zeitung,* in March 1878, later published in a book, by another state socialist, Johannes Huber, in a part of the essay clarifying Marx's "way of explaining history [*Geschichtserklärung*] from class struggles."[106] The *Brumaire* is described as a masterful application of the idea to contemporary historical events:

> Here Marx at once sketches an anatomy of French society in the enumeration and characterization of its classes, depicts the preparation [*Lagerung*] and the antagonism of party interests, and reveals thereby in particular the unprincipled politics of the bourgeoisie, dictated by selfishness and fear … shows how the struggle of parties made possible a new Caesarism in an intellectually mediocre, morally degenerate personality … With political divination, at the end it is

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[105] Rudolf Meyer, *Der Emancipatioinskampf des vierten Standes* (Berlin: Aug. Schindler, 1875), Bd. II, pp. 509-520

[106] Johannes Huber, "Der Socialismus," II, *Beilage zur Allgemeine Zeitung,* Nr. 90, March 31, 1878.

> indicated that the imperialism of Napoleon III will rot out the roots of Bonapartism in France.

The hope of the 1869 preface, to destroy the word "Caesarism," certainly had not been achieved. The final sentence in the text is now quoted as prophetic. But what is most striking in hindsight is the idea of the *Brumaire* as revealing the "unprincipled politics of the bourgeoisie, dictated by selfishness and fear." The earlier survey of references shows very little evidence at all of any such anti-bourgeois interpretation in earlier commentary on the text. It was rather an attack on the democratic petit-bourgeoisie, for example, or it showed that the peasants were to blame for Bonapartism. The idea of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* as a prime illustration of the theory of history as class struggle emerged despite a remarkable confusion about its basic historical argument and its political standpoint.

III. Political and Scholarly Translations in the Third Republic

The idea of a French translation was mentioned when the *Eighteenth Brumaire* was first published in 1852, and again at the time of the second edition, in 1869, but it gained little traction either time. The first French translation was published in 1891, first in *Le Socialiste,* the weekly newspaper of the *Parti ouvrier français* (POF), then as a pamphlet, at the party's press in Lille.[1] The translator was Edouard Fortin, from the small city of Beauvais, in the north of France. After the French edition of *Capital,* published in booklets from 1872-1875, this was the first French translation of Marx to be published as a book. Nine years later, the *Brumaire* became the first work by Marx to be published in "retranslation," in a second translation responding to the first.

Léon Rémy's 1900 translation was published by the popular-science press Charles Reinwald, in Paris, in a single volume with *Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850,* in a series of works in the "sociological sciences" edited by Augustin Hamon.[2] It was one of several volumes by Marx in the series, at the height of a trend toward the publication of Marx and Engels by "éditeurs universitaires" in the late 1890s.[3] As Jacqueline Cahen recounts in a survey of the first publishers of Marx in France, by 1900, at least four such

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[1] "Français" was only added to the party's name in the early 1890s, after Fortin's translation was published, but I use it here for simplicity.
[2] The accent in "Rémy" is used in scholarship but not in primary sources, including the author's signature, published works, and obituary.
[3] Jacqueline Cahen, "Les premiers éditeurs de Marx et Engels en France (1880-1901)," *Cahiers d'histoire* 113 (2011).The term "university presses" here means presses that publish academic works broadly speaking, including works by scholars for the general public. In the social sciences and philosophy, Félix Alcan is the overwhelmingly dominant example in this period. Jean-Louis Fabiani, *Les Philosophes de La République* (Paris : Editions de Minuit, 1988), 103–18.

presses were competing to publish Marx in France, each with its own political affiliations and related intellectual perspective. This was a situation unique to France and illustrates one problem in defining "French Marxism."[4]

The genesis of the Fortin translation has been closely studied by Renate Merkel-Melis, an editor of the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe,* in an attempt to determine the role of Engels. She uncovered a surprisingly long history. In October, 1883, Fortin and his friend Paul Lavigne began to work together on a translation of the *Brumaire*. The following spring, however, they had a bitter fight that left the ownership of their joint work in doubt. Over Lavigne's protests, Engels chose to work with Fortin.[5] Given the many hands involved and lacking manuscripts, Merkel-Melis doubted that it was possible to attribute specific "interventions" (*Eingriffe*) in the translation. This primary question of attribution took priority over broader contextualization and other questions that can be asked about the translation.[6]

Only a small part of the correspondence between Fortin and Engels concerns the translation. Fortin's letters, which remain unpublished, more often concern his work with a tiny socialist circle in Beauvais, teaching political economy and organizing meetings on

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[4] Prewar Marxism in Germany is largely associated with a single publication, *Die Neue Zeit,* and often a single figure, Karl Kautsky. In contrast, it is sometimes asked if there was Marxism in France before the First World War, and if so, how many "Marxisms" there were. A starting-point for current debate is Christophe Prochasson, "Sur la réception du marxisme en France : le cas Andler (1890–1920)," *Revue de synthèse* 110, no. 1 (January 1, 1989): 85–108. Most recently, see Jean-Numa Ducange and Antony Burland, "Faire l'histoire des marxismes français," in *Marx, une passion française*, ed. Jean-Numa Ducange and Antony Burland (La Découverte, 2018), 5–14.

[5] Renate Merkel-Melis, "Zur Entstehung der Französischen Ausgabe des 18. Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte," in *Klassen-Revolution-Demokratie: Zum 150. Jahrestag Der Erstveröffentlichung von Marx' Der 18. Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, ed. Rolf Hecker (Berlin: Argument, 2003).

[6] This is apparently why the translation is not included in MEGA. For a summary of the research and the conclusion, see MEGA XXX:1 (2011), p. 981-989.

the military question, activities for which his work on the translation is often postponed. Fortin sought a broader relationship with Engels, which contributed to his rise to a regional leadership role in the POF. In harsh contrast, Lavigne was marginalized and died of tuberculosis in 1887, some four years before the translation was published under Fortin's name. The publication of the translation was clearly not an urgent priority, closely tied to some particular event. Can we still say that it had a specific political significance in 1891?

Cahen cautiously suggests that the *Brumaire* "was no doubt judged to be of great timeliness [*de grande actualité*] after the Boulangist crisis."[7] This useful idea of timeliness *after* a crisis deserves a careful elaboration. For the POF, the crisis of 1888-1889 was one of several catalysts for the shift from "sect" to "party" in the early 1890s.[8] Although the *Brumaire* was sometimes discussed in relation to Boulangism, at least in the German socialist press, the broader transformation of the party was probably more important than any analogies to the recent past. The *Brumaire* was recommended as a source for studying rural social conditions, in particular, at a time of new practical horizons. The process of modern party formation—the POF has even been called the first modern political party in France—created new roles for figures like Fortin in an emerging hierarchy, while it marginalized others.

Léon Rémy and Augustin Hamon both began their political careers outside of the POF and sometimes came into conflict with it, each in his own way, identifying with

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[7] Cahen, "Les Premiers Éditeurs."
[8] Claude Willard, *Le Mouvement socialiste en France (1893-1905): Les Guesdistes* (Paris: Editions sociales, 1965), 59–89.

terms like "revolutionary socialist," "anarchist socialist," and "libertarian communist." The two had different relationships to Marx. Rémy, who came to Marxism through student politics, hoped to restore Marx's conception of history to an imagined "purity," before its corruption by Engels and others. Hamon, who appears to have known fairly little about Marx, was more concerned to promote his vision of the "sociological sciences," including his own deterministic views. Their joint work was attacked on both scholarly and political grounds. A harsh review in Émile Durkheim's critical journal *Notes Critiques* dismissed the *Brumaire* itself, as a poor representation of scientific socialism; the quality of Rémy's translation; and the editing of the work, especially the excerpting of the important 1895 preface by Engels to *Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850.* Paul Lafargue attacked the legal but unauthorized translation of Marx as a form of "piracy" typical of "intellectuals."

I consider the process of political modernization from the standpoint of those involved in making each edition of the *Brumaire* while seeking to improve our understanding of the text itself. My analysis of Fortin's translation focuses on his understanding of the 1885 preface by Engels, and on just three familiar problem terms, *Weltgeschichte*, *bürgerliche Gesellschaft,* and *Lumpenproletariat*.[9] These are hardly just problems for translators, as these terms are fairly central to the interpretation of this text and others by Marx. With Rémy's translation, the editing is the primary focus, although I also consider some of his word choices. The fate of the *Brumaire* in France in this period

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[9] Guillaume Fondu and Jean Quétier, "Comment traduire Marx en français?," in *Marx, une passion française*, ed. Jean-Numa Ducange and Antony Burland (Paris: La Découverte, 2018), 111–23; Lucien Sève, "Traduire Marx: travail linguistique, travail théorique," *La Pensée*, no. 360 (2009): 135–140.

was dependent on some concurrent phenomena in Germany that will be considered more closely in chapter four, such as the controversy over "revisionism," but it mostly followed a distinctive course, defined by a certain confluence of trends in social science and personal political trajectories.

The Fortin-Lavigne Translation (1891)

Edouard Fortin is mentioned repeatedly by historians of the POF, but little is known about his early life.[10] According to a historian of the worker's movement in Oise, the department in the north of France, he was born in Amiens, in 1854, and moved to Beauvais by the late 1870s.[11] One of his 24 surviving letters to Engels, discussed below, suggests that he was in Beauvais already by 1872, before coming to Paris.[12] Recently digitized newspapers reveal a small but important detail.[13] At the end of 1876, Fortin was living in Paris and subscribed to *Vorwärts,* the new organ of the SDAP. The newspaper regularly published lists of money received for subscriptions, advertisements, and sales of

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[10] Jean Maitron, ed., "Fortin, Edouard," in *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier Français*, vol. 12, III (1871-1914) (Paris: Editions ouvrières, 1974), https://maitron.fr/spip.php?article86941; Claude Willard, *Le Mouvement socialiste en France (1893-1905): Les Guesdistes* (Paris: Editions sociales, 1965); Robert C. Stuart, *Marxism at Work: Ideology, Class, and French Socialism during the Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[11] Jean-Pierre Besse, "Le mouvement ouvrier dans l'Oise 1890-1914" (Thesis, Paris I, 1982), 25. With a population of under 20,000 at this time, Beauvais was the administrative center and the largest city in the department.

[12] Fortin's letters to Engels are in the Marx-Engels Papers, L1875-1898, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam, https://search.iisg.amsterdam/Record/ARCH00860/ArchiveContentList#L 1875-1898.

[13] This paragraph relies on the high-quality digitizations of *Vorwärts* done by the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung in 2017. The version of *Vorwärts* available via Hathitrust, based on hasty Google scans of a reprint edition, is readable but inadequate for digital searching. Searching the FES edition led me to five articles, where Hathitrust led to just one.

books, in which the names "Frtn," "Fortin," and "Ed. Fortin" begin to appear at this time.[14] "Ed. Fortin Paris Ab. 4,00, Schr. 7,80," on December 13, shows that Fortin purchased a quarterly subscription (*Abonnement*) and some of the texts (*Schriften*) for sale in the newspaper.[15] Until March, 1877, his residence was Paris. In June, 1877, he was in Beauvais.[16] Fortin's early engagement with the German socialist press was unusual in France, but it does not show that he discovered Marx at this time.[17]

The *Brumaire* was on the long list of books for sale in *Vorwärts* but mentioned in articles only rarely, perhaps only once, in an article supporting the hard left position that *Vorwärts* had taken toward the Third Republic.[18] This was epitomized by its response to the crisis of May 16, 1877, a defining power struggle over the meaning of the constitutional laws of 1875. These established a bicameral parliament, with a Chamber of Deputies elected directly by universal manhood suffrage and a Senate elected indirectly, by a college of mayors and other communal officials. The president was elected by parliament and had powers that resembled those of a constitutional monarch, including

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[14] "Quittung," *Vorwärts,* November 29, 1876 ("Frtn Paris Ab. 4,00"). It is unclear why Fortin bought a second subscription just two weeks later, if these two entries are accurate.
[15] "Quittung," *Vorwärts,* December 13, 1876. I have discussed the books sold by *Vorwärts* in the previous chapter.
[16] Most of the entries follow a pattern of quarterly subscription renewals: "Frtn Paris Ab. 4,00," on March 23, 1877; "Frtn Beauvais Ab. 4,00," on June 27, 1877 and January 13, 1878, and "Fortin, Beauvais, 8.00," on April 7, 1878.
[17]Almost all of the other hundreds of subscribers on these lists are Germans, including just a few who live in Paris. Historians rarely mention the international circulation of German socialist newspapers or books as a factor in the discovery of Marx in France, focusing instead on personal contacts and conversation, as in the example of the "Café Soufflet" circle. In contrast, for southeastern Europe, George Haupt has described the German socialist press as a main channel of transmission, along with students returning from Germany.
[18] While the evidence of digitization is too unreliable to make any quantitative claims at this scale, one of the only references to the *Brumaire* in French in print in the 1870s, besides the one footnote in *Capital*, is another footnote in the second volume of a massive (and conservative) history of the Second Republic: Victor Pierre, *Histoire de la République de 1848* (Paris, 1878), Vol. 2, p. 544.

the right, with the support of the Senate, to dissolve the Chamber and call for elections. When the "conservative republican" prime minister, Jules Simon, was replaced by the Orleanist Duc de Broglie, on May 16, the latter named a cabinet of conservatives and Bonapartists, and President Marshal Macmahon invoked his constitutional right to dissolve the republican-dominated Chamber. Radicals and moderate republicans perceived the threat of a coup d'état and immediately unified for the elections that October.[19]

In *Vorwärts*, a front-page headline from July declared, "Down with the Republic!" The article begins: "Yes, down with the republic, the *French bourgeois-republic,* the sooner the better." While the "republican state form" was abstractly superior to monarchy, May 16 showed that the Third Republic offered only "illusory freedom." The only true republic would be the democratic and social one. *Vorwärts* denounced the tiny extreme left in parliament, the "Intransigents," for uniting with moderate and radical republicans in electoral campaigns. This was the "most despicable betrayal of the people."[20] The reference to the *Brumaire* appeared several months later, shortly before the parliamentary elections, in an anonymous front-page article, from an unnamed city in France.[21]

The author sided with *Vorwärts* "against conservative and radical republicanism" but emphasized that this was a completely marginal position in France. One of the "small minority of socialist-minded Frenchmen," he claims to read *Vorwärts* because his views

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[19] R. D. Anderson, *France, 1870-1914 : Politics and Society* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1977), 10–11.
[20] "Nieder mit der Republik!" *Vorwärts,* July 1, 1877.
[21] "Aus Frankreich," *Vorwärts,* October 5, 1877.

have no longer been tolerated in the French press since the Commune. He has also been reading, and writes now to recommend, the "now extremely rare" writings of Auguste Vermorel, *Les hommes des 1848, Les hommes des 1851,* and *Les Vampires.* The journalist Vermorel, who was read by Marx himself and died in fighting for the Commune, confirms "day to day, step for step," "everything that Marx with his much sharper insight asserts theoretically." The French will grasp the "inner sense" of their own politics only by studying Marx, "the *Eighteenth Brumaire* and *Civil War in France* and so on," but the Germans should also study Vermorel.

The author links 1848 and 1851 to 1871 and Marx himself to Vermorel, as two complementary perspectives on recent French history. Vermorel may lack "insight" into the "inner sense" of French politics, but Marx also seems here to need empirical verification, "day to day, step for step," by a participant, for a position that was understood as marginal, in fact wholly excluded from the French public sphere of the time.[22] The author went on to criticize an article by Jules Guesde on the situation in France in the new scholarly review of the SDAP, *Die Zukunft,* the rival to the popular *Vorwärts.*[23] Guesde was a radical republican with anarchist and socialist tendencies who had just returned to France from exile. Contrary to *Vorwärts,* he argued that socialists should support radicals in upcoming elections. Since the Commune, Guesde granted,

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[22] On the specific nature of claims to historical truth about the Commune, see Julia Nicholls, *Revolutionary Thought after the Paris Commune, 1871-1885*, Ideas in Context (Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[23] Ernst Theodor Mohl, "Die Zukunft. Socialistische Revue. Berlin 1877/78. Ein Kapitel Zur Frühgeschichte Des Revisionismus," in *Die Zukunft: Socialistische Revue* (Glashütten im Taunus: Verlag Detlev Auvermann KG, 1971).

French socialists were separated from all "government-republicans" by "rivers of blood," but the republic was in danger, and the republic was a condition for social revolution. Without attacking Guesde directly, the anonymous reader of the *Brumaire* declares, "We cannot degrade ourselves to tools and appendages of the Herr Bourgeois-Republicans." The first task must be "to bring enlightenment, full enlightenment, to the people." He has no more specific political proposals, other than more reading.[24] He does not counter Guesde's historical claim about republics as a condition for social revolution and does not yet promote the electoral alternative to supporting radicals, forming an independent worker's party. The example shows that the *Brumaire* was relevant to a major decision facing French socialists, a self-consciously marginal group at this time, but also the weakness of its historical and political authority on its own. Its practical-political implications were very unclear, perhaps leading away from political action to prioritize intellectual "enlightenment."

As worker's parties were formed in France over the next few years, the historical writings of Marx had no clear role to play. Some of his other works, especially *Capital,* supplied economic arguments for the broader idea of "collectivism," the public ownership of land and other means of production, and against the established mutualist tradition, which also spoke of collective ownership, but in such forms as a federation of producers' cooperatives. Collectivism drew on a variety of sources, French, Belgian, and

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[24] The author warns the Germans of an expurgated translation of Chernyshevsky's novel *What is to be Done?* and refers them to Cesar de Paepe for more information. De Paepe's papers might make it possible to identify the author.

Russian, including anarchism. Followers of Bakunin, for example, distinguished their "collectivism" from Marx's "authoritarian communism."[25] Collectivism was promoted in Guesde's "republican socialist" weekly *L'Égalité*, first published in 1877 and 1878, which excerpted *Capital* four times, on concepts like surplus value and primitive accumulation.[26] But Marx was not a natural source for discussions of French history in *L'Égalité,* such as Victor Marouck's history of the June Days.[27]

Collectivism came to the fore at a worker's congress at Marseilles, in 1879, which founded a new worker's party, the *Fédération du parti des travailleurs socialistes de France* (FPTSF). This was a loose and diverse organization, a "party" without any program, simply sharing collectivist and revolutionary ideals.[28] When *L'Égalité* reappeared in 1880 under a new subtitle, "Organe du collectivisme révolutionnaire," it serialized Marx's 1847 critique of Proudhon, *The Poverty of Philosophy.*[29] Benoît Malon also launched a monthly journal, the *Revue Socialiste,* that published Paul Lafargue's translation from Engels, *Socialisme utopique et socialisme scientifique.*[30] Finally, Marx,

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[25] See Christopher K. Ansell, *Schism and Solidarity in Social Movements: The Politics of Labor in the French Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 84. Adler-Gillies 2014; Madeleine Rebérioux, "Le socialisme français de 1871 à 1914," in *Histoire générale du socialisme*, ed. Jacques Droz, vol. 2 (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1974), 151.

[26] The excerpts from Marx are surprisingly technical, even though they are short. Marx himself described *L'Égalité* as a "worker's newspaper." Its circulation at this time may have reached 4,000 copies. Gabriel Deville would later call himself "one of those who propagated collectivist and Marxist theory in the journal." In this retrospective view, collectivism and Marxism are compatible but distinct. Deville, preface to Marx, *Capital,* 3rd ed. (Paris, 1897), as cited by Claude Willard, introduction to *L'Égalité / Le Socialiste,* Vol I, 1877-1880 (Paris: Editions Hier & Demain, 1974).

[27] The serialization of Victor Marouck's *Juin 1848* was interrupted on July 14, when *L'Égalité* ceased publication, but its sources include Vermorel, pp. 4-5, among many other French writers: Victor Marouck, *Les grandes dates du socialisme: Juin 1848* (Paris: Librairie du Progrès, 1880)

[28] Madeleine Rebérioux, "Le socialisme français de 1871 à 1914," 151–52.

[29] Maurice Dommanget, *L'introduction du marxisme en France* (Lausanne: Éd. Rencontre, 1969), 158.

[30] The translation was published from Mar-May 1880, then as a pamphlet. See Cahen, "Les Premiers Éditeurs."

Guesde, Lafargue, and Engels co-wrote an electoral program in May, 1880. Marx wrote a short preamble, emphasizing that "the emancipation of the producing class is that of all human beings, without distinction in sex and race," and that the collective ownership of the means of production could only come about through the formation of the proletariat into a political party.

Edouard Fortin may just have been an interested observer, but these developments may help to explain how he became engaged in studying Marx and finally contacted him directly at the end of 1880, without getting a response.[31] He wrote again on January 2, 1881, now prompting Marx to write to Charles Longuet, asking for more information about Fortin and describing his initial request:

> His demand is very "modest." While he studies Capital he proposes to make monthly résumés which he is kind enough to be willing to send over to me monthly, whereupon I shall correct them monthly, elucidating the points he might have misunderstood. In this quiet way, when he had done with the last monthly résumé, and I sent it back corrected—he would have a manuscript ready for publication and—as he says—inundate France with torrents de lumière.

Longuet at this time was in a short-lived group called the Alliance Socialiste Républicaine, which opposed running collectivist candidates in 1881.[32]

A first letter from Marx to Fortin went missing, and Fortin wrote for a third time on January 18, asking for answers to some questions about the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*

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[31] Fortin first wrote to Marx on December 9, 1880. This letter is lost but mentioned in the next one from Fortin. EF to KM, January 2, 1881. Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels Papers, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam, D 1932-1936.

[32] M. Adler-Gillies, "Cooperation or Collectivism: The Contest for Meaning in the French Socialist Movement, 1870-90," *French History* 28, no. 3 (September 1, 2014): 398–99.

and unspecified "economic works."[33] Marx wrote again on February 2, in some way that led Fortin to explain his qualifications. He had the *Poverty of Philosophy*, had supposedly even translated *Towards the Critique of Political Economy*, had studied *Capital*, and still had some questions for Marx. No letter from Marx to Fortin survives, and just one more letter from Fortin, in December 1881, sending his condolences for the death of Marx's wife. Fortin never mentions the *Brumaire.* He also does not yet mention any socialist organization or party. Accurately or not, he gives the impression of just promoting "enlightenment." His idea for a dialogue might even permit an ambivalent or critical attitude toward Marx.[34]

The period of "collectivist" unity was short lived. At the Congress of Saint Etienne, in 1882, when the majority rejected the attempt to impose a minimum program on local electoral campaigns, the Guesdist minority split to found their own *Parti ouvrier.* A majority resolution authored by Paul Brousse, a former anarchist opponent of Marx in the Second International, warned already of a *domination marxiste.* Brousse gave an older anarchist epithet a more formal party-political meaning. One of the first appearances of the word *marxisme* in France was in the title of a pamphlet by Brousse,

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[33] Fortin may have learned about the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and "other economic works," all impossibly rare by this point, from the preface to the 1859 *Critique*, which mentions these but not the *Brumaire*.

[34] In France as in England and Germany, those with an interest in Marx, even those who were responsible for spreading his ideas, did not always share his convictions. I discussed the German example of the conservative "state socialist" Hermann Meyer in the last chapter. For England, see E. J. Hobsbawm, "Dr. Marx and the Victorian Critics," in *Laboring Men: Studies in the History of Labour.* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1964). For France, Jacqueline Cahen, "Marx vu de droite (1) : quand les économistes français découvraient le Capital de Marx," in *Marx, une passion française*, ed. Jean-Numa Ducange and Antony Burland (Paris: La Découverte, 2018).

who attacked "antiquated materialism" and "marxist fanaticism" as having no place in a worker's party or a "socialist worker's state."[35]

Brousse was not exactly a Communard himself, but he claimed the legacy of the Commune with a broader vision of municipal socialism and autonomy.[36] This came to be called "possibilism" because it was based in the belief that local groups should campaign only for those reforms that were possible in their local circumstances, rather than pursuing a common program on a class basis. In this context, the meaning of "Marxism" essentially concerned ideas about political organization and electoral strategy. This was the context of the overly quotable comment by Marx, as reported by Engels, "I am not a Marxist."

Fortin's collaborator, Paul Lavigne, is a far more obscure figure, but his political tendencies are more clear. After his death in 1887, *Le Socialiste* published a passionate obituary that includes many details about Lavigne's short life.[37] It describes Lavigne's family as "wealthy," but it also notes the death of his father, a talented *peintre verrier*, a stained-glass maker. The city of Beauvais gave Lavigne a scholarship to attend lycée. Around 1876, he went to London, with few resources and little English, "to conquer, with only the forces of his intelligence, the social situation to which every hardworking citizen should be entitled." Here Lavigne learned both English and German, met "refugees from

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[35] Dommanget, *L'introduction du Marxisme en France*, p. 161.
[36] David Stafford, "Paul Brousse," *International Review of Social History* 17, no. 1 (April 1972): 381–86.
[37] Carnonnel, "Paul Lavigne," *Le Socialiste,* February 4, 1888.

every country," and discovered a wide range of socialist ideas. Lavigne then spent some time in Heidelberg, where he studied German philosophy and still more socialism.[38]

This international travel and contact with exiles is a significant contrast with what we know about Fortin's background. Lavigne's obituarist, named Carnnonel, met him in the Paris agglomeration of the POF in the early 1880s and was impressed by his wide interests in art, literature, philosophy, and "ethnography, this new-born science that is destined to reduce bourgeois *blagueurs* to the most pitiful silence." He describes Lavigne as reading Darwin and the anthropologists Abel Hovelacque and Charles Letourneau, as well as Marx and Heine, Zola, Chernyshevsky, Gogol, and Jules Vallés. He does not mention economics, the subject that drew Fortin to Marx. Lavigne cannot have been in Paris for long, as by 1883, he had returned to Beauvais to find work as a teacher.

In explaining his later argument with Lavigne to Engels, Fortin claims, "This young man, of a quite difficult and punctilious [*pontilleux*] character, had alienated many sympathies in our town." Fortin supposedly took Lavigne into his home and "pushed him toward the work of the mind, lending him my books, installing him in my room, and inviting him to translate various German works, notably the writings of Marx." They agreed that Lavigne, whose German was better, would quickly write a first draft of the *Brumaire*, and Fortin would revise it, rework it. In this account, the friends had no specific reason to choose the *Brumaire*. It was just one of "various German works" that

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[38] Georges Haupt mentions foreign students who study in Germany as one of three main channels, alongside newspapers and books. This may have been relatively less common in the French case. "Model Party: The Role and Influence of German Social Democracy in South-east Europe," in Georges Haupt, *Aspects of International Socialism, 1871-1914: Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Fortin owned.[39] There may be some truth in this account, but it sounds contrived. Fortin had shown some serious interest already in publishing something about Marx, so it is hard to imagine the translation of the *Brumaire* as so free of any political or commercial ambitions, as Fortin portrays it here. The *Brumaire* was a likely means to "popularize" Marx for French readers at a time of growing interest in his work, comparable to Gabriel Deville's highly influential summary of *Capital,* published by Henri Oriol at this time, with a preface dated August, 1883.[40] Fortin also had an incentive to conceal his original motives from Engels, because he did not yet have permission to translate Marx.

Paul Lafargue learned about the translation of the *Brumaire* quickly*,* either from Fortin or Lavigne, to judge from Fortin's first letter to Engels, from mid October, 1883:

> As I said recently to P[aul] Lafargue, I possess the translation of *XVIII Brumaire de Louis Bonaparte*. If you judge the publication of this work—as illuminating as it is profoundly artistic in its composition—to be useful, I would be very happy to see it preceded by an introduction, which you would know how to do better than anyone. With the resources of economic criticism … you could provide some striking glimpses into the revolution of 1848-51 in Europe.[41]

Fortin only claims that he "possesses" the translation, not that it is his own translation.[42] Like Marx, Engels noticed that Fortin was somewhat demanding. In his first letter he already hints that he could translate the second volume of *Capital,* which Engels was still editing. He goes on to ask a series of specific economic questions that "would take a year

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[39] Lavigne would later claim also to have translated *The Holy Family*, according to Paul Lafargue.
[40]Joy H. Hall, "Gabriel Deville and the Abridgement of Capital," *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History* 10 (January 1, 1984): 438. On Oriol, see Cahen, "Les Premiers Éditeurs."
[41] Fortin to Engels, October 12, 1883, from Amsterdam, "chez Van Workom."
[42] Later, when Engels accused Fortin of misleading him on this point, Fortin emphasized that he never used the first-person possessive pronoun to refer to the translation.

to answer," as Engels wrote to Laura Lafargue. He told Fortin to send his *Brumaire* and "put off the rest for better times."[43]

The argument between the two translators occurred in May, 1884. Fortin writes: "Lavigne, under the military law (for the period of 28 days) was sought by the police... I warned him to take the necessary steps to avoid an arrest… Jude irae! Lavigne gets angry at my completely well-intended advice... and breaks off an intimate relationship of twelve years." I am not sure how to interpret this passage. It sounds like Lavigne was evading military service. Fortin clearly had a more settled life. He had a job, perhaps as a bookkeeper, and a family.[44] Lavigne was less settled and appears more rebellious.

By February, 1885, Lavigne had returned to Paris. Carnonnel recalls being surprised to see him again, after two years, at a demonstration that took place at this time, in response to the news that Jules Vallés was dying. As revolutionaries from all over Paris gathered to salute Vallés and the Commune, Carnonnel writes, Lavigne had marched with the Germans in the procession, "whom we had to defend against the cowardly aggression of the *grelotteux* of the Latin Quarter and disguised *mouchards* … who saluted the socialists' funeral procession with stones." In the mournful circumstances, it was a consolation for Carnonnel to see Lavigne again.[45] This anecdote supports the limited evidence of two translators with fairly different political commitments or modes of political activity.

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[43] MECW 47, pp.62-63 (FE to LL, October 15, 1883)
[44] Besse, "Le mouvement ouvrier dans l'Oise 1890-1914."
[45] Carnonnel, "Paul Lavigne."

Fortin did not send a copy of the translation to Engels and probably stopped working on it for some time. In May, 1885, he wrote again with apologies for a "long silence." A newborn and "the rigors of social combat for material life," he wrote, "have pitilessly destroyed every minute of my freedom." He has been re-reading *Capital*, for the second and third time, still looking forward to the second volume, and struggling to revise the translation of the *Brumaire.* Now he mentions that he had begun the work with a friend, not named here, who "has misrepresented our first agreement," but he hopes that Engels still wants to work with him. As in his earlier letter, he suggests another project beyond this one, a "complete works" of Marx to be published by subscription.[46]

Fortin was not only or even mainly interested in the translation of the *Brumaire.* As earlier with Marx, his goal was a useful relationship. After Engels reaffirmed that they could still work together on the translation, Fortin responded with another request. "The most conscious workers of our city" were starting to see "the necessity of a class action," and he had been asked to give them a course on political economy.[47] He wanted advice on teaching. Engels responded by sending a copy of his recent work, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State.* He may also have sent the *Communist Manifesto,* because he asked Fortin to recommend a publisher for a French translation.[48]

Fortin wrote again in June, finally sending a rough draft of the first chapter of the *Brumaire*. "I'm afraid I have translated nonsense for *Fleischtöpfen Ägyptens*," he confessed, probably unfamiliar with the Biblical expression "fleshpots of Egypt," which

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[46] Fortin to Engels, May 12, 1885
[47] Fortin to Engels, May 25, 1885.
[48] Fortin thanks Engels for *The Origins of the Family* in his letter of May 25.

Marx had used to compare French nostalgia for Napoleon to the story about Jews in the desert longing to return to the relative comforts of Egyptian slavery. Fortin had not yet found time to read the *Origins of the Family,* but he wrote with awe about the *Manifesto,* as if he might not even have read it before. After Feuerbach, he declares, Marx and Engels are the "definitive voice of emancipation." In his course on political economy, he had begun to "survey the developments of Marx [sic] and illustrate them with the facts of French and English history. My first lecture was understood and at certain points outpaced by the spontaneous reflections of the workers in the audience ..."

Work on the translation was going slowly, Fortin explained in early August, but he wondered if it should appear before the upcoming legislative elections and suggested two publishers, Oriol and Auguste Ghio.[49] By this point, however, Lavigne had approached Lafargue independently, and on August 5, he wrote to Engels directly, sending him a finished manuscript. Engels wrote to Lafargue to figure out what was going on. "One fine day [Lavigne] appeared in our midst," Lafargue responded, "saying that he had translated Marx's *18th Brumaire* and *The Holy Family*, that Fortin did not know the ABC of German." This may have been what Fortin meant when he wrote that Lavigne was "misrepresenting" their agreement. Lavigne was apparently persuasive at first. When the POF prepared to launch its first newspaper, *Le Socialiste,* the editors even asked him translate the *Communist Manifesto*. "But after going over the translation for the first number," Lafargue reported, "we decided it had to be thrown into the waste-

[49] Fortin to Engels, 5 August 1885.

paper basket … Lavigne seems to me slightly mad…"[50] The task fell instead to his wife, Marx's daughter, Laura Lafargue, whose translation of the *Manifesto* was published from August to November, 1885.

When Fortin read the new *Socialiste*, he claims, he was surprised to see Lavigne's name among the contributors. He wrote to him through the newspaper that the translation was still being revised, and to ask if he should include Lavigne's name as translator. Lavigne responded "in a rage," accusing Fortin of theft, while Fortin protested that the work had been "completely redone [*refondue*]," according to their initial agreement—that Lavigne was supposed to "quickly sketch" a draft, while Fortin would "put the thing in a French as lively, alert and expressive as possible." Fortin now proposed anonymous publication: "Marx's work is so beautiful that we must consider ourselves very happy when we can work *discreetly* on its dissemination." Fortin did not explain the situation to Engels until early November, after further inquiries. He claimed that he had not wanted to bother Engels with such a trivial matter.[51] Engels wrote to Lavigne in December that he was working with Fortin and would not look at the manuscript that Lavigne had sent, to avoid any possible influence.[52] There was still no rush. The elections of October, 1885, were the only relevant occasion that was mentioned.[53] Now that they were over, in "this affair of the translation of the *18 Brumaire*," Fortin awaited instructions from Engels.[54]

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[50] Paul Lafargue to Engels, 4 November 1885, translated in MECW , endnote 481, p. 612.
[51] Fortin to Engels, November 8, 1885
[52] Engels to Paul Lavigne, December 1, 1885 (in MECW 47); Lavigne to Engels, December 7.
[53] Fortin to Engels, November 5, mentions two letters from Engels on the elections in *Le Socialiste*, and Fortin's letter on December 6 refers to an article that he wrote for *Le Socialiste* on November 28, "Socialisme vaincu."
[54] Fortin to Engels, December 25. By January, 1886, Engels was "about 1/3 already done" reviewing Fortin's translation. Engels to Sorge, January 29, 1886.

By this time, Engels was helping Fortin build a local reputation, as Fortin was becoming more clearly politically active. Fortin describes reading a letter from Engels to his circle, now about foreign affairs rather than economics, and their meeting on the "military question."[55] This became a recurring theme in Fortin's letters, in tandem with growing tensions with Germany and the growing popularity of General Boulanger, who became Minister of War in January, 1886. In April, Fortin describes a work that he had written, "Development of Productive and Destructive Forces," probably the history of military technology later published in *Le Socialiste* as "The Military Question."[56] At least one sentence in the published version bears a suspicious resemblance to Marx*:* "The incessant menace of a general conflagration stands like a nightmare in the minds of the living," Fortin writes, "and weighs on the best brains." If this is inspired by the famous sentence from the *Brumaire,* the "nightmare" of tradition has been replaced by a fear of the future.[57]

Work on the translation continued slowly. In September, 1886, Fortin sent chapters IV and V, apologizing for a long silence caused by "the necessities of work and the extension of local propaganda."[58] By the end of the year, he had made it through chapter VI. He was still holding antiwar meetings with his socialist circle, which was "limited to twenty workers, under the necessity of bourgeois law," drawing on writings

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[55] Fortin to Engels, February 1, 1886.
[56] Fortin to Engels, April 11, 1886. He claims here that the work was inspired by a part of the *Anti-Dühring,* pp. 158-166.
[57] "La menace incessante d'une conflagration générale se dresse comme un cauchemar dans l'esprit des vivants, et déprime les meilleurs cerveaux." In Fortin's published translation of the *Brumaire*, traditions of the past "pòse comme un cauchemar sur le cerveau des vivants."
[58] Fortin to Engels, September 13, 1886. He was unsure how to translate "Klaus Zettel," in the allusion to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on p. 204, leaving it for Engels to decide.

by Engels and asking him technical military questions.[59] In February, 1887, the *Sozialdemokrat* published a statement: "After listening to lectures arranged by the socialist circle in Beauvais about the 'origins of the Commune' and 'the military question,' 213 citizens [*Bürger und Bürgerinnen*] present offer to German social democracy the deepest expression of their solidarity."[60]

The idea of publishing the *Brumaire* came up again in June 1887, as the POF prepared to launch a second series of *Le Socialiste,* and Fortin sent the last two chapters to Laura Lafargue, who had taken over from Engels the task of reviewing it. At this point, however, Engels wanted a guarantee that it would not just be serialized but also published as a pamphlet. This was a promise that the Guesdists could not yet make, because they did not yet have their own press.[61] In the new series of *Le Socialiste,* Fortin was now listed as one of the editors. In August, the newspaper belatedly reported the death of Paul Lavigne, who had died in May. It promised an obituary by "our sympathetic friend Fortin," but no such article seems to have appeared.[62]

Fortin's political profile continued to rise. In September, he put his knowledge of *Capital* to use in an article on a strike by metalworkers in Montataire, for example, invoking the concept of a "reserve army of labor," which he had discussed with Engels in one of his letters.[63] In November, *Le Socialiste* reported on a public meeting of the

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[59] Fortin to Engels, December 31, 1886.
[60] They particularly approved a certain speech against Bismarck by Hasenklever and pledged, on 21 February, "gegen die wiederholten Brutalitäten des kleinen Belagerungszustandes zu protestiren, indem sie nur Namen von Sozialisten in die Wahlurne werfen."
[61] Fortin to Guesde, June 4, 1887; Engels to Guesde, June 11; Fortin to Engels, June 14.
[62] *Le Socialiste,* August 20, 1887.
[63] *Le Socialiste,* September 3, 1887.

socialist circle in Beauvais at which Fortin was joined by Jean Gédéon, a veteran of the Commune, and Edouard Vaillant, the leading heir to the legacy of Auguste Blanqui.[64] In January, 1888, it began to publish his treatise on military technology, but it ceased publication again after its issue of February 4, interrupting Fortin's history in the eighteenth century.[65] The February 4 issue also contains Carnonnel's obituary for Lavigne. It presents him as a selfless victim of bourgeois society, who was robbed of his intellectual potential by a "cruel and stupid" death, providing some balance to the negative impressions of Fortin and Lafargue.

In the spring of 1888, when General Boulanger was still mainly seen as a man of the left, Paul Lafargue resisted the widespread comparisons to Bonapartist seizures of power.[66] He wrote to Engels, "All the newspapers compare the situation with the 18 Brumaire and December 2; I believe they are vastly mistaken." Boulanger's strength came "solely from the poverty-stricken popular masses … the elements, not of a coup d'état, but of a revolution."[67] He made this argument in some detail for *Die Neue Zeit*, in terms that certainly suggest the *Brumaire* to a reader today, although Lafargue is supposed not to have been able to read German.[68] Lafargue certainly knew of the work, as

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[64] *Le Socialiste,* November 10, 1887. Jean Léon Osmin, "Jean Gédéon," in *Figures de Jadis* (1934), excerpted in *Le Populaire*, February 5, 1934, identifies Gédéon (1848-1922) as a former "delegate to the central committee of the National Guard." His actual name was Gédéon Jean, according to Besse, "Le mouvement ouvrier dans l'Oise 1890-1914."
[65] *Le Socialiste,* January 21 and 28 [?], 1888
[66] Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 76.
[67] Lafargue to Engels, April 24, 1888.
[68] According to Gary Steenson, who notes that Laura Lafargue once described her husband receiving the second volume of *Capital* but unable to read it: "The book has been reverently *looked at* and handled ..."

he mentions it already in the early 1870s, and he may have been influenced by it through others. But he does not follow Marx at all closely, and it is likely that many of their shared ideas were simply common at the time.

Lafargue emphasizes the need to analyze, not personalities, but the "concrete moment" [*sachliche Moment*] that makes the population "inclined to Caesarist tendencies." He carefully explains that he uses the word "Caesarist" only for lack of an alternative, not to imply any useful historical analogies. He criticizes the belief in historical repetition more generally, distinctly evoking the *Brumaire*: "Man loves to create, not only gods, but also his ancestors in his own image. Modern man believes that he finds himself everywhere in the past. He sees the difference only in costume." This false relation to the past can only be overcome with a "scientific handling of history, of which we so far possess only the beginning." What distinguishes scientific history is its perception of difference where common sense sees only similarity.[69] Lafargue's main point is a simple one: "World history does not repeat itself." Boulanger is not Napoleon III, any more than the latter was his uncle, and France in 1888 differs profoundly from France in 1851. For example, republicanism has now won so much legitimacy that even monarchists must identify as "conservative republicans."[70]

Gary P. Steenson, *After Marx, before Lenin: Marxism and Socialist Working-Class Parties in Europe, 1884-1914* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 10.

[69] In one notable case, Lafargue emphasizes difference more than Marx does. He tries to explain why arguments on both sides of the "bourgeois revolution" appealed to Rome, rather than, as during the Reformation, to the Bible, proposing that bourgeois or civil society fosters a distinctly "juridical" outlook rather than a religious one, that Roman law "better corresponded to the interests of the princes and the bourgeoisie" than the moral framework of the Bible. This does not fit well with the idea of "bourgeois revolution" in the *Brumaire* or elsewhere in Marx, which clearly includes the English civil war.

[70] "Boulanger und die französische Sozialisten," *Die Neue Zeit*, 6. Jg, 1888.

In downplaying the threat, Lafargue was particularly at odds with the Possibilists, who used the perceived danger of Boulanger to justify their alliance with Radicals. He was also at odds with the official position of the POF, "Neither Ferry nor Boulanger," which involved a rhetoric of republican defense even when the party was running candidates of "socialist concentration" rather than "republican union." The socialist circle in Beauvais was much too small to run independent candidates, and Fortin was elected to the municipal council in 1888 on a ballot with Radicals.

In Boulanger's first electoral victory in the by-election in Paris in January 1889, the socialists got 17,000 votes, the republican union 162,000, and Boulanger a quarter-million. In a front-page article on "Boulanger's Victory in Paris," on February 3, the *Sozialdemocrat* cited the *Brumaire*, "this book that provides a whole arsenal of political *Lehrstoff,"* attacking the Radicals with a line about the democrats of 1848, "No party overestimates its means more than the democratic party, none deceives itself more fantastically about the situation." On March 9, however, another socialist organ, the *Berliner Volks-Tribüne,* appealed to the *Brumaire* against any rhetoric of historical repetition, and in far more detail.[71] "What the causes of this repetition might be, how such a repetition could be possible in completely different circumstances, after nearly forty years of the most rapid evolution, are questions that are never answered."

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[71] The *Volks-Tribüne* was a forum for a rising group of young intellectuals who set out to elevate and deepen the public understanding of Marx. As the party emerged into legality, several figures from this circle would protest the pragmatic policies of Social Democratic leaders, in what was called the revolt of "the Young Ones," *die Jungen*. Stanley Pierson, *Marxist Intellectuals and the Working-Class Mentality in Germany, 1887-1912* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 12–19.

The *Volks-Tribüne* briefly summarized the differences. Louis-Napoleon had promised peace and "order," while Boulanger represents disorder and war, a "movement." Political power was then in the hands of the notables, now it is with the petit bourgeoisie. The newspaper copies nearly verbatim from Marx the summary of the shifting class alliances that led to December 2 and the distinction between the "revolutionary" and "conservative" peasant. Then it was the conservative peasant who supported Louis-Napoleon, Marx had claimed, now the revolutionary peasant supports Boulanger. This was a far more detailed reading of the *Brumaire* than others that appeared at this time, and like Lafargue, it emphasized historical difference rather than similarity, using the *Brumaire* to illuminate the "concrete moment" by contrast to another time.[72]

The annual commemorative issue of the *Sozialdemokrat* for the anniversary of the "March days," the Berlin revolution in 1848, also related the *Brumaire* to Boulanger. The work is presented here in a bold and new way, as "the political counterpart of *Capital*." While admitting the outrageousness of this comparison between a life's work and occasional writing, the author sees the *Brumaire* as essential from a philosophical point of view, to refute the idea that Marx "denies individuality." Along with this use as a "history textbook," it also has a specific contemporary interest: "The circumstances are not completely the same, but ... the analogies leap into view. Whoever wants to understand Boulangism can do no better than to read the *Eighteenth Brumaire*." It quoted at length several complex passages that are not often quoted, about Bonaparte's character

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[72] "Boulanger und Louis Napoleon?" *Berliner Volks-Tribüne,* March 9, 1889.

as adventurer, the developing fixation on a coup d'état, and the ineptitude of the bourgeois parties. Even with all these similarities in view, the conclusion was a question, not a prediction: "Will the farce of December 2, this parody of the 18 Brumaire of Year VIII, repeat itself once more in a double parody?"[73]

At the beginning of the 1880s, the POF was tiny, with about 1000 members, few resources, and little real organization.[74] It held only one congress that decade, in 1884. In Parisian municipal elections that year, the Possibilists won over 33,000 votes, while the POF won only 800.[75] At the end of the decade, the POF had perhaps 6000 members, the FTSF about 15,000. After the defeat of Boulanger, the Guesdists made significant gains and organized a successful demonstration for the first May Day, 1890. They were finally able, with great difficulty, to establish a party press, through Georges Delory in Lille, who also published *Le Socialiste.*[76] In September 1890, the paper became a weekly and was covering its costs by the end of the year.

In December, Fortin wrote to Engels to ask him to authorize the publication of the *Brumaire* in the *Socialiste*. He also mentions that Malon's *Revue Socialiste* had asked about publication. This supports other evidence that there were no simple implications of the *Brumaire* for the politics of Boulangism, on which the *Socialiste* and the *Revue*

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[73] "Zum Gedenktag Karl Marx," *Der Sozialdemokrat*, 16 Mar 1889, No. 11.
[74] Jacques Kergoat, "France," in *The Formation of Labour Movements, 1870-1914: An International Perspective*, ed. Marcel van der Linden and Jürgen Rojahn (Leiden: Brill, 1990).
[75] Gary P. Steenson, *After Marx, before Lenin: Marxism and Socialist Working-Class Parties in Europe, 1884-1914* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 130.
[76] Cahen, "Les Premiers Éditeurs." On Delory, see Bernard Simler, "Un socialiste, Gustave Delory (1857-1925)," *Revue du Nord* 56, no. 221 (1974): 221–31.

Socialiste took different stances. Engels gave permission to the *Socialiste* "with pleasure" (as he wrote to Laura Lafargue) but declared that he would never agree to publication in the *Revue Socialiste.* The forthcoming translation was finally announced in *Le Socialiste,* on December 31, 1890, as a "historical work," "the most complete and the most profound that has been written on the Revolution of 1848."[77]

There is no mention of its timeliness, but an article in the same issue may illustrate the way that it was now seen as a resource for discussing the new questions of a party reaching out to new audiences. The article responds to a dispatch by German socialists on the need for propaganda among agricultural workers. Following their example, it calls for "profoundly studying the agricultural question," mentioning the *Brumaire* together with "the last pages in the first volume of *Capital*" (those on colonization) and "fragments in the second volume" as good sources. The *Brumaire* began to appear on January 7, 1891. It was reprinted in a few other newspapers associated with the party, which relied very heavily on the *Socialiste* for all of their content.[78] As Engels had insisted, it was also published by Delory as a pamphlet.

Le Socialiste published the *Brumaire* as feuilletons, spreading the original seven sections over some two dozen issues. Beginning with the second installment, each

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[77] Clemenceau's *La Justice* (3 January 1891) noticed with approval the forthcoming translation in *Le Socialiste*.

[78] These smaller newspapers routinely copied whole pages from *Le Socialiste*. See Claude Willard, *Les Guesdistes,* 31. For examples, see *La Défense des travailleurs: organe socialiste de Saint-Quentin et de l'Aisne* (https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5609875q) and *L'Autonomie: Organe Socialiste Anti-religieux* (https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5502980z), which both printed the *Brumaire* along with many of the surrounding stories.

excerpt included the title and a small woodcut portrait of Marx, drawing attention to the *Brumaire* and distinguishing it from other material in *Le Socialiste.*[79] This was a unique graphic element in *Le Socialiste,* one of the *only* images that appeared in the entire newspaper. A footnote at the beginning attributes the translation to Fortin and claims that it is based on the third edition of 1885, although the text of the first two chapters in fact follow the second edition, reflecting its earlier textual history.[80] Günther Kluge, who reviewed the whole translation for its possible publication in MEGA in 2002, called it generally faithful to Marx's lexicon and style, with occasional small insertions or elaborations of terms.[81] I focus here only on the translation of the historical law that Engels ascribes to Marx in the 1885 preface and several key terms known to cause translation problems: *Weltgeschichte, bürgerliche Gesellschaft,* and *Lumpenproletariat.*

The translator(s) took some liberties with the preface by Engels. For example, the German version introduces the *Brumaire* as a "little text," *Schriftchen,* while in French it is an "important work," *œuvre importante*. This must be a conscious intervention, not a mistake. In German, it is "a short, epigrammatic *Darstellung*," while in French, it is "a concise and mordant *étude*." The choices here seem to reinforce the view of the *Brumaire* as an "important work." Other choices in the translated preface suggest distinctive ideas

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[79] The regular display of Marx's portrait at Guesdists meetings may have begun only later in the 1890s, perhaps copying a practice at Congresses of the International. Robert C. Stuart, *Marxism at Work: Ideology, Class, and French Socialism during the Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 24, fn. 15, gives an example from 1897.
[80] Merkel-Melis, "Zur Entstehung der französischen Ausgabe des 18. Brumaire Des Louis Bonaparte."
[81] For example, in chapter one, where Marx writes that the Paris proletariat immediately recognized the *Charakter* of the National Assembly after February, the Fortin translation has *caractère réactionnaire.* This apparently contradicts the *Brumaire's* explicit rejection of the concept of "reaction." Kluge also notes that some German insults are translated with neutral words in French: *Simpel* (simpleton) as *naïf, Preßbengel* (press urchin?) as *journaliste dans le presse*. Perhaps Fortin did not understand some connotations.

about why it is important and its mode of representation. In German, the work "presented the whole course of French history since the February revolution in its interconnection [*innere Zusammenhang*], resolved the miracle of December 2 into the natural, necessary result of this connection [*Zusammenhang*]." *Zusammenhang* can mean "context" or "connection," but its meaning here seems to be something like coherence. In French, in contrast, the work "demonstrated the fatal concatenation [*enchaînement*] of successive events and presented the miracle of December 2 as the necessary and natural result of this series of events."[82] The coherence or interconnection of a course of history includes connections among many kinds of things, not just events but, for example, individuals and groups, social and political forms and mental representations. In contrast, *enchaînement* here seems to mean just causal ties between successive events.

Together with this new emphasis on causal links between events, as opposed to ideas of historical totality or structural determination, Fortin imposes a certain understanding of the kind of knowledge that went into the work. In German, Marx's knowledge of French history in general is *genau,* exact, while in French it is *profond*. This emphasizes insight over precision. In the original, French class struggle is uniquely *akute*, while in translation it is "violent and acute."[83] Although "acute" is often used to mean something like "dire," in this context it means sharply or clearly expressed, as in the "classical" political forms that France is supposed to have achieved, not necessarily implying a distinctive violence. The translator introduces the idea of French class struggle

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[82] démonstrait l'enchaînement fatal des évènements successifs
[83] akute, violente et aigue

as distinctly violent and perhaps the hope that Marx explains this violence. The "great law of motion of history" discovered by Marx becomes a "great law presiding over the march of history."[84]

The emphasis on serial history expresses a significant shift in the meaning of Marx's work, or at least, from that work as interpreted by Engels. The displacement of the idea of France as a "classical" symbol by the idea of France as distinguished by its violent class struggles also seems significant here. The first and perhaps most important part of the "law of motion" as formulated by Engels is that "all historical struggles … in whatever ideological field … are the expression of class struggles." This does not really have to do with how one event leads to the next in a "march of history" or with any explanation of class violence. In the second part of the supposed law, that the existence of classes is conditioned by economic development and mode of production, the German "conditioned" (*bedingt*) becomes "determined" (*déterminée*).[85] Most strikingly, in German, the law of motion is compared to the "law of the transformation of energy," in French to the "law of the conservation of force." Here an allusion to the new field of thermodynamics seems to be misunderstood as an allusion to mechanics.[86] This was recognized as an error at the time, as it was corrected when the translation was republished as a pamphlet.

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[84] das große Bewegungsgesetz der Geschichte / la grande loi présidant à la marche de l'histoire
[85] The French also adds the word "dominant" to "mode of production" here: *Art und Weise ihrer Produktion / mode dominant de production.* Another small discrepancy: in German, modes of production "condition" exchange, while the French has exchange "corresponding to" mode of production.
[86] Fortin's letters to Engels include extensive discussions of the idea of "labor power" that may be relevant here. He also draws a comparison between historical materialism and astronomical explanation that may be influenced by this passage.

The history of the translation process makes it difficult to ascribe specific errors like this one to any one of the several people involved. For simplicity, I ascribe them to "Fortin," granting that they may have been made by someone else. It is unlikely that they were made by Engels, who could perhaps be blamed instead for his lack of influence, for his neglect of the way that his own interpretation of Marx was being handled here. I cannot consider here the translation of the text itself in detail but will only discuss a few word choices, *Weltgeschichte*, *bürgerlich,* and *Lumpenproletariat.* There is no simple solution in these cases, but different passages may lead to different choices. Translation is not just a series of independent substitutions of words or sentences in one language for those in another. Translators come to texts with vast conceptual and textual "grids" that may be more or less flexible and sensitive to textual context.[87] The Fortin translation shows a little more variety in word choices than the scholarly one that I will consider later, which tries to maintain consistency, even to the point of making mistakes.

Recent discussions of Marx and world history in English do not define the term "world history," let alone historicize it.[88] Its meaning is hardly self-evident. Guillaume Fondu and Jean Quétier propose that *Weltgeschichte* as used by Marx has no obvious equivalent in French. They reject *histoire du monde,* which implies "the history of a world that pre-exists in some form or another outside of historical development."

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[87] Melvin Richter, "Introduction: Translation, The History of Concepts and the History of Political Thought," in *Why Concepts Matter: Translating Social and Political Thought*, ed. Martin J. Burke and Melvin Richter, Studies in the History of Political Thought 6 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2012).
[88]Andrew Sartori, "Hegel, Marx, and World History," in *A Companion to Global Historical Thought* (John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 197–212; Michael R. Krätke, "Marx and World History," *International Review of Social History* 63, no. 1 (April 1, 2018): 91.

Considering the *German Ideology* manuscripts, Fondu and Quétier suggest that for Marx and Engels *Weltgeschichte* is itself "a historically situated phenomenon, beginning with the expansion of the market and the transformation of human activities into activities of global dimension." They recommend *histoire mondiale*.[89] The French translators of the *Brumaire* in the nineteenth century were more inclined just to abandon the "world" altogether.

Most of the references to *Weltgeschichte* in the *Brumaire* are in the first chapter, where it appears six times, or in later references back to the same topics discussed there. Edouard Fortin and his collaborators choose *histoire du monde* for *Weltgeschichte* and its derivatives just twice.[90] Where the famous first sentence of the *Brumaire* refers to "great world-historical facts and people," *grossen weltgeschichtlichen Thatsachen und Personen,* the French has *grands faits de l'histoire du monde, avec leurs personnages*. A bit later in the first chapter, *Weltgeschichtsszene* is *scène de l'histoire du monde.* Otherwise, the "world" is just dropped. In the passage on bourgeois revolutions, *weltgeschichtliche Rückerinnerung* becomes *réminiscences historiques.* Where the revolutionaries of February imagine that they are performing a *weltgeschichtliche That,* the translators have them imagining *un événement de premier ordre.* When the June insurrection is defeated with "the honor of great world-historical battles," this becomes *les honneurs du grand combat historique.*

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[89] Fondu and Quétier, "Comment traduire Marx?"
[90] In Brunkhorst, ed., *Der achtzehnte Brumaire,* the relevant passages are on pp. 9, 10, 12, 13, and 18.

In part V, Louis Bonaparte becomes the victim of his own *Weltanschauung* when he "takes his comedy as world history." Here *Weltanschauung* becomes *manière de voir* and the simple *histoire* is used again.[91] In Part VI, he seeks his prototype, *Vorbild,* "not in the annals of world history," although he holds power like Cromwell or Napoleon, but "in the annals of the criminal courts [*Kriminalgerichtsbarkeit*]."[92] Here again there is no *histoire du monde,* just *histoire.* In short, the question here is not the one that faces us today, how to express one or another distinctive idea of global history. Rather, it is whether to express the "world" in "world history" and similar formations, like *Weltanschauung.* In part III, one reference to a *bürgerliche Weltordnung* becomes *système bourgeois integral.* The word *Weltmarkt,* which appears just twice in the *Brumaire,* in connection with a supposed market glut and signs of crisis in 1851, becomes *marché universel.*[93] The significance of this lexical evidence can hardly be determined in isolation, but it does merit further research.

I have discussed earlier the central problem word *bürgerlich.* In the first English translation, by the German-born Wilhelm Pieper, *bürgerlich* was not equivalent to *bourgeois.* A *bürgerliche Monarchie* was a "constitutional monarchy," for example, and *bürgerliche Republik* was *sometimes* "civil republic." *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft* was "commonwealth" or just "society," and the past participle *verbürgerlicht* was "civilized." Marx himself, writing in French in the 1840s, used *société civile* for *bürgerliche Gesellschaft,* and in English in the 1850s, used "civil society," but his translators have

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[91] Brunkhorst, ed., *Der achtzehnte Brumaire,* p. 70
[92] Brunkhorst, p. 109
[93] Brunkhorst, pp. 102-3

almost always used *société bourgeoise* or *"*bourgeois society." There may well be a distinction in Marx, not indicated by a simple choice of words, between civil society in general and a more specifically bourgeois civil society.[94] If that is true, the distinction is certainly obscured by choosing "bourgeois society" in every case.[95] The word *bürgerlich* appears 53 times in the German *Brumaire,* and it is translated by Fortin as "bourgeois" at least forty times. The exceptions, however, show that he gave this some thought. They often occur at places where there is a conceptual or political tension in translating *bürgerlich* as *bourgeois.* Sometimes "civil" is used to express a (positive) relation to the civil, civic, or civilian, as opposed to the cruelty associated with the "bourgeois." Here the political context of the "military question" is important to bear in mind.

In part one and two of the Fortin translation, there is no ambiguity with respect to society, republic, and monarchy. These are all now "bourgeois." In a list of things that seem to have vanished with the December 2 coup, however, *bürgerlich Gesetz* is *loi civile,* civil law, not *loi bourgeoise.* This may seem merely natural, but as noted earlier in passing, Fortin did refer to law as "bourgeois" when referring to the restrictions on his socialist circle. The choice of *"*civil" here may express, consciously or not, a certain distinction between good "protective" laws and bad "repressive" ones. The later French translator, Léon Rémy, will choose *bourgeoise* here.

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[94] This is drawn for example in the commentary to the old *Marx-Engels Complete Works*, and also Fondu and Quétier, "Comment traduire Marx?"

[95] Guillaume Fondu and Jean Quétier, "Comment traduire Marx?" This tension, they claim, was particularly evident in "the oldest translations, realized in a context of strong politicization," which chose the term *société bourgeois*e. Fondu and Quétier mainly refer to writings by Marx that were first translated in the 1920s, such as the *German Ideology* manuscripts.

Another exception occurs in certain passages in part III that discuss the relationship between the military and the rest of society. Here *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* is translated as *vie civile,* "civic life," while *bürgerliche Allmacht,* "civil omnipotence," is rendered using *puissance civile,* "civil power." In part IV, in a passage about what the state machine controls, *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* is *sociéte civile*. Later in the same chapter, *sogenannten bürgerlichen Freiheiten* is "so-called civil liberties," *les prétendues libertés civiles*. As with *bürgerlich Gesetz,* Rémy will make the mistake of choosing "bourgeois" here, accidentally implying that the laws are falsely called bourgeois. In a few other cases, the choice of "civil" over "bourgeois" expresses a similar idea of inclusion. In chapter VII, Marx writes that the French revolution created *die bürgerliche Einheit der Nation,* and *die Teilung der Arbeit innerhalb der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. For Fortin, this is *l'unité civile de la nation*, the "civil unity of the nation," and the division of labor takes place within *sociètè civile.* In contrast, *bürgerliche Ordnung,* the common German phrase for "civil order," is *ordre bourgeois.*

The last "problem term" worth considering is *Lumpenproletariat.* As Merkel-Melis and Kluge note, Fortin and his translators rendered this in many ways, including *la populace bohémienne, la bohème, la pègre, la racaille,* and *le prolétariat des vagabonds.* Although the use of the word by Marx and Engels was noticed and criticized already before the *Brumaire,* as it was used in the *Manifesto,* its meaning does not seem to have been much discussed even in the German socialist press before the 1890s, when Karl Kautsky's commentary on the Erfurt Program especially elevated its prominence. Under that influence, the later English translator Daniel De Leon always used his own term,

"slum proletariat," while the later French translator Rémy translates it always as *la canaille* and includes the German in a footnote each time. Fortin clearly does not treat *Lumpenproletariat* as a technical term and may be just guessing about its meaning from the ways that it is used by Marx.

The Rémy-Hamon Translation (1900)

The history of the second French translation of the *Brumaire* is much shorter than that of the first and has a different character. For Léon Rémy, the translation of the *Brumaire* was just one part of a broader project to translate selected works of Marx that would illustrate historical materialism in its "purity," in opposition to its misrepresentation by Engels and other disciples. This idea of a "pure" Marx was fairly original in its time, and its sense is hardly self-evident. Critics of Marx and others might look to *Capital* as an example, at a time when the *German Ideology* manuscripts were not yet known, or simply to the abstract formulation in the preface to the 1859 *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.* Rémy distinguished "historical" from "economic" writings, and wanted to give them equal weight. He also included in the "historical" works at least two that we rarely count as historical, let alone as evidence of the meaning of historical materialism.

Rémy's relationship to Marx may have been informed by his unusually long participation in a "revolutionary socialist" student group in Paris. For Rémy's collaborator Augustin Hamon, an autodidactic social thinker whose knowledge of Marx

was more limited, the translation of Marx was just one part of an attempted series on the "sociological sciences." He and Rémy found themselves on the same side of some major conflicts within socialism, but they were not particularly close in their thinking and did not work intimately on this edition. I treat them here as having independent goals that happened to overlap, each best understood through his own intellectual and political formation. The documentation of their joint work shows a great deal of improvisation. I will try here to coordinate their decisions to the shifting political circumstances of the time, even though the connection is not always clear.

Augustin Hamon is not a famous figure, but his life is unusually well documented.[96] Parts of it have been studied.[97] Born in 1862 in Nantes, he moved to Paris when he was six. His father was a metalworker and inventor, who tried unsuccessfully to start a company to produce a type of tin-lined lead pipe for water. Hamon had an early interest in chemistry, physics, and public hygiene. Hamon had no university education, but he was writing for various popular-science publications by 1881, published a book on drinking water and lead in 1884, and participated in an international congress on hygiene in Vienna in 1887. One publication from 1888 calls him a "Member of French, Spanish,

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[96] The Augustin Hamon Papers, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam, include thousands of letters, some catalogues of his personal library, and papers relating to his work as an editor and publisher. He also left thousands of pages of daily journals, including those recently published in Augustin Hamon, *Mémoires d'un en-dehors les années parisiennes (1890-1903),* ed. Patrick Galliou (Brest: Centre de recherche bretonne et celtique, 2013). This covers some of 1890-1, 1896-7, and early 1898, but not the period in which Hamon was producing his "sociological sciences" series. Galliou's "Élements d'une biographie," in this volume, is more detailed than its title suggests, but it does not analyze political or intellectual context in detail.

[97] Dominique Le Page, "De Paris à La Bretagne: Augustin Hamon," *Le Mouvement social*, 1992, 99–124; Kaat Wils, "Der Wettstreit der Utopiesoldaten. Augustin Hamon: Wissenschaft, Literatur und Anarchismus," in *Anarchismus und Utopie in der Literatur um 1900: Deutschland* (Königshausen & Neumann, 2005); Guillaume Davranche, "Pelloutier, Pouget, Hamon, Lazare et le retour de l'anarchisme au socialisme (1893-1900)," *Cahiers d'histoire. Revue d'histoire critique*, no. 110 (2009): 139–161.

Russian, and Florentine hygiene societies, of the Hygiene Society of the Province of Quebec, of the Climatological Society of Algeria, of the Hygiene Society of Palermo, and the librarian of the Society of Hygiene and Childhood."[98]

Hamon shared some common tendencies of his time, including a deterministic view of human behavior, a fear of national "degeneration," an anti-parliamentarian hostility to the government of the Third Republic, and a left-wing anti-Semitism.[99] In June, 1890, he started to collaborate with an "organ of socialist concentration" called *L'Égalité,* apparently in homage to the "collectivist" newspapers that had predated *Le Socialiste,* the organ of the POF.[100] One of the newspaper's editors, Alexandre Zévaès, warned Hamon that some of his writings had been cited by the anti-Semitic author Jean Drault in something unambiguously called *Anti-Juif*.[101] Hamon denied responsibility for whomever cited his work, but he was compelled to write a brief note disavowing Drault. It is not clear what writings by Hamon were at issue here. Besides writing on avant-garde authors such as Ibsen, he had recently published in *L'Égalité* an article denying the existence of free will and moral or criminal responsibility, arguing that human psychology was completely determined by heredity and "milieu."[102] This belief in a form

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[98]Galliou, "Élements d'une biographie," pp. 22-23

[99]At this time, Hamon was associated with the anti-Semitic and anti-parliamentarian publisher Albert Savine. The first entry in his edited journals, from December 1890, describes a discussion of Boulanger with Savine.

[100] This newspaper is identified with the Guesdists by Patrick Galliou, in his introduction to Hamon, *Mémoires d'un en-dehors les années parisiennes (1890-1903)*, 29–30.and in Wils, "Der Wettstreit Der Utopiesoldaten. Augustin Hamon" In both cases, the conclusion is that Hamon moved from the *Parti ouvrier* to anarchism. But I take the title *L'Égalité* to recall the ecumenical "collectivism" of 1877-1880.

[101] Hamon, *Mémoires d'un en-dehors les années parisiennes (1890-1903)*, 94. This may be the newspaper *Anti-Juif* in Algiers. The state of the French anti-Semitic movement around 1890 and its relationship to socialism and anarchism is discussed in Robert F. Byrnes, "Antisemitism in France before the Dreyfus Affair," *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 1 (1949): 49–68.

[102]At the end of December, 1890: Galliou, "Élements d'une biographie," pp. 32-3

of determinism was hardly unusual at the time and was often associated with progressive or revolutionary arguments in criminology and law.[103] It became central to Hamon's thinking, including his later idea of the "sociological sciences" and the series in which he included Marx.

The earliest connection between Hamon and Léon Rémy may be in 1892, when both were contributors to a newspaper edited by Fernand Pelloutier.[104] At about the same time, Hamon moved in an increasingly anarchist direction, collaborating with Jean Grave's newspaper *La Révolte* and with *L'Art Social.* When Pelloutier came to Paris in 1893, Hamon claims to have introduced him into Parisian anarchist circles, a category in which Hamon includes Bernard Lazare and Maurice Barrés.[105] During the terrorist scare of these years, Hamon's arguments for determinism and "irresponsibility" moved in an increasingly anti-statist direction. His use of them to defend the anarchist Ravachol, who was executed in July, 1892, and to criticize criminological work on anarchism and criminology more generally, were not unusual for the time, but Hamon created a scandal with his *Psychologie du Militaire professionel,* published in November 1893. Hamon protested that this was a scholarly work, written "to refute a pseudo-scientific work" in the *Archives d'Anthropologie criminelle,* but it was regarded at the time as promoting

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[103]Edward J. Erickson, "Punishing the Mad Bomber: Questions of Moral Responsibility in the Trials of French Anarchist Terrorists, 1886–1897," *French History* 22, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 51–73.
[104] Jacques Julliard, *Fernand Pelloutier et les origines du syndicalisme d'action directe*, Univers historique (Paris: Seuil, 1971), 54.
[105] Augustin Hamon, *Mémoires d'un en-dehors les années parisiennes (1890-1903)*, ed. Patrick Galliou (Brest: Centre de recherche bretonne et celtique, 2013), 31; Julliard, *Fernand Pelloutier et les origines du syndicalisme d'action directe*, 92.

anarchism. Hamon argued that the professional culture of the military promoted brutality.[106]

Hamon's career was slightly affected by the *lois scélérates,* the laws passed in 1894 to ban anarchist propaganda, but it was not necessarily harmed. Shortly afterward, Hamon contributed a chapter on the psychology of the anarchist to a sensationalistic volume on the "Anarchist Peril." Published also in German and English, the work was loosely based on "questionnaires" that were quoted at length, allowing anarchists to defend their own views. This was published as a book, *Psychologie de l'Anarchiste socialiste,* the title and concept, "anarchist socialist," perhaps an attempt to evade the *lois scélérates* but also a plausible label for Hamon himself.[107]

Around the time of a brief exile in London, Hamon expanded his audience to England and Germany, with translations of programmatic articles on anarchism and socialism and "fatherland and internationalism."[108] In particular, he came into contact with Joseph Bloch and the *Sozialistische Akademiker,* the predecessor of the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*. As Hamon later put it, his ideas were "not to the taste of the social democrats and the parliamentarian socialists who presume to chase the anarchist

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[106] On the November 1893 date and the context, see Hamon's own "A propos de 'Socialisme et Anarchisme': En guise de Préface," in *La Société nouvelle: Revue internationale* (Oct-Dec 1908), pp. 129 ff. On Hamon as social psychologist , see Erika Apfelbaum and Ian Lubek, "Augustin Hamon aux origines de la psychologie sociale française.," *Recherches de Psychologie Sociale*, 1982.
[107] Kaat Wils, "Der Wettstreit der Utopiesoldaten. Augustin Hamon: Wissenschaft, Literatur und Anarchismus," in *Anarchismus und Utopie in der Literatur um 1900: Deutschland, Flandern und die Niederlande*, ed. Jaap Grave, Peter Sprengel, and Hans Vandevoorde (Königshausen & Neumann, 2005), 120–38.
[108] In February and March 1895, from *La Société nouvelle*, "Un Anarchisme, Fraction du Socialisme?" was translated into English for the *Free Review,* and into German for Joseph Bloch's *Sozialistische Akademiker*. *Patrie et internationalisme* was translated as "Das Vaterland," in *Der sozialistische Akademiker*, 1 Jg., n. 21 (1 Nov 1895).

communists from the great socialist family."[109] Hamon also became involved with the emerging syndicalist movement, attending the International Socialist Congress in London in 1896 as a delegate of the Nantes *Bourse du Travail*. With Pelloutier and the support of the Allemanist POSR, he organized resistance to "the hegemony of German social democracy, represented then in France by the POF."[110] For Hamon, this confrontation marked an "epoch" in the history of global socialism, as the first time since Bakunin that the dominant position of German social democracy had been effectively attacked. This is where Hamon and Rémy first crossed political paths.

In the spring of 1897, Hamon found a position teaching criminology at the New University of Brussels, an experimental school founded in 1894 in protest over the dismissal of the anarchist geographer Elisée Reclus from the Free University of Brussels. The course that he taught there was the basis for his later book *Determinisme et responsibilité*.[111] At the same time, Hamon also joined with Belgians in a new journal, *L'Humanité nouvelle*. He appears first as the "director" of the journal in July 1897, when it also began to publish his study on the definition of socialism, in July and October 1897.[112] Hamon maintained his relationship with Bloch, now editing the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*. Georges Sorel also joined *L'Humanité nouvelle*.[113]

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[109] Hamon, "A propos de 'Socialisme et Anarchisme': En guise de Préface," in *La Société nouvelle: Revue internationale* (Oct-Dec 1908), p. 136
[110] Hamon, "A propos de 'Socialisme et Anarchisme'" (1908), p. 136-7.
[111] Hamon, "A propos de 'Socialisme et Anarchisme'" (1908), p. 137
[112] This appeared in English in the *Free Review* (London), in November 1896.
[113] Sorel is listed as a collaborator beginning with the August-September issue of *L'Humanité nouvelle.*

Beginning in January, 1898, *L'Humanité nouvelle* began to be published by Charles Reinwald, Schleicher Brothers, a press with its roots in the free-thinker, materialist and evolutionist movement of the 1860s. Its founder, Charles Reinwald, had published Darwin and Büchner, and in 1875 he began to publish works for a wider audience in his "Bibliothèque des sciences contemporaines." The press was driven by radical ideas as much as by commercial motives. One of Reinwald's authors was the anthropologist Charles Letourneau, mentioned earlier as an influence on young Paul Lavigne. In a speech at Reinwald's funeral in 1891, later quoted in the publisher's catalog, Letourneau declared, "For him, publishing was not a simple trade in which one traffics in printed paper, as one would do with any industrial product." Books were for him "messengers of ideas," a way of spreading "scientific truth."[114] The brothers Schleicher took over the press after Reinwald's death.[115]

Hamon sent a plan for a *Bibliothèque internationale des sciences sociologiques* to the Schleichers in February, 1898.[116] According to the summary that would be included in volumes in the series, Hamon imagined the "sociological sciences" as "a series of sciences relating to society, that is to say, to relations that unite men living in collectivity," namely, economics, politics, ethics, criminology, and social psychology, all clustered around sociology, the science of the development and constitution of human societies. This idea of "sociological sciences" had little to do with either "scientific socialism" or Marxism. The word "sociology" appears rarely in *Le Socialiste*, for

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[114] *Le Cinquantenaire de la Librairie C. Reinwald: 1849-1899* (Paris: Schleicher Bros., n.d. [1899?]), p. 11.
[115] Cahen, "Les Premiers Éditeurs."
[116] Hamon to Schleicher, February 15, 1898, enclosing proposal, in Hamon Papers, Inv. nr. 289

example. Hamon's vision also differs in various ways from other attempts at the time to define the "social sciences" or "sciences of society," but the prominence that it gives to Hamon's interests of criminology and social psychology was typical of the early phase in the "scientization of the social."[117]

Jacqueline Cahen has located this series in the context of a developing commercial field. Its most impressive competitor was the dominant social-scientific publisher of the time, Félix Alcan.[118] For example, in March 1898, as Hamon tried to negotiate simultaneous publication in English with a British publisher, University Press, he explained that his idea was to imitate and compete with Alcan's Bibliotheque Scientifique Internationale, published in English by Kegan Paul. The first volume in the series would be his own *Determinism and Responsibility.* The others were determined gradually, in a somewhat ad-hoc way. For example, in June 1898, one contributor to *L'Humanité nouvelle,* Victor Dave, wrote to Hamon about translating Eduard Bernstein's book on Lassalle, a collection of speeches by Lassalle, and a volume on William Morris. This was apparently the plan, but on June 13, 1898, Hamon wrote to the Schleichers to ask if they wanted to include Marx in the Bibliothèque, and in particular, the 1859 *Zur Kritik,* which had recently been republished in German. Hamon now insisted that this should take priority over the publishing of Lassalle. It would sell well and help to launch

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[117] Kerstin Brückweh et al., eds., *Engineering Society: The Role of the Human and Social Sciences in Modern Societies, 1880-1980* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 10–19. The editors of this volume distinguish a broader phenomenon of the "scientization of the social" (Lutz Raphael) from "scientism," the view that methods from natural science provide a model for studying human societies. "Scientization" simply refers to the application of social science in all kinds of social fields.
[118] Fabiani, *Les Philosophes de la république*, 103–18.

the library, he argued, and the translation was in the public domain. He had already spoken to a translator about a rate of 10 percent of the sales, after the first thousand.

The legal situation significantly influenced the works by Marx that could be included in the series. At the end of 1898, Hamon wanted to publish the second and third volumes of *Capital,* but he had to clarify the legal situation. He learned that the Berne convention of 1886, article 8, had established a generally lenient policy. The translation of any work entered the public domain ten years after its first publication. Under this rule, everything that Marx had published in his lifetime, such as the 1859 *Critique,* could be published in translation without restriction. Unfortunately, the rule did not apply yet to the posthumous volumes of *Capital,* which were first published only in the 1890s. The Schleichers said that the fee requested from Meissner in Hamburg for rights was prohibitive.[119]

The translator of the 1859 *Critique* was Léon Rémy, who delivered the manuscript to the Schleichers in December, 1898.[120] Two weeks later, Rémy sent Hamon a list of five "historical works" by Marx for a proposed collection that would include the *Brumaire.* He includes brief descriptions of the works that he meant to include, assuming that Hamon knew very little about Marx. Rémy adds, "These are the only works in which Marx's theory of historical materialism was applied by Marx. It is only there that it is found in its purity, all the disciples and Engels first have modified it for the needs of the cause." This idea came entirely from Rémy. Hamon had little evident relationship to

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[119] Hamon to Julian Borchardt, November 4, 1898; Borchardt to Hamon on November 5; Hamon to Borchardt, December 11, 1898. Hamon Papers, Inv. nr. 268.
[120] Rémy to Hamon, December 24, 1898, in 546.268.

Marx at all. It is possible that the plan had some relationship to a specific political context, dominated at this time by the Dreyfus Affair, but on a closer inspection of its genesis, a more important factor in the timing seems to be the heated political and commercial competition among different groups of French intellectuals seeking to publish Marx for different reasons.

Léon Rémy was not nearly such a public figure as Hamon. After his death by suicide in 1910, however, he was prominent enough to merit a long obituary in *l'Humanité,* prefaced with a note by Jean Jaurés.[121] It begins with his entry into politics, as one of the founders of the "first socialist group in the Latin Quarter," the *Groupe des étudiants socialistes-révolutionnaires internationalistes de Paris,* founded in December, 1891.[122] This was a tiny group of "socialist concentration," including anarchists, Blanquists, and Guesdists, with several members who went on to careers in politics or journalism. Although it was hardly larger than Fortin's tiny socialist circle in Beauvais, the ESRI has left a much larger mark in the sources and scholarship.

One of the founders, Alexandre Zévaès, mentioned earlier in connection with the newspaper *L'Égalité*, wrote several memoirs of this period. One of them describes Rémy as having "the nature of a conspirator."[123] More generously, Rémy's obituary describes "habitual modesty and extreme reserve." His early political commitments are a bit hard to

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[121] J.L. "Léon Remy," *l'Humanité,* November 22, 1910.
[122] Jean Maitron, "Le groupe des Etudiants Socialistes Révolutionnaires Internationalistes de Paris (1892-1902): Contribution à la connaissance des origines du syndicalisme révolutionnaire," *Le Mouvement social*, no. 46 (1964): 3–26.
[123] Alexandre Zévaès, *Notes et souvenirs d'un militant* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1913), p. 37.

define, in ways that are typical of the French left at this time. The obituary calls him "syndicalist, anti-parliamentary." Recent scholarship sometimes calls him "Blanquist," sometimes "anarchist," or he is said to move from one to the other. He has also been associated with Jean Allemane's *Parti ouvrier socialiste-révolutionnaire*, a "workerist" party that split from Possibilists and believed in the general strike. One article claims that Rémy worked as a typesetter at Allemane's printing shop.[124] Another founding member who became close to Rémy, Marc Pierrot, recalled later, "Many of us had friendly relationships with Jean Allemane."

The statutes of the ESRI affirmed collectivism and the decisions of the congresses of the Second International. It elected a Romanian, George Diamandy, as president and "foreign secretary," and also included several Russians. In March, 1892, it commemorated the Commune with speeches and letters of friendship to the banquets hosted by the Blanquists and the Guesdists.[125] Its main activities that year included reading *Capital* and holding discussions on topics that included evolution, child labor, workplace accidents, "the condition of woman according to Engels," and surplus value and primitive accumulation, as treated by a critic of Marx, Pierre Leroy-Beaulieu.[126] The group grew to 50 or 80 members, partly by attracting more Russians and Romanians.[127]

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[124] Yolande Cohen, "Avoir vingt ans en 1900: à la recherche d'un nouveau socialisme," *Le Mouvement social*, no. 120 (1982): 11–29.
[125] *Le Socialiste,* March 25, 1892.
[126] Maitron, "Le groupe des Etudiants Socialistes Révolutionnaires Internationalistes de Paris (1892-1902)," 6.
[127] One of the new members, in the summer of 1892, was Marie Goldsmith, who became close to Rémy and probably exposed him to the influence of Russian exiles in particular. Marc Pierrot, "Marie Goldsmith," *Plus Loin*, no. 95 (March 1933): 1–4.

The status of students in socialism was becoming a controversial issue in France as well as in Germany at this time.[128] An article in *Le Socialiste* in April, 1891, while not referring to the ESRI directly, denounced students as "the most reactionary party of the bourgeoisie" and called on "the few healthy members of this corporation" to "give up this title of student" and join the *Parti ouvrier.* In November, 1892, Rémy himself published an article in the Allemanist newspaper, a bit confusingly called *Le Parti ouvrier,* that grapples with the issue. Here he describes the members of the ESRI as "bourgeois themselves or destined to become bourgeois," apparently meaning that they are *supposed* to become bourgeois, as he goes on to portray them as undergoing proletarianization. Students know "better than anyone the miseries of the intellectual proletariat, of which most of them form or must inevitably form a part." Renouncing their class origins, they seek to "hasten the explosive revolt that will liberate the proletarianized mass from the phantasmagoric oppression of the bourgeois class." Quoting a journalist who had mocked those "crying 'comrades' in the Latin Quarter," he declared, "We don't care … When it is necessary, there will be frock coats [*redingotes*] alongside the blouses."

One broadsheet, reprinted next to Rémy's article, protested "the ceaseless proletarianization across the industrial, agricultural, and intellectual order" and declared "the necessity of revolt."[129] The group seems to have appealed ambiguously to an actual membership in the "intellectual proletariat" and a potential "proletarianization." Another manifesto published in the Allemanist *Le Parti ouvrier,* on 27 November, refers to "all the

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[128] Christophe Prochasson, *Les intellectuels, le socialisme et la guerre : 1900-1938* (Paris : Seuil, 1993), 30–31.
[129] *Le Parti ouvrier*, November 13-14, 1892.

proletariats [*sic*] (industrial, agricultural, and intellectual)." Along with its dilemmas in theory, by 1893, the ESRI was showing its limits in practice, organizing a congress that failed to materialize and losing members to the radical-socialist *Ligue démocratique des écoles.* At this point, Guesdist members, including Zévaès, split to form a *Groupe des étudiants collectivistes* that supported the POF.[130] Zévaès denied that students were a group with any distinctive class or political identity. In practice, this meant that they should participate in the electoral politics of the POF. It may also have meant avoiding unruly actions, such as the student demonstrations that erupted into "riots" in the Latin Quarter that summer, including fights with police in which one student was killed.[131]

At the same time as the Guesdists left the ESRI, the founding president of the group, George Diamandy, also took an independent course, launching *L'Ère nouvelle,* a journal of materialist theory and culture.[132] This was not a student publication. It rather boasted an aspirational list of "principal collaborators," including the socialist deputies Abel Hovelacque, Lafargue, and Millerand; Gabriel Deville, Jules Guesde, Karl Kautsky, and Engels; and several more revolutionary socialists from France and Russia, mostly not well known today. Engels at least was included on the list without his prior knowledge.[133] When he complained to Laura Lafargue, she explained, "everything written by you, Guesde and Paul, they look upon as public property."[134] In his own defense to Engels,

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[130] Cohen, "Avoir vingt ans en 1900," 14.
[131] Zévaès describes and condemns these "riots" in *Notes et souvenirs d'un militant* (Paris: M. Rivière, 1913), p. 57 ff.
[132] On the role of *L'Ère nouvelle* in propagating Marx and Engels, see Jacqueline Cahen, "Les Premiers Éditeurs de Marx et Engels En France (1880-1901)," Cahiers d'histoire 113 (2011)
[133] FE to Laura Lafargue, July 1893, *Correspondence*, p. 278
[134] Laura Lafargue to FE, July 26, 1893, *Correspondence*, p. 280

Diamandy emphasized that the journal was the first in France exclusively promoting "the materialist and economic conception of history, of literature and art," aspiring to be "our *Neue Zeit*."[135]

As others left the group, Rémy became more visible as a leader. Shortly after the departure of the Guesdists, in August, 1893, he attended the meeting of the Second International in Zürich, as a delegate of the ESRI and two political groups, the *Comité révolutionnaire central* and the *Union socialiste revolutionnaire* of the 6th Arrondissement. With the majority in the French delegation, he opposed the move to exclude anarchists from this congress, proposing the removal of a clause that required participating groups to recognize the need for "political action."[136] This was at odds with the German social democrats and almost every other national delegation, and with the Guesdists in the French delegation, which finally abstained from the vote on the issue.

The same month saw significant electoral success for the POF, confirming its status as a full-fledged party. This is one reason that the activities of the "collectivist" students increasingly overshadowed the ESRI.[137] It is also possible that Rémy's group's plans for "propaganda" were hampered by fears of the *lois scélérates*. In January, one of the founders of the ESRI, J.-L. Breton, was arrested under the laws, for writing a defense of the bomber Auguste Vaillant, and sentenced to two years, although he was pardoned.[138]

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[135] Diamandy to FE, n.d., Marx / Engels Papers, IISH, Amsterdam, L 1119-1122
[136] *Protokoll des Internationalen sozialistischen Arbeiterkongresses in der Tonhalle, Zürich, vom 6. bis 12. August 1893,* p. 5. The only delegation actually to vote against the "political action" clause seems to have been Spain, p. 9.
[137] In the fall of 1893, the ESRI planned a series of lectures by socialist and anarchist leaders, but only a few took place at the time, "for reasons independent of the will of the group." Albert Livet, "Le Mouvement socialiste au quartier latin," *Revue socialiste,* 155 (November, 1897), p. 569 ff.
[138] Zévaès, *Notes et souvenirs d'un militant*, p. 42.

At the same time, attrition may have made the group coherent enough to realize its most plausible goal, "propaganda," making it easier to author pamphlets collectively and to find support with the anarchist press. The ESRI published its first pamphlet, on "Socialism and Students," at the end of 1894, and a second, "Why We Are Internationalists," in early 1895. By 1896, the ESRI became increasingly associated with revolutionary syndicalism, the new synthesis of anarchism and union activism that was emerging at that time.[139]

Hamon and Rémy first met in March, 1896, when Hamon was preparing to attend the International Socialist Congress in London.[140] In his journal, Hamon described Rémy as a "libertarian communist" (*communiste libertaire*), using one of several new designators that was emerging in this context as alternatives to "anarchist" and "collectivist." After returning from the Congress, Rémy published a note once more asking the collectivist student group to repudiate the decision to exclude anarchists.

Rémy also began to collaborate with *L'Humanité nouvelle,* regularly reviewing German journals and books. In the first issue, he critically reviewed the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*.[141] While appreciating the journal's choice to publish socialist and anarchist writers together, Rémy objected that this alone did not seem to involve much sharing of ideas or even mutual understanding. He particularly criticized an article on "socialist and

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[139] The terrorist attacks of 1892-4 are often taken to characterize these years in the history of French anarchism, after a phase of insurrection (1878-1886) and belief in the general strike (1886-1892), preceding the emergence of syndicalism after 1894. See Guillaume Davranche, "Pelloutier, Pouget, Hamon, Lazare et le retour de l'anarchisme au socialisme (1893-1900)," *Cahiers d'histoire. Revue d'histoire critique*, no. 110 (2009): 139–61.
[140] Hamon, *Mémoires d'un en-dehors les années parisiennes (1890-1903)*, p. 176 (Entry for March 23, 1896.)
[141] *L'Humanité nouvelle*, May 1897, p. 110-111

anarchist morality," which he saw as reflecting a simplistic view of anarchism as "individualist." Other reviews suggest an interest in sophisticated philosophical debates. In the November-December issue of 1897, for example, Rémy published a short summary of an article by Edouard von Hartmann in *Die Neue Zeit* denying the "utility of dialectical methods."[142]

During the Dreyfus Affair, Hamon once again crossed the line into an appearance of antisemitism. In September, 1898, *L'Humanité nouvelle* published an article by the Viscount de Colleville on "Antisemitism and the Rights of Man."[143] This provoked some private complaints from figures on the left, including Rémy, who threatened to quit writing for *L'Humanité nouvelle* and seems to have done so.[144] In the November issue, Hamon published an excerpt from the end of Marx's 1843 essay on the Jewish question. This was a fairly obscure rediscovery for the time. The source of the translation was a volume on German religious criticism from nearly fifty years earlier.[145] This was apparently after Rémy and Hamon had discussed the translation of the 1859 *Critique* but just before they began to discuss the idea for the "historical works." It is unclear that there is any link between this disagreement and the publishing plan.

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[142] *L'Humanite nouvelle*, November-December 1897, p. 768
[143] Ludovic Vicomte de Colleville, "L'Antisémitisme et les Droits de l'Homme," *L'Humanite nouvelle,* September 1898, p. 315
[144] Rémy to Hamon, October 4, 1898.
[145] *L'Humanite nouvelle*, November 1898, pp. 580-585; Hermann Ewerbeck, *Qu'est-ce que la Bible d'après la nouvelle philosophie Allemande* (Paris: Ladrange and Garnier, 1850), pp. 652-660. Rémy later translated "On the Jewish Question" for *Le Mouvement socialiste,* Vol. I, January-April 1903, pp. 431 ff.

Rémy believed that the project for "historical works" had a general interest, partly because it illustrated Marx's method in its "purity," partly because the reading was "light and easy, fifteen times more easy than *Capital.*" The original list of "historical works" focused entirely on the revolutions of 1848-1851. It included *Class Struggles in France,* the *Brumaire,* and *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany,* as well as two works that are hardly counted as "historical" today, *The Cologne Communist Trial* and *Karl Marx Before the Cologne Jury (February 9, 1849).*[146] He includes brief descriptions of each, as if he is unsure that Hamon is even familiar with them. In particular, *Class Struggles* is described as "the first work in which Marx applies the doctrine of the materialist conception of history to historical facts." Rémy believed that these were the *only* works in which historical materialism could be found "in its purity."

This was and remains far from obvious. Although the collaborative *German Ideology* manuscripts were not available yet, other sources such as the preface to the 1859 *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* or even *Capital* might be seen as better expressions of Marx's conception of history in its "purity." Moreover, it might seem that a doctrine of history would still have to be extracted or abstracted from the historical "application" of the doctrine. The most striking difference between Rémy's perspective on Marx and our own, however, is his inclusion of the two texts against the courts in Cologne, one about the banning of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in 1849*,* the

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[146] Rémy to Hamon, January 17, 1899, Augustin Hamon Papers, IISH, Amsterdam, Inv. Nr. 268. I have discussed the first three works in chapters one and two. As noted, *Revolution and Counter-revolution* is now known to have been written by Engels, but it was published under Marx's name in the *Tribune* and was attributed to him when the articles were republished as a book in 1897.

other about the trial of the Communist League in 1852, as examples of "historical works" in the most paradigmatic sense, as illustrations of historical materialism in its "purity."

These works are significant for their reflexivity. Here Marx interprets events in which he took part, and even some of his own writings, in the context of legal defenses of his own revolutionary activities. Their inclusion in the attempt to illustrate the theory can be justified from two directions in principle. They provide knowledge of the author's political standpoint that may well be essential for a critical interpretation of his other writings from the same time, especially where, as in this case, the reader may come to the other works with anachronistic ideas about his politics. These works also define concrete stakes for the *theory* of historical materialism, providing a certain constraint on possible interpretations of the doctrine of history that might be ascribed to the other works. Marx in fact articulated more basic principles of his historical views in the legal setting than he does in the specific interpretations of events. While Rémy's list is perhaps partly just based on the works that were familiar to him, it suggests a distinctive idea of what it means to "apply" materialist theory, one that includes this reflexive element of the use of the theory as applied to oneself in a legal-political setting. All five works together, he estimated, would make a single volume of about 400 pages.[147] The same letter includes a summary of Karl Kautsky's *Erfurt Program,* apparently proposed for translation as well.

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[147] Rémy's estimates of length are based on the German texts, which were much smaller than the French ones ultimately published. The 1895 edition of *Class Struggles* was 92 pages, without the twenty-page introduction by Engels, while the Rémy translation is 184 p. His edition of the two texts on France is 362 pages, not including the introductions and prefaces by Hamon and Rémy.

Hamon's response to this letter may be lost, but the next letter from Rémy, on January 19, gives some indication of its contents. Apparently, their ideas for the series had been "leaked" to Albert Bonnet, an editor at Giard et Brière, by Hubert Lagardelle, the editor of the new journal *Mouvement socialiste.*[148] Giard et Brière had been pioneers in the emerging field of sociology, launching a *Revue internationale de sociologie* in 1893, some three years before Alcan began to publish Durkheim's journal *L'Année sociologique*. In 1896, they launched both a sociological series, edited by René Worms, and an "International Socialist Library," edited by Alfred Bonnet. Notably, Bonnet had been among the founders of Rémy's student group, and the editor of the important Marxist journal *Devenir social.*[149]

On February 8, Rémy asked Hamon about the historic works, noting that *Mouvement socialiste* was beginning to publish translations, including the *Civil War in France* and Kautsky's *Erfurt Program*. If they delayed too long, he worried, their plan would be superseded.[150] Rémy asked again about the project on March 18, reiterating the reasons that he thought it would succeed. Political competition was also involved: "After the last maneuvers of our collectivist friends, which turned out so well, I have decided to publish these brochures by Marx, whatever the cost." In fact, Rémy had been discussing with "some comrades" the idea of publishing the pieces as pamphlets, one by one, but he prefers the idea of the book to a "fragmentary and irregular publication." Only grouping them together in one volume, he reasoned, would provide a kind of *balance* to the

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[148] Rémy to Hamon, January 19, 1899, in AH Papers, IISH, 268.
[149]Cahen, "Les Premiers Éditeurs."
[150] Rémy to Hamon, February 8, 1899, in AH Papers, IISH, 268.

volume on economic theory, elevating "the method, the historical and sociological theory" to an *equal* status with the critique of political economy. Rémy added finally that the plan must be kept rigorously secret, in particular, from anyone formerly associated with *Devenir social* or currently associated with *Le Mouvement socialiste,* and from Lagardelle and Sorel in particular.[151] Hamon immediately promised to do his best to get the historical volume accepted by Schleicher and to keep it quiet.[152]

In mid-April, however, Rémy still had no news about the project, only a notice that his translation of the 1859 *Critique of Political Economy* had appeared. When he asked again, Hamon's response was ambivalent.[153] One concern had to do with the size of the volume, as Rémy's next letter discusses other possible arrangements. If something had to go, he suggested, it could be the *Eighteenth Brumaire,* as it had appeared in French already—"if it was absolutely necessary, although the translation that was done by the *Parti ouvrier* is absolutely unreadable in many places."[154] In June, Rémy speculated about another way to combine different writings, this time apparently including Marx's writings from the *Tribune* on the Crimean War.[155]

The final decision to proceed with the "historical works" may have been somehow related to a decisive moment in the history of French socialism. On June 22, 1899, René Waldeck-Rousseau took office as president with a ministry of republican

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[151] Rémy to Hamon, March 18, 1899 ,in 546.289
[152] Hamon to Rémy, March 19, 1899, in 546.289
[153] Rémy to Hamon, n.d. [c. Mar-Apr], April 16, and May 5, 1899, all in 546.268
[154] Rémy to Hamon, May 5, 1899, in 546.268. Instead of "*Parti Ouvrier,*" in this passage, Rémy had begun to write "collectivists," but crossed the word out. He may have resisted the way that the Marxists had appropriated the shared term "collectivist" for themselves more than their appropriation of the term "worker's party," although the latter was also contested.
[155] Rémy to Hamon, June 6, 1899, in 546.289.

defense, including Alexandre Millerand as Minister of Commerce. In July, Hamon wrote to the Schleichers that he had an *Ouevres Historiques* by Marx in preparation.[156] Rémy sent the last parts of the manuscript of the *Brumaire* at the end of August.[157] The relationship between the plan and contemporary political events may only be indirect, insofar as the decision to participate in a non-socialist government inflamed and made relevant the issues at stake in the debate about Eduard Bernstein's "revisionism," in which Rémy was also engaged at just this time. He reviewed Bernstein's *Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie* for *L'Humanité nouvelle* at the same time, signing it simply "A Student."[158] Here he notes especially the use that Bernstein made of the 1895 preface by Engels to *Class Struggles in France,* in which Engels had relegated the writings on France to a former time of revolution, in which he and Marx had supposedly completely underestimated the time that social and political transformation would take. This left Rémy unsure (or at least unwilling to say) whether it was Bernstein or Kautsky who represented "orthodoxy."

On the title page of the volume, the titles of the two texts appear in different sizes and layouts that dramatically emphasize *Class Struggles in France (1848-1850)* over the *Brumaire.* The title is spread over four lines, as "*La Lutte* / *des* / *Classes en France* / *(1848-1850)*" with the words "Classes en France" the largest, the words "La Lutte" above them a bit smaller. The title of the *Brumaire* appears on a single line, in smaller type than

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[156] Hamon to Schleichers, July 8, 1899, Hamon Papers, Inv. Nr. 270.
[157] Rémy to Hamon, August 25, 1899, Hamon Papers, Inv. Nr. 268.
[158] *L'Humanite nouvelle* (1899), Vol. 5., p. 261. The manuscript is with the Rémy correspondence in Hamon Papers, IISH, Inv. Nr. 137.

either of these. This confirms Rémy's claim that the publisher was reluctant to publish the *Brumaire* at all, partly because it had appeared in French already.

The volume begins with Hamon's introduction to the series as a whole, locating the work in the field of the "sociological sciences," concluding with the list of titles available so far. This is followed by a new introduction to *Class Struggles in France,* mostly consisting of quotations from the first few pages of the preface by Engels to the *Vorwärts* edition of 1895. These begin with the important claim that this is "Marx's first attempt to explain a piece of contemporary history on the basis of the given economic situation by means of his materialist mode of interpretation." For the German word *Auffassungsweise,* Rémy chooses *mode de conception.* Where Engels has "the given economic situation," Rémy has "the economic situation of the epoch." Engels adds that he and Marx had constantly used this mode of interpretation in their journalism, for the interpretation [*Deutung*] of contemporary events, that what was new here was its application to a critical period of years. Rémy omits this point, as well as the difficult idea that Marx proved the "causal connection," *Kausalzusammenhang,* of this period. For Engels, it is a matter of "tracing political events back to the effects, in the last instance, of economic causes," while for Rémy it is a matter of "establishing that political events are nothing, in the last instance, than the effects of economic causes."

Rémy inserts a comment here: "Engels tries to show how such an attempt encounters difficulties even today. They were even greater when Marx took up his work." The rest of his excerpts from Engels relate entirely to these two points. First, he quotes the long passage from Engels that describes the shortcuts that are supposedly necessary in

the application of "materialist method," given the impossibility of knowing all the potentially relevant economic changes happening in any time. Then he quotes the passage describing the particularly difficult circumstances in which Marx was working. Where Engels writes that the work "brilliantly passed two tests applied by Marx himself," Rémy paraphrases this as, "Marx in fact submitted his work to two successive revisions." While Engels describes these two "tests," namely, the economic studies of the prior ten years and the *Brumaire*, at some length, Rémy just mentions them briefly and notes that Marx had to make no changes to his earlier work.

The Rémy introduction ends here, while Engels goes on for fifteen more pages to discuss the political-historical significance of the work, as expressing for the first time the formula "appropriation of the means of production" and locating it in a much broader historical narrative. This historical and political discussion is simply omitted by Rémy, as his critics would be quick to observe. The omitted section includes the self-critical passages that Rémy knew and had discussed in his review of Bernstein, in which Engels declares that "history also proved us in the wrong, and revealed our opinion of that day as an illusion." This editorial choice gives the French translation a more "scientific" character than the German edition has.

One basic difference between the Rémy translation and its predecessor is that Rémy tends to be far more consistent in his choices of words. This does not necessarily make it more accurate. For example, while Fortin sometimes translates *Weltgeschichte* as *histoire du monde,* Rémy abandons the "world" formation consistently. (He has *marché*

général for *Weltmarkt*.) Similarly, he chooses *bourgeois* for *bürgerlich* almost every time, even where it does not make sense, as in the phrase "so-called bourgeois law." While Fortin had chosen various terms interchangeably for *Lumpenproletariat,* Rémy always chooses *la canaille,* including the German in a footnote each time.[159] These are the only footnotes in the text, as this edition leaves out Marx's own footnotes and offers no further historical clarifications.

Given this greater tendency always to choose the same French word for a German one, one significant exception should be noted. For the German word *Umstände,* he generally chooses *circonstances,* which is the meaning. In the famous sentence about men making their own history but not in circumstances of their choosing, however, which includes this word three times, Rémy chooses *conditions* three times.[160] The choice seems to express the interpretation that in this case circumstances are more than just circumstances, that they are supposed to be enabling or constraining conditions for making one's own history. Another difficult word choice concerns the philosophical term *Inhalt,* "content." Rémy sometimes simply translates this as *contenu.* Where Marx writes that former revolutions needed reminiscences in order to numb themselves to their own content, however, *über ihren eigenen Inhalt zu betäuben,* while the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead in order to arrive at its own content, *um bei ihrem eignen Inhalt anzukommen,* Rémy opts for *objet,* object or aim, in both

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[159] Karl Marx, *La Lutte des classes en France (1848-1850) / Le XVIII Brumaire de Louis Bonaparte,* trans. Leon Rémy (Paris: Librairie C. Reinwald, 1900), pp. 203, 266, 276, 287, 291, 338, 355, 358.
[160] Les hommes font leur propre histoire, mais il ne la font pas spontanément dans des conditions choisies par eux, mais, au contraire, dans des conditions qu'ils ont trouvées toutes faites, dans des conditions données, transmises.

cases. This makes some sense, but it is far from self-evident that *Inhalt* means "object" here. This would really be a question for philosophers, but it seems possible that Rémy has imposed more future-oriented conceptions of political identity or revolution than Marx had intended to express here, that he has distinctly equated another notion of historical identity or substance with intentionality or at least with historical purpose in some future-oriented sense. Fortin's paraphrases do not seem to introduce the same ideas. He has *pour s'étourdir sur leur propre portée* and *pour en venir à l'œuvre qui lui est propre,* respectively.

In late January, 1900, the second issue of the new journal *Notes Critiques—Sciences Sociales* published a scathing anonymous review of Rémy's edition, mocking both Marx and his translator. "Nothing that Marx wrote before *Capital* is very good," it begins, "before the time in which he learned to work silently, rather than prophesying with certainty." The author implies that he knows these earlier works relatively well: "But of all the works around the *Communist Manifesto*, this one is perhaps the least good, the most overblown [*ampoulé*], the most spoiled by *concetti* that cover up sophisms, and by pointlessly aggressive wit." Without summarizing either work or distinguishing between them, the author simply gives a series of quotations that illustrate this charge and the "philosophy of the book," and "it is this hasty copy from the newspaper that we are given for the new 'materialist interpretation of history.'" The author hopes that Alexandre Millerand, who has been assigned to write the volume on the Second Republic in Jean Jaures' *Histoire Socialiste,* "will give us a superior idea of scientific socialism." After

criticizing Rémy's syntax, the author expresses his position, that the materialist conception of history must be interpreted with more textual rigor than this:

> It is contrary to all method, also, for a book that has as its goal to illustrate the "materialist conception" in history, to have cut the preface by Engels from Klassenkämpfe and the two prefaces to the XVIII Brumaire. They made some corrections to this conception that are not only authoritative among the Orthodox but are decisive.

I will discuss these prefaces in more detail in the following chapter. *Notes Critiques* has a significant independent interest in intellectual history. Its main contributors included Durkheim and Mauss, but it differed from the main Durkheimian journal, *Année Sociologique,* in being a critical review of the field rather than an organ for research, and also, as the passing reference to Millerand may suggest, in taking a political position. One historian of social thought in France calls it a "cogent example of how sociology and social action were viewed as compatible."[161] The critique may well express an intuitive position for advanced social scientists at the time, still respectable enough today, that the writings on France are just bad examples of materialist historiography.

Georges Sorel mentioned the review in a letter to Hamon on February 2, 1900. Hamon responded that he thought the tone was so extreme that it would not hurt Rémy, that its attitude toward Marx and the comparison between Marx and Millerand was simply "grotesque." He suspected that the author was Lucien Herr.[162] *Mouvement socialiste* published a much more benign review, by René Arnot, but also regretted the

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[161] Jennifer Mergy, "On Durkheim and 'Notes Critiques,'" *Durkheimian Studies / Études Durkheimiennes* 4 (1998): 1–7.
[162] The Sorel-Hamon correspondence is in Hamon Papers, IISH, Inv. Nr. 155.

omission of the Engels preface. The translation also came up and was attacked from another direction in another context, in the course of a significant controversy about intellectuals and their relationships to socialism.[163] This apparently began when Charles Péguy's *Cahiers de la quinzaine* published a long discussion on the subject of "socialism and the intellectuals," from a meeting involving the POF (Lafargue) and the Blanquist *Parti socialiste révolutionnaire* (Vaillant). This prompted Paul Lafargue to respond in *Le Socialiste,* complaining first of all that the transcript was published without the typical courtesy of being sent to him for review. He also accused the intellectuals associated with *Mouvement socialiste* of piracy: "The works of Marx have recently acquired a commercial value that they intend to exploit," he writes; "they have translated and published two volumes of Marx without asking permission from his daughter, Laura Lafargue, and without even deigning to send her a copy." He seems to have been confused about the origins of the translations. Hubert Lagardelle responded that *Le Mouvement socialiste* and its editors had nothing to do with it, and Léon Rémy also clarified that he had nothing to do with *Mouvement socialiste.* He appealed simply to his rights of translation under the law.

This exchange certainly illustrates the profound change in status that the work of Marx had undergone in France from his death in 1883, when Fortin and Lavigne began to work on their translation, to 1900, when the works of Marx had acquired commercial value in the quasi-academic marketplace. The *Brumaire* as such seems hardly to have been an object of special concern in this period, and by the end, it is even apparently less

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[163] This is mentioned in passing by Cahen, "Les Premiers Éditeurs," fn. 41.

important and valued than the earlier series of articles, *Class Struggles in France,* which was a newer rediscovery and featured more prominently in the debate about revisionism. The publication was finally just a part of a huge rush to publish Marx in France. Between 1872 and 1898, just three titles by Marx were published as independent volumes: *Capital,* the *Brumaire,* and the *Communist Manifesto.* Between 1899 and 1901, some twelve different volumes by Marx or Engels were published by various houses. There is nothing here to suggest that the *Brumaire* itself had a particular relationship to a political situation, except in the general sense that it was related to the politicization of intellectuals after the Dreyfus Affair and the new conflict among socialists with the 1899 Waldeck-Rousseau government. Rémy's collaboration with Hamon was finally the result of a distinctive confluence of intellectual trends, especially the rise of a market in social science, and personal political trajectories.

IV. Three Editions in Germany, 1878-1914

The second edition of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* in 1869 and its reception were closely tied to the political circumstances of the time. The significance of the work in the longer term was still far from clear. It would not have any comparable timeliness in Germany again at any particular moment before the First World War. Its history appears far more determined by broader attempts to define the legacy of Marx, after his death in 1883, than by the perception of any urgent relevance of this text to other political or intellectual situations. New editions in 1885 and 1907, by Otto Meissner's firm, and in 1913, after the expiration of copyright, by the SPD's own Dietz Verlag, were not urgent productions, like the first edition or the second. They had less distinct "receptions" than the second edition. Still the editions belong to distinct moments in the history of the German socialist party.

The 1885 edition was a product of the "outlaw years," from 1878 to 1890, in which the SAPD party organization was effectively banned and its press was strictly censored. After legalization in 1890, the party dropped its self-designation as a "workers' party" and became the modern SPD. The 1907 edition belongs to a time of rapid growth and increasing tension in the party, also defined by an increasingly historical perspective on Marx and a remarkably dynamic view of Marxism itself, which resembled a "science" in these years most of all in a restless push for innovation that implied doctrinal flexibility and pluralism. The defining question of this moment for my purposes is, "How Should We Read Marx?" The 1913 edition belongs to a time of prewar radicalization and autonomous socialist counter-culture: it is even recommended as a Christmas gift. But

there were still few hints of the significance that the work would suddenly acquire in Germany in the decade to come.

The Eighteenth Brumaire in the "Outlaw Years"

The 1878 "Law Against the Publicly Dangerous Endeavors of Social Democracy" banned societies, meetings, and publications that showed any "socialist-democratic, socialistic, or communistic endeavors that aim at the overthrow of the existing political or social order," when they disrupted "public peace" and especially "harmony among the classes of the population."[1] Legal repression fostered a rapid and far-reaching transformation in the structure and intellectual character of the SAPD. One consequence was a new concern to define party history and doctrine, within the party as well as among sympathetic observers and critics. Plans for a party library, for example, turned quickly into plans for an archive protecting "manuscripts and printed matter that are important for the history of the worker's movement in Germany."[2] The party's doctrine also became a historical problem for some who remained aloof from it politically, most notably, Franz Mehring, who introduced the word "Marxism" into the second edition of his history of German social democracy in 1878.[3] "Marxist" and "Marxism" remained uncommon in

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[1] The law is translated in Vernon L. Lidtke, *The Outlawed Party: Social Democracy in Germany, 1878-1890* (Princeton [N.J.]: Princeton University Press, 1966), Appendix C.
[2] Fritz Schaaf, "Zur Gründung und Entwicklung des deutschen sozialdemokratischen Parteiverlages in Hottingen-Zürich und London in der Zeit des Sozialistengesetzes," *Beiträge Zur Geschichte Des Buchwesens* 8 (1980): 94–134.
[3] For Mehring's political self-description, see *Die Deutsche Socialdemokratie: Ihre Geschichte und ihre Lehre* (Bremen: Schünemann, 2nd ed., 1878), p. IX. Mehring describes Albert Schäffle's *Quintessenz des*

German and were hardly articulated theoretically or registered in handbooks before the 1890s. Still their elevation from the esoteric and pejorative use by anarchists in the First International to public political discussion was a sign of the times.[4]

The first *Probeblatt* of the party organ in exile, the weekly *Sozialdemokrat,* was published in Zürich at the end of September, 1879, and a legendary system of smuggling was established. The initial editor, Georg von Vollmar, was replaced by Eduard Bernstein in early 1881. The party purchased the cooperative press that had published the newspaper, both a printshop and a *Buchhandlung.* The *Sozialdemokrat* was able to sustain political discussion far to the left of socialists in parliament, while the political content of socialist publications in Germany was limited.[5] J.H.W. Dietz took over the party press in Stuttgart, as a supposedly private enterprise for legal reasons. The party was unable to provide significant funding and the press continued to face police harassment.[6] These were the circumstances under which the popular-scientific journal *Die Neue Zeit* was founded in 1883.

Sozialismus (1874) as making "strong concessions to strict Marxism," p. 171. "Marxismus" was defined by another writer the same year, in contrast to "Bakuninismus," as a political ideal of state communism. Rudolf Walther, "Marxismus," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, ed. Reinhart Kosselleck, vol. 3, 1982, 949 errs in referring to the 1879 edition.

[4] Walther, 943–44. For the earlier French use of *marxisme* in anarchist circles in the First International, R. Romberg, "Marxismus," in *Historisches Wörterbuch Der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer, vol. 5 (Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe & Coag, 1980), 759. Both words do seem to have spread earlier and more readily in French than in German.

[5] Lidtke, *The Outlawed Party; Social Democracy in Germany, 1878-1890*, 83.

[6] Angela Graf, "Wie Alles Begann–Von der Verlagsgründung bis zum Ende der Weimarer Republik," in *Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Dietz - Verleger der Sozialdemokraten : Biographische Annäherung an ein Politisches Leben* (Bonn: Bibliothek der FES, 1998).

Die Neue Zeit successfully avoided persecution by avoiding political controversy and even politics as such.[7] Letters discussing the founding of the journal contain some of the earliest known uses of "Marxist" as a positive self-description, by Karl Kautsky, but *Die Neue Zeit* claimed only to be promoting the popular knowledge of society and politics, cultivating *Staatsmanthum* ("statesmanship"), a "democratization" of political knowledge and "national education" in a Fichtean sense.[8] The circumstances clearly influenced the obituary for Marx, presumably by Kautsky, that the journal published in its first issue.[9] Marx was "the direct opposite of a conspirator," the obituary explains, in contrast a Bakunin or a Heinzen. In one quotation from the preface to the 1859 *Critique of Political Economy,* Kautsky italicizes the word "embarrassment" (in the description of how Marx first began to study material interests) and the remark about not wanting to write about what he did not understand. There is an emphasis on the aim of historical self-understanding as a form of political responsibility, a general "striving to investigate the laws of the organic development of all historical phenomena." What matters here more than any results of the striving is the good intellectual will, the drive for knowledge.

In this context, Kautsky describes the *Brumaire* as an "occasional text," *Gelegenheitsscrift,* "like Goethe wrote occasional poems [*Gelegenheitsgedichte*]." This comparison suggests that the work was not only "occasional" in the sense of written casually, for a certain occasion, but has a memorial character, like the poems that Goethe

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[7] Lidtke, *The Outlawed Party; Social Democracy in Germany, 1878-1890*, 281. Apparently inspired by the example of Gabriel Deville, Kautsky also had the idea of a popularization of *Capital* under these conditions, as *Capital* itself was not censored.
[8] "An unsere Leser!" *Die Neue Zeit* (1883), Heft 1 (At FES via http://library.fes.de/nz/)
[9] "Karl Marx," *Die Neue Zeit* (1883), Heft 1

was commissioned to write for royal occasions. "Free from empty pathos," it "portrays the value of the coup d'état in flaming language," "mercilessly flays and dissects" Bonaparte. It is "not merely a historical sentencing [*Strafgericht*] but also one of the brilliant historical studies that our literature possesses." *Herr Vogt* is "a kind of completion" of the *Brumaire*, "insofar as the corrupt essence and the corrupting influence of Bonapartism is drastically characterized [*gekennzeichnet*]." This opposition to Bonapartism is virtually the *only* political opposition that is allowed to find expression in the whole obituary. The obituary in the party's censored newspaper, *Die Neue Welt,* similarly dramatizes the anti-Napoleonic aspect of the work, "in which Napoleon and his striving for absolute rule underwent an extremely bitter criticism."[10] Marx was certainly opposed to Bonaparte, but this somewhat misconstrues the *Brumaire* as an attack on Bonaparte and gives his anti-Bonapartism a significantly outsized place in Marx's political career as a whole.

These are only fleeting references. The *Brumaire* seems to have been mentioned only one more time in *Die Neue Zeit* before 1890.[11] Still, the fact that it could be used to present Marx in these almost patriotic terms may help to explain the considerations that led to the new edition of 1885, even as it also implied analogies between the repression depicted in the text and the present situation in Germany. There may be more detailed evidence available regarding the circumstances that led to republication, but I think the

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[10] *Die Neue Welt,* April 12, 1883.
[11] For example, it is not mentioned in an article on small land ownership in France by Paul Lafargue, who knew of the work but, as noted in chapter three, supposedly could not read German. Paul Lafargue ("P.L."), "Der kleine Grundbesitz in Frankreich," *Die Neue Zeit* (1883), Heft 8.

correspondence published so far shows that it came about due to interest from Eduard Bernstein. The circumstances were perhaps more dire but also in a sense less urgent than those surrounding the second edition of 1869, and the political timeliness was never explicit.

The *Brumaire* was mentioned in one exchange between Bernstein and Engels in 1883, in relation to some important topics, but its role here was small and not clearly related to the decision to republish it. The exchange concerned the question of what form of state should be favored by socialists and why. On July 5, 1883, for the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, the *Sozialdemokrat* had published an article defending the idea of the republic while attacking the courts and police of the Third Republic. The recent trial of the anarchist and famous Communard Louise Michel showed that public security in France was no less brutal than police in monarchies, the argument went, but "what does this fact prove against the republican state form in itself?" No socialist could support a "merely nominal republic," a "republic without republicans," but even such a republic at least brings corruption out into the glare of publicity, *Oeffentlichkeit*: "Monarchy is perpetual lies, the republic the way to truth."[12]

In a letter to Bernstein, Engels criticized this position and referred Bernstein to the *Brumaire* and his own "Housing Question" for an understanding of "bonapartist monarchy." For Engels, Bonapartism had played a role in the modern class struggle that was analogous to the role of the absolutist monarchy in the earlier struggle between the bourgeoisie and "feudalism," maintaining its position by sustaining and balancing class

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[12] "Republik oder Monarchie? Zum Jahrestag des Bastillesturms," *Der Sozialdemokrat,* July 5, 1883.

conflict. For Engels, just as the earlier conflict could not play out under absolutism but only in constitutional monarchy, so the modern class struggle is only expressed in the republic. Bernstein's argument about publicity understated important differences between France, even as it was, and Germany, with its "mishmash of half-feudalism and bonapartism."[13]

This question of state form was immediately related here to another major topic of Engels's political counsel, the supposed course that a revolution leading to the seizure of state power by the proletariat would take.[14] The first task for a revolution in Germany was still that of the republic, but it would be a transitional moment, because "we fortunately have no republican bourgeois-party." A republic, perhaps led by the *Fortschrittspartei,* would only be the opportunity, within two or three years, for the bourgeois parties to ruin themselves and the revolutionary socialists to win over the masses of the workers. Engels concludes with a warning that revolutions take time: now France in 1848 is an example of the consequences of a premature attempt. The letters do show that the *Brumaire* was potentially relevant to some of the most important questions of socialist political thought at the time, but its relevance to those questions was still vague and required considerable explanation.

Several months after this exchange, in late January and early February, 1884, Bernstein wrote to Engels regarding plans for the upcoming first anniversary of the death

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[13] Helmut Hirsch, ed., *Eduard Bernsteins Briefwechsel mit Friedrich Engels* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1970), 220–22. (FE to EB, August 27, 1883)
[14] Steenson, *After Marx, before Lenin: Marxism and Socialist Working-Class Parties in Europe, 1884-1914*, 26.

of Marx. He noted here that the *Volksbuchhandlung* had asked Meissner about the status of the *Brumaire,* whether he intended to publish another edition or would give up the rights. Meissner apparently expressed little interest in either option.[15] Bernstein then made a conspicuous use of the *Brumaire* in the *Sozialdemokrat* that March, in a front-page article commemorating the "March Battles," plural, linking the uprising in Berlin in 1848 and the Paris Commune of 1871.[16] It begins by quoting the passage from the *Brumaire* on bourgeois and proletarian revolutions, with certain phrases printed with emphasis, up to the slogan, "Hic Rhodus, hic salta!"[17] This passage had not been quoted much before. It clearly had a new significance in a time of new repression. The *Brumaire* itself was written, Bernstein emphasizes, at a time of total defeat. Less than twenty years later, however, the proletariat in Paris rose up again; and the Commune and the worker's movement since then provide a "classical proof" of the description of the self-critical character of proletarian revolutions. The February revolution and the June Days were nothing compared to the Commune and its repression, and now a new party in France has arisen that regards the Commune and those who cling to its traditions with a silent shrug [*ein schweigendes Achselzucken*], respecting them but not following them, in fact thoroughly criticizing them. This involves also self-criticism: "We are not better than

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[15] Hirsch, *Eduard Bernsteins Briefwechsel Mit Friedrich Engels*, 241–45. (EB to FE, January 30 and February 2, 1884)
[16] [Eduard Bernstein], "Zum Gedenktage der Märztage," *Sozialdemokrat*, March 13, 1884.
[17] The passages printed with extra spacing are "kritisiren beständig sich selbst," "verhöhnen grausam-gründlich die Halbeiten … ihrer ersten Versuche," and "bis die Situation geschaffen ist," etc., through the "Hic Rhodus, hic salta."

them, and if we do not share their illusions … which of us would draw the conclusion that we are free from errors?"

The *Brumaire* is not quite yet explicitly treated as an explanation of failure that draws lessons for the future, a "summing up" of revolutionary experience. The one passage depicting how proletarian revolutions are supposed to respond to defeat, with self-criticism and even mockery of their own past attempts, is used to legitimate Bernstein's treatment of the Commune as already in the past. That kind of criticism of experience is certainly put forward as an ideal, even a critical bond that defines a revolutionary tradition despite historical interruptions, in dynamic terms rather than those of repetition. Although this use of the text certainly seems based in a sense of shared defeat, it does not yet suggest any deeper sense of loss at all comparable to the productive "left-wing melancholias" of the late twentieth century.[18] This is one of the earliest prominent uses of the *Brumaire* as a source of political inspiration that I have found.

Bernstein mentioned the idea of a new edition of the *Brumaire* again to Engels in November, 1884.[19] He had just rediscovered a copy of Engels's pamphlet from 1865, *The Prussian Military Question and the German Worker's Party,* and saw that it had a different perspective on the military question than his "former authority" on the subject, Wilhelm Liebknecht. This is one example of the significant role that generational conflict

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[18] Enzo Traverso, *Left-Wing Melancholia: Marxism, History, and Memory*, New Directions in Critical Theory (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).
[19] Hirsch, *Eduard Bernsteins Briefwechsel mit Friedrich Engels*, 311. (EB to FE, November 15 and 16, 1884)

played in the "invention of Marxism."[20] Bernstein adds: "Our local printer is currently without commissions." They could either print an *Anti-Dühring* or, if Engels didn't object, "organize an *American* edition of the *Brumaire*." The idea was perhaps to evade Meissner's copyright. Meissner had a third edition underway by mid-February, with a new preface by Engels. This was a more affordable edition than the second. The news of the forthcoming third edition may explain why the *Vochsbuchhandlung* advertised copies of the 1869 edition in the *Sozialdemokrat*, together with copies of *The Prussian Military Question*, as "very rare."[21]

Just as interest from German socialists led Meissner to republish the work in 1869, it seems clear, their interest also led him to publish a third edition by May, 1885. This was a commercial publication, with no explicit ties to the party, but it probably assumed a socialist readership. Like Marx in 1869, Engels seems to have taken no initiative to republish the *Brumaire,* playing only an intermediary role. I have discussed some aspects of his preface in chapter three, in assessing the challenges that it posed for the French translation. Here I will compare it to the earlier preface by Marx, also

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[20] Generational approaches to the history of Marxism are common. See, for example, David W. Morgan, "The 'Orthodox' Marxists: First Generation of a Tradition," in *Ideas into Politics: Aspects of European History, 1880 to 1950*, ed. Roger Bullen, H. Pogge von Strandmann, and Antony Polonsky (London : Totowa, N.J: Croom Helm ; Barnes & Noble, 1984). The idea has been developed more rigorously recently, however. See Stefan Berger, "Marxismusrezeption als Generationenerfahrung im Kaiserreich," in *Generationen in der Arbeiterbewegung*, ed. Klaus Schönhoven and Bernd Braun (München: Oldenbourg, 2005); Christina Morina, *Die Erfindung des Marxismus: Wie eine Idee die Welt Eroberte* (Siedler Verlag, 2017); Christina Morina, "Marxismus als Generationenprojekt," in *Zyklos 5: Jahrbuch für Theorie und Geschichte der Soziologie*, ed. Martin Endreß and Stephan Moebius (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2019), 41–70.

[21] I infer this from the timing. Engels apparently told Karl Kautsky, who reported to August Bebel that the new edition was forthcoming in a letter on Feburary 14, 1885. Karl Kautsky Jr., ed., *August Bebels Briefwechsel mit Karl Kautsky* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1971), 29. The advertisement ran in the *Sozialdemokrat* on February 26.

included in this edition. Dominick LaCapra sees Engels as going "beyond" Marx in his assessment of the author's mastery of events, as in the absurd-sounding claim that "events never took [Marx] by surprise," asserting a "more narrowly positivistic" view of the work than Marx does, as "fully representational or documentary," a reflection of reality and the product of a scientific discovery, the discovery of the "great law of motion of history."[22]

In a greater historical context, Engels is largely reprising ideas about the work that are found before him, discussed in the prior two chapters, and also in critics of Marxism. While any contrast between Marx and Engels may be valid as far as it goes, in other words, it is not obvious what is new to Engels, how his views about Marx here differ from other views of Marx in his time. In one important way, moreover, Engels also deprecates the work, relative to Marx in 1869. He writes entirely in the past tense. When Marx described his own argument and intention, he wrote, "I show," "I hope." The *Brumaire* was considered to be still intellectually and politically active. Engels discusses only what Marx *did*, focusing on the act of comprehension and writing, completely avoiding any reference to its contemporary significance. This anticipates a tendency in Engels to historicize Marx, a tendency that continues in prewar German Marxism.

The *Brumaire* was an "ingenious" [*geniale*] work, presenting a course of French history "in its inner context" or "coherence," *in ihrem innern Zusammenhang.*[23] It

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[22] Dominick LaCapra, "Reading Marx: The Case of The Eighteenth Brumaire," in *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).
[23] Emma Rothschild has recently noticed a quasi-technical use of *Zusammenhang* in historical political economy. For Bruno Hildebrand in 1848, for example, political economy was a form of "national-economic-cultural history," she writes, "concerned with the context or *Zusammenhang,* the 'political and

supposedly resolved the "miracle" or "lightning-strike" of December 2 into the "natural, necessary result" of that *innere Zusammenhang*, while still treating the "hero" with deserved contempt. Engels particularly emphasizes the speed of this act of comprehension, as evidence of a superior political understanding in the moment.[24] Here he partially restores an aspect of the original preface by Weydemeyer, his contrast to the "embarrassed expectations" of the democrats, that Marx does not include in his own preface. He does not say that the *Brumaire* is a simple application of the theory of history as class struggle, only that, together with studying history, the theory was one thing that made this comprehension *in the moment* possible. First, Engels claims, Marx consciously maintained an exact knowledge of French history, because France was for him a particularly illustrative or "classical" example of class struggle. This remark makes it clear that the aim and achievement was not so much in a documentary validity as a superior mastery of political *discourse* about France.

It is in these terms also that I would understand the claim that events "never took him by surprise." This is a different claim than others had made about the *Brumaire*, that it had *predicted* the fate of France. The only kind of prescience that Engels claims for the work is that its claims about France at the time had not yet been refuted. Nor can he plausibly be taken to mean that Marx never had the feeling of being surprised. That reading seems a little absurd. The historically informed interpretation is that Marx was

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legal development of nations and statistics." Emma Rothschild, "Economic History and Nationalism," *Capitalism: A Journal of History and Economics* 2, no. 1 (2021): 227–33.

[24] My interpretation can also be contrasted to that of Peter Stallybrass, who sees Marx as emphasizing the contingency of his achievement, Engels its inevitability. Peter Stallybrass, "`Well Grubbed, Old Mole': Marx, Hamlet, and the (Un) Fixing of Representation," *Cultural Studies* 12, no. 1 (1998): 3–14.

not publicly caught out as others were. He was prepared to interpret them and avoided the kind of compromising "embarrassment" caused by Heinzen when he published the letters from his friends eagerly predicting the next revolution.

The second condition that made this comprehension possible, besides a knowledge of French history, was that Marx had discovered "the great law of motion of history."[25] In looking at the French translation of this passage, I emphasized that this supposed "law of motion" does not relate successive events but rather simultaneous phenomena of different kinds. According to the "guiding thread" interpretation, the "law" is that ideological conflicts are evidence of class struggles, and the existence of classes is conditioned by economic development and "mode of production." In this formulation of the idea of the work as a "test," the discovery of the law is presented as only one thing that made the *Brumaire* possible. The achievement is not so much scholarly as political, a superior and perhaps even unique ability to comprehend the present, relative to others at the time.

One of the first scholarly studies of Marx's work was published at about this time by Gustav Gross, a *Privatdozent* at the University of Vienna, as an expansion of an article for the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie.*[26] Gross's book took a broadly biographical

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[25] Marx had used the term *Bewegungsgesetz* in the 1867 preface to *Capital,* but in a different sense, referring to the "economic law of motion of society," not a "law of motion of history." On the former idea, see John P. Burkett, "Marx's Concept of an Economic Law of Motion," *History of Political Economy* 32, no. 2 (June 1, 2000): 381–94. The phrase *Bewegungsgesetz der Geschichte* was uncommon, but a search turns up a potentially significant earlier use and discussion by Herman Doergens, *Ueber das Bewegungsgesetz der Geschichte* (Leipzig: Winter, 1878).

[26] Gustav Gross, *Karl Marx: eine Studie* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1885). The preface is dated July, 1884.

approach to Marx's writings.[27] A whole first section is devoted to the "young Marx," mainly the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher,* in which Gross perceives already "a lack of any consciousness of nationality."[28] With the *Manifesto,* he perceives "a certain split in Marx's inner being," precluding the identification of the scholar and the worker's leader. Even if they shared the same principles, one could hardly guess that the same man had written the agitational texts and the scholarly ones.[29] This justifies dividing his study in two parts, one on Marx as "worker's leader" and publicist, one on his "scientific system." The *Brumaire* is relegated to the first section and described as "a series of intellectually scintillating [*geistsprühende*] aphorisms," and a kind of commentary, attacking all parties in France except the proletariat. Kautsky's review of Gross's book in *Die Neue Zeit* mocked this "two-soul theory" and gives the *Brumaire* as an example: it was absurd that Gross counted it among the "agitational writings," whose "spirit allegedly stands in the fullest contradiction to the scientific works of Marx!"[30] The point, it should be emphasized, was not that the *Brumaire* itself was a "scientific work," only that it shared the same "spirit," or was at least not so drastically opposed as Gross suggested.

By the time of the 1885 *Brumaire,* public discussions of Marx were often philosophical, focusing on the meaning of "materialism." By 1886, the *Sozialdemokrat*

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[27] Gross drew on some existing histories of the International and some correspondence with Engels, but he also had some more interesting sources, for example, for information about Marx's father and early education: see *Karl Mar*x, p. 3.
[28] Gross, *Karl Mar*x, p. 5. Engels had also told Gross about the *German Ideology* manuscripts, p. 12.
[29] Gross, *Karl Mar*x, p. 12. It was just here, Gross astutely proposed, that Marx's *journalism* might be important, as a kind of medium between anti-bourgeois agitation and overly abstract scholarly works.
[30] Karl Kautsky, Review of Gustav Gross, *Karl Marx: Eine Studie,* in *Die Neue Zeit* (1885), Heft 6, 281-283

claimed, much had already written about the "*materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*," but the meaning was still not clear. It first tried to explain the "scholarly" (philosophical) meaning of "materialistic," as opposed to "idealistic," as explaining appearances through material causes. "Without bodily organs, according to this view, no intellectual life."[31] It then cites the *Leitfaden* passage from the preface to the 1859 *Kritik*, where Marx uses the word "material" (*materiell*) some seven times, referring to "material life," "material productive forces," "the material revolution in the economic conditions of production," "material conditions of existence," and "material conditions for the resolution of this antagonism," for example. Still the meaning was obscure, the newspaper admitted, and it would be better illustrated by the example of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. But this example would itself be too complex for a newspaper, it admits, so it refers finally to the example of the French revolution as a bourgeois revolution in *Anti-Dühring.* The idea of the French revolution as a bourgeois revolution, although hardly developed by Marx, became quite central to the historical self-understanding of Marxism for prewar German socialists and attempts to teach the theory of history as class struggle.[32]

Georg Adler's *Foundations of Karl Marx's Critique of Existing Political Economy,* published near the beginning of 1887, includes what was probably the first

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[31] *Sozialdemokrat*, February 12, 1886.
[32] This is not a topic that I am going to discuss closely here, but in a large literature, see Bertell Nygaard, "The Meanings of 'Bourgeois Revolution': Conceptualizing the French Revolution," *Science & Society* 71, no. 2 (2007): 146–72; Bertel Nygaard, "Constructing Marxism: Karl Kautsky and the French Revolution," *History of European Ideas* 35, no. 4 (2009): 450–464; and Beatrix W. Bouvier, "The Influence of the French Revolution on Socialism and the German Socialist Movement in the Nineteenth Century." *History of European Ideas* 14, no. 1 (January 1992): 101–13.

attempt to interpret the *Brumaire* in detail in the context of Marx's work.[33] While others had focused on Marx's theory of value, Adler claimed to be the first to "investigate the whole Marxian critical system completely," that is, both the materialist theory of history [*materialistische Geschichtstheorie*] and the theory of value. The criticism of the *Brumaire* comes at the end of Adler's first chapter, on the theory of history. Adler first constructs this theory abstractly, in familiar terms, mostly from the *Communist Manifesto* and the 1859 *Preface.* Economy is the basis of human society, prefiguring an intellectual superstructure; when productive forces come into conflict with the form of production and class rule, latent class contradictions give rise to class struggles that lead to social transformation or the common destruction of the two classes; the proletariat cannot free itself without bringing class struggle as such to an end. He then considers the writings on mid-century French history as applying this theory to events.

This part is largely paraphrase, with damning commentary kept to footnotes. It begins by quoting the opening pages of the *Brumaire,* for example, on the French revolution of 1789-1815, and paraphrasing Marx's views on the 1830 revolution and the July monarchy, citing the earlier articles from *Class Struggles in France.* Adler has several lines of attack. Many of Marx's general statements are pulled "completely out of thin air," presented wholly without proof: for example, the claim that if the French

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[33] Georg Adler, *Die Grundlagen der Karl Marx'schen Kritik der bestehenden Volkswirtschaft: kritische und ökonomisch-litterarische Studien* (Verlag der H. Laupp'schen Buchhandlung: Tübingen, 1887), p. 10-27. Foreword dated mid-Novermber, 1886. This built on Adler's earlier research on worker's movements in the mid-century revolutions and lectures in the political-economic seminar of Wilhelm Lexis at Freiburg. For his earlier *Geschichte der ersten sozialpolitischen Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland* (1885), Adler had done some original research in libraries and private collections. Here he refers already to a "Marx-Engelschen Doktrin," even an "orthodox-Marxistischen Richtung."

working class had really been capable of revolution, it would have been found its goals and motives in its own situation, not conducted elaborate theoretical investigations into its own task.[34] Marx also changes his basic views of the same events over time. For example, in the writings of early 1850, the June Days result in a more determined working-class opposition, evident in the slogans, "Sturz der Bourgeoisie! Diktatur der Arbeiterklasse!" In the *Brumaire,* however, this is just when the proletariat retreats "to the background of the revolutionary stage," developing its supposed interest in "doctrinaire experiments." In such cases, Adler argues, Marx "sometimes twists around [*umspringt*] even with facts …"[35] The main criticism is that the theory is useless for practical-political prediction and was used by Marx to justify completely different expectations.[36] At the end of the original "1848-9" articles, Marx expected, as Adler puts it, "a great revolution, in which the extreme-socialist proletariat must take over the leading role." In the *Brumaire* the same theory is supposed to show how class struggles "enabled a mediocre and grotesque personage to play the hero's role." Adler ends with the bon mot that Marx got his revenge on the critical turning point by describing it as "gray on gray," in a whole page of angry expressions about this period of time.

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[34] Adler, *Die Grundlagen,* p. 14 and fn. 1.
[35]Adler, *Grundlagen,* p. 19, fn. 2. Adler also thought that other claims in C*lass Struggles* were disproved by time. According to *Class Struggles*, the June insurrection revealed the "secret" that France had to avoid foreign war in order to conduct civil war at home, and thus, "The Hungarian will not be free, nor the Pole, nor the Italian, so long as the worker remains a slave!" But "contrary to this Marxian maxim," today the Hungarian, the Italian, and the Pole (in Galicia) are "free," but the worker, as Marx would put it, remains a slave.
[36]Adler, *Grundlagen,* p. 21, fn. 3.

On March 18, 1887, the *Sozialdemokrat* published a series of "Timely Aphorisms from the 18 Brumaire," to commemorate Marx as "the founder of the International."[37] The front page of the issue commemorates the "March Days," now understood as including the March revolution in Berlin in 1848, the Paris Commune, and the assassination of Alexander II. Marx is remembered at the same time, with no direct relationship to these events. The article must be one of the first attempts to consider the *Brumaire* as having lasting value, apart from Marx, distinguishing his action in life from "what he *is* in his works, still today, for us, what an abundance of instruction we can draw from his work, not just about the past, but also for the present." While the lasting value of *Capital* is obvious, the *Brumaire* is still not as well known as it deserves to be.

The "historical-critical treatise" shows the "fruitfulness of the Marxian conception of history," by no means crudely mechanistic, denying the influence of ideas and personal initiative, but simply giving "these and other subjective factors of popular life" their place alongside the "objective factors of history, the economic conditions under which peoples and classes live and develop." The preface alone refutes the legend of the "onesidedness" of Marxism, found among bourgeois and many professedly socialist critics of Marx. Apart from this, however, the brochure was never more timely for Germany than the present, when the German people experiences "in its own body" a "Bonapartist economy." It is recommended not only to comrades but also to opponents, most of all the "representatives of so-called *bourgeois* democracy," that is, the short-lived progressive

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[37] "Zeitgemäße Aphorismen aus dem 18. Brumaire von Karl Marx," *Sozialdemokrat*, March 12, 1887.

Deutsche Freisinnige Partei (DFP). Studying the *Eighteenth Brumaire* will help to explain their recent defeat in the election that year by the "Bismarckian demagogues."

Some of these newly timely passages are still familiar, others less so. Italics are added and occasional interjections to clarify the point. Most of the comparisons are predictable. For example, what Marx says about the ways that petit-bourgeois democrats respond to defeat is supposed to be confirmed anew by progressive journalism on the recent electoral defeat. Certain tactics of the Party of Order, including the control of rural schools and policing and the tendency to attack any undesirable policy as "socialism," anticipate the National Liberals. Other comparisons are a bit less familiar. For example, a passage on the tendency of the French bourgeoisie to increase the size and power of the state machine and the executive is the "political *Urbild* of German national liberalism." Achille Fould, as a representative of "financial aristocracy," was compared to the great German banker of the time, Gerson von Bleichröder, and naturally, Bismarck to Bonaparte: "Today Junker, tomorrow Bourgeois, today the protector of [anti-Semitic agitator Adolf] Stoecker, tomorrow bosom-buddies with [the German-Jewish] Bleichröder, today the "Patrimonium of the Disinherited" [*Patrimonium der Enterbten*], tomorrow offering his agrarian friends the *Schnapsmilliarde* ..."

By the time that the anti-socialist law was allowed to lapse, the SAPD had seen some significant changes: the growth of the electoral base, stronger ties to unions, more refined parliamentary tactics, and a conspicuous turn to Marxism, especially to the

economic theories of Marx.[38] In the elections of February 20, 1890, when the anti-socialist law was still in effect but its renewal had been rejected, the party won the most votes of any party, with over 1.4 million.[39] Bismarck resigned in March. One of the first criticisms of Marx as having a teleological "philosophy of history," oriented toward a supposed end of capitalism, was in a book by Paul Barth, with a preface dated March, 1890, just one month after the elections.[40]

For Barth, Marx's supposed idea that contradictions within capitalism would produce its communist negation made him in fact the last true Hegelian, with Eduard von Hartmann, one of two heirs of Hegel's philosophy of history. Some fifty years after Hegel's death, Barth still saw the topic of Hegel's philosophy of history as new, finding little of value on the subject in the existing literature. Hegel's logic and philosophy of nature had fallen into oblivion, he claims, but other aspects remain influential in Germany and internationally. Hegel's ideas about history, in particular, "have not remained in books but influence the spirits of certain contemporaries and therefore history itself." Only twenty pages in the book are devoted to Marx, out of 150, and they touch only briefly on the *Brumaire*. Barth relies mainly on *Capital* and claims such as that money has its origins in the circulation of commodities rather than in the state, that religion will only vanish when the relationship to nature is rationalized, or that Descartes'

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[38] Vernon L. Lidtke, *The Outlawed Party; Social Democracy in Germany, 1878-1890* (Princeton [N.J.]: Princeton University Press, 1966), 320.
[39] Steenson, *Not One Man! Not One Penny!*, 39.
[40] Paul Barth, *Die Geschichtsphilosophie Hegel's und der Hegelianer, bis auf Marx und Hartmann.* This was his *Habilitationsschrift,* earning him a post in philosophy in Leipzig.

idea of animals as machines belongs to a time of early manufacture.[41] One of Barth's main lines of criticism is a familiar one, that Marx underestimated the role of "superstructure" in history, although he adds that Marx also neglected factors such as "race" and climate.[42]

Because Barth's main interest is in the idea of dialectical transformation leading to a new social order, he shows little interest in the *Brumaire.* He simply describes the work as trying to prove that "each of the political parties then was constituted by a certain class of economic interests," and ultimately blames the peasants, "who, embittered about certain oppressive laws passed by Parliament, indirectly brought about the coup d'état." This description ignores the role of heterogeneous parties and alliances between parties, political differences among the peasants, and the whole idea of class struggle creating a possibility for action, for which no one class is to blame.

One popular socialist work from about the same time, Jakob Stern's *Philosophy of Spinoza,* refers to the *Brumaire* in quite different and more interesting, if not necessarily more accurate, philosophical terms. Stern compares the prophecy at the end of the *Brumaire,* which he sees as having been "literally" fulfilled, to the use of mathematical reckoning to discover the planet Neptune, as an example of what Spinoza calls an "adequate idea."[43] Stern later mentions the *Brumaire,* along with Karl Kautsky's recent

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[41] Barth, *Geschichtsphilosophie Hegel's,* p. 43-4

[42] For Barth's book and the debate surrounding it, Bo Gustafsson, "Friedrich Engels and the Historical Role of Ideologies," *Science & Society* 30, no. 3 (1966): 257–74. Barth gives examples of ideological and political causes of economic circumstances: that religious ideas can cause wars, for example, and therefore also slavery. Other extensive arguments concern the supposedly different influences of Christianity and Islam on economic behavior. Barth, *Geschichtsphilosophie Hegel's*, p. 57.

[43] Jakob Stern, *Die Philosophie Spinoza's: erstmals gründlich aufgehellt und populär dargestellt* (Stuttgart: Dietz, 1890), p. 77. One of the few discussions of Stern in English is in Tracie Matysik, *Reforming the*

history of the French revolution, as proof that the materialist theory of history provides the understanding of the past and present, before adding that the theory is more than this, "a reliable Ariadne's thread in the political and social confusion of our time, a proven guide to the culture of the future."[44] For the second edition, published in 1894, Stern added a third and seemingly more substantive reference to the *Brumaire,* in a footnote relating to the idea of the illusion of free will. "Men deceive themselves often about the motivations of their actions even insofar as they themselves ascribe to themselves different motives than the actual ones," he writes, citing this passage from the *Brumaire*: "So the Tories in England long imagined that they were fanatics for royalty, the church, and the beauties of the ancient constitution, until the day of danger tore from them the confession that they were fanatics only for rent."[45] Stern's book would be republished in 1908 and 1921.

Moral Subject: Ethics and Sexuality in Central Europe, 1890-1930 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 188 ff. Stern is placed in the context of a greater German reception of Spinoza in Tracie Matysik, "Spinozist Monism: Perspectives from within and without the Monist Movement," in *Monism: Science, Philosophy, Religion, and the History of a Worldview.*, ed. Todd Weir (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[44] Stern, *Philosophie Spinoza's,* p. 176.

[45] Stern, *Philosophie Spinoza's* (Stuttgart: Dietz, 2nd ed., 1894), p. 101-2, fn.

The Eighteenth Brumaire in the "Golden Age"

For Leszek Kolakowski, the period of the Second International (1889-1914) is the "golden age" of Marxism, when the doctrine was "clearly enough defined to constitute a recognizable school of thought, but it was not so rigidly codified or subjected to dogmatic orthodoxy as to rule out discussion or the advocacy of rival solutions to theoretical and tactical problems." In this idealized and seemingly irretrievable period, Marxism guided thought and enabled discussions of theory and tactics in which "practical" activists and some party leaders took part. For that reason, it "appeared in the intellectual arena as a serious doctrine which even its adversaries respected."[46] The present work is not a history of Marxism, but the history of the *Brumaire* in this period may offer a concrete and distinctive perspective on this remarkably dynamic period.

The party program of the prewar SPD was the Erfurt Program of 1891, which replaced the outdated Gotha Program of 1875. Although the Erfurt Program was not related to the *Brumaire* or influenced by it in any evident way, Karl Kautsky's commentary on the program may have exerted a lasting influence on the understanding of the text, simply by including a long discussion of the term *Lumpenprolateriat.* For Kautsky, this just meant those who could not work or could not find work, who were forced to beg or steal to survive. Prostitutes were also in this category. Already the

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[46] Leszek Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Rise, Growth, and Dissolution. 2: The Golden Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

Lumpenproletariat had lost some of its treacherous character, as being just dependent on charity and not inclined to fight exploitation. It was still mentioned that the *Lumpenproletariat* was unreliable in revolutionary situations, but this had few implications for the politics of the 1890s.

When the meaning and moral implications of the term were debated, it was sometimes with reference to the *Brumaire*. An article in *Vorwärts,* from March 1892, cites the passage from the *Brumaire* as a "conceptual definition [*Begriffsbestimmung*]," responds to a supposedly common question about the meaning of the term: if someone should happen to lose their job and no longer be able to buy new clothes, so that their clothes became rags [*Lumpen*], does that make them a *Lumpenproletarian*? The paper vigorously denied this: what mattered was not the clothes but the "gone-ragged attitude" [*verlumpte Gesinnung*], the willingness to sell oneself and to betray one's own class comrades. Somewhat contrary to Kautsky's emphasis on the corruption caused by poverty, the newspaper emphasizes, "under a torn smock the truest self-sacrificing heart may beat." Marx had said the same thing. Conversely, well-dressed people may just as well be rogues. The article recalls the example of the Society of December 2, Paul Déroulède's Boulangist *Ligue des patriotes*, and also the use of certain paid clappers in Berlin in 1878, after the assassination attempts.[47]

The revolutionary era of the *Brumaire* belonged increasingly to a distant past. One of the most important prefaces by Engels to any work by Marx, perhaps also the most influential, was his preface to the 1895 edition of *Class Struggles in France, 1848 to*

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[47] "Zum Begriffe des Lumpenproletariats," *Vorwärts,* March 13, 1892.

1850. This was mentioned only briefly in the prior chapter, as it was quoted in the French volume, published in 1900, that included both *Class Struggles* and (in small type on the title page) the *Brumaire.* Wilfried Nippel, in his recent article on Engels and the "politics of the preface," has described the circumstances of this edition.[48] The initiative for publication came from the *Vorwärts* press, not from Engels himself, but the very long preface, with its self-critical summary of his perspective on the revolutions of 1848, was also the last significant thing he wrote, his "political testament." It was dated March, 1895; he died in August. It appeared in an ambiguous political context, marked simultaneously by real fears about a new anti-socialist law but also the increasing apparent possibility of socialists taking power by legal means.

Class Struggles in France combines the three articles first published as "1848-1849," published in the spring of 1850, with excerpts of articles by Marx and Engels together from that fall, describing the economic recovery as evidence that no new revolution in France is forthcoming soon. This may be seen as a kind of response to Adler's line of criticism, mentioned earlier. Again, Engels calls these a "first attempt, with the aid of his materialist conception … to trace political events back to the effects of what are, in the last instance, economic causes," and emphasizes the empirical limits of this kind of explanation, as applied to the present, because the economic history of a time can only be known in some retrospect. For that reason, Engels claims, the "materialist method" is generally limited to tracing political parties and conflicts back to classes or

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[48] Wilfried Nippel, "Friedrich Engels und die Politik des Vorworts," *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* XI/3 (Fall 2017)

class fractions and their struggles. This is imprecise, he admits, but so is any other approach to contemporary history.

This "first attempt," it might be noted, is not described here as the "test" of the theory, as Engels had described the *Brumaire* in 1885. Rather, the "first attempt" is what is "tested," now not once but twice. The "first test" was through studies of recent economic history, through which Marx is supposed to have arrived at his theory that the trade crisis of 1847 was an essential condition for the revolutions of 1848 and conversely, that returning industrial prosperity meant a (temporary) return to political stability. Engels concedes what Adler had emphasized, that the earlier articles had still expected an imminent "upsurge of revolutionary energy," but he sees this as the only significant error, corrected in the co-written articles a few months later. The *Brumaire,* therefore, is now a "second test … even more severe." While Adler, again, had emphasized the differences, insofar as they overlap, between the ways that the two texts represent the same events, Engels again emphasizes that the changes were really remarkably small. These arguments about tests and methods are only the beginning of the preface, which goes on to discuss the significance of the *Class Struggles* in completely different terms, not focused on their form or method but their content and current significance. While only the first part of the preface, on method, would be included in the French social-scientific volume, discussed in the prior chapter, the much longer historical discussion was far more important for German socialists. Here Engels especially emphasizes the error of the belief in historical repetition, the "spell of previous historical experience," that "our conceptions of the nature and the path of the 'social' revolution … of the revolution of the proletariat, were

strongly colored by memories of the models of 1789-1830." The greater European wave of revolutions in 1848 confirmed the belief that "the great decisive struggle had broken out."

Already in 1849, Engels claims here, he and Marx saw the future completely differently than those refugee activists who "grouped around the would-be provisional governments *in partibus*," discussed in chapter one, who expected a speedy triumph of "the people" rather than, as Marx and Engels did, a long struggle among the classes comprising "the people." But history had also exposed their own position at that time as wrong, that the "mode of struggle of 1848 is today obsolete from every point of view." European capitalism was just beginning, not anywhere near its limits and its transformation through the kind of mass-democratic action that Marx and Engels had imagined as immanent, and had taken a course, he claims, that they could not even have *imagined* in 1848, with forms of class struggle that were peculiar to England, perhaps only really existing in Paris in 1848, now taking shape everywhere with unexpected scale and intensity. Here Engels also summarizes his theory of Bonapartism as a "revolution from above," in France and in Prussia, and as definitely belonging to the past, to a "bonapartist war period." Now the only war possible in Europe would be a world war of unthinkable violence and incalculable outcome. He criticizes the Commune: "The victory which came as a gift in 1871 remained just as unfruitful as the surprise attack of 1848." And finally, he describes the shift in the "center of gravity" of the workers' movement from France to Germany. The Germans showed how to organize a party and "how to use universal suffrage." Suffrage provides an estimate of strength and above all a

platform and authority, and it has displaced insurgency as a means to power. He concludes with a remarkable comparison of socialism to the rise of Christianity.

This was one of the last texts by Engels, his "testament." Its historical-critical perspective would be taken up in different ways by leading Marxists after his death. Early in 1896, Eduard Bernstein took on the difficult task of editing the manuscript of a popular history of the February revolution and the Second Republic by the Genevan socialist Louis Héritier, which had been written in French, translated into German, and partially edited by Wilhelm Eichhoff.[49] Bernstein found this task very tedious and time-consuming, "the most painful labor that I have done for a long time." This was due partly to confusion introduced by the anonymous translator (Hermann Thurow) and Eichhoff, but "the worst was Héritier, when he wants to be a Marxist [*wenn er Marxist wird*]. Because his natural disposition is Blanquism, mixed with Swiss democracy!"[50] The timing of Bernstein's work on Héritier has aroused some curiosity among specialists, as evidence of his thinking about Marx and revolution during his revisionist "turn."[51] In October, 1896, *Die Neue Zeit* began to publish his series of articles, "Problems of Socialism," later republished as a book that would be central to his argument with Karl Kautsky known as the revisionist controversy.

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[49] Till Schelz-Brandenburg, ed., *Eduard Bernsteins Briefwechsel mit Karl Kautsky*, Quellen Und Studien Zur Sozialgeschichte, Bd. 19, 22 (Frankfurt/Main ; New York: Campus, 2003), 85, 107. (EB to KK, February 24, 1896 and March 23, 1896)
[50] Schelz-Brandenburg, 121–22. (EB to KK, April 19, 1896). By April 30, Bernstein had finished "die zweite Lage," p. 137.
[51] H. Kendall Rogers, *Before the Revisionist Controversy: Kautsky, Bernstein, and the Meaning of Marxism, 1895-1898* (New York: Garland, 1992), 311–17.

In December, 1896, Bernstein was still "sweating over the Héritier."[52] One of his complaints is worth quoting at some length, because it also reveals his motives and his view of the *Brumaire* in particular. He was fascinated with the events themselves and a desire to recover the reputation of the February revolution from beneath the shadow of the Commune. The work of correction was also a learning experience for him:

> In no history of the February revolution have I found such a clumsy conception of events as in Heritier. And the February Revolution is precisely the most interesting revolution of the century, much more interesting, e.g., than the Commune … the Commune was a local phenomenon, in February, however, a nation was in revolt, all classes and parties … Closer study of events allows me to see many details in a different light than Marx depicts them, but on the whole Marx remains still the exemplary leader through the different phases … Heritier or at least Eichhoff knew the *18 Brumaire*, even cites some passages … but of the spirit of the text there is not a trace in the whole history. What Shaw writes about the melodramatic conception of the socialists receives here the classical confirmation… Horrific and virtuous [*Scheusale und Tugendbolde*], devilish bourgeois and innocent simple Arbeiter—that is Héritier and Eichhoff's historical stencil [*Geschichtsschablone*].[53]

There is one striking continuity between this passage and Bernstein's use of the *Brumaire* fully twelve years earlier, in the *Sozialdemokrat.* Remember, in 1884, while he began to inquire about republication, he had quoted the still relatively obscure "bourgeois and proletarian revolutions" passage from the *Brumaire,* in order to assert the right and even the obligation to criticize revolutions in the past, and the Paris Commune in particular.

To judge from his remarks here, one thing that was essential to the "spirit" of the *Brumaire* for Bernstein was a critical distance from class prejudices in particular, not just more complex concepts of class and class determination, but a more subtle depiction of

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[52] Schelz-Brandenburg, *Eduard Bernsteins Briefwechsel mit Karl Kautsky*, 309.
[53] Schelz-Brandenburg, 319. (EB to KK, December 7, 1896)

the moral and intellectual character of the classes in conflict, as not just simply devilish (and clever) bourgeois, innocent (and simple, a word that Bernstein writes in English) workers. What is also striking, in contrast to our own comparisons of the *Brumaire* to theater, is that Bernstein puts a basic critical concept from a playwright to use in history, not with great profundity, perhaps, only to say that good history should not be like "low" theater in its approach to human motivation. Bernstein would restate one idea that he has here, that the revolution of 1848 was a more important event than the Commune because it had a national character, along with others in an afterword to the published book.

Although Bernstein only mentions the *Brumaire* in passing, he also makes another basic point, with his distinction between a superficial citation (whether it was by Héritier or Eichhoff) and capturing the spirit of the text, as he understands it. The remark about Héritier's would-be Marxism suggests that Bernstein understands Marxism as a political identity, at least in relation to political identities, comparable to Blanquism or Swiss radicalism and incompatible with them. The contrast between Marxism and "Blanquism" would become increasingly important to Bernstein, who would come to see Marx himself as mistakenly "Blanquist" at times, in the *Communist Manifesto* but also the early writings on France, including the *Brumaire.*

While Bernstein was editing Héritier, in May, 1896, Kautsky published a German translation of *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Germany,* the series of articles from the *Tribune*, now known to be mainly by Engels, but published under Marx's name in 1851 and 1852. An advertisement for this volume in the SPD's very popular humor newspaper, *Die Wahre Jakob,* presented then as "a counterpart to the *Eighteenth*

Brumaire," but added that, because it was originally written for a daily newspaper in America, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* was more popularly written and "therefore suited to provide in a nutshell an understanding of the first German revolution to the widest circles." The *Brumaire* is implicitly relegated to a category of less popular works. It appeared perhaps increasingly as a text appreciated by insiders, for whom it was nonetheless essential for understanding Marxism. When Kautsky acquired Bertrand Russell's *German Social Democracy,* for example, he noticed at a glance that Russell's sources were inadequate, at least to judge from his citations: "not once *Anti-Dühring, Origin of the Family*, *18 Brumaire*, *Herr Vogt.* One must however know the writings, if one wants to write about the Marx-Engels doctrine [*die Marx-Engelsschen Lehren*] and relations."[54] Kautsky here insists that the *Brumaire* and *Herr Vogt* are essential, along with the theoretical writings of Engels, for any legitimate scholarly engagement with "Marx-Engels doctrine."

The *Brumaire* played only peripheral roles in the "revisionist controversy" that formally distinguished orthodoxy from revisionism in the years around 1900. Karl Kautsky and Eduard Bernstein did not refer to it often or at decisive junctures in their arguments. Still, I propose, there is enough evidence to speak of "revisionist" and "orthodox" approaches to the *Brumaire* that are still far from antiquated in principle in scholarship today. In his *Preconditions for Socialism,* the collection of earlier articles at the core of the revisionist controversy, Bernstein develops an independent and more substantive version of Adler's biographical argument about revolutionary expectations

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[54] Schelz-Brandenburg, 324. (KK to EB, December 8, 1896)

and illusions in 1850.[55] Where Adler focused on changes in Marx's outlook and internal inconsistencies, Bernstein sees a flawed theory of revolution as constant, an underlying "theory of the immeasurable creative power of revolutionary political force and its manifestation, revolutionary expropriation."[56]

This theory was prefigured already in Marx's 1844 critique of Hegel and still evident in Marx's writings on France, including the *Brumaire,* where "the Blanquists are presented as *the* proletarian party … a designation in no way based on the social composition … but solely on its revolutionary character." (For Bernstein, the socially-proletarian party was clearly the socialist party of Louis Blanc, "grouped around the Luxemburg.") Bernstein uses an argument partly drawn from the *Brumaire* against it, emphasizing the positive harm of historical repetition: "it was senseless, it was more than merely silly to don the costumes and to revive and surpass the language of 1793 … this policy was a crime." The idea that Bernstein saw at the heart of the *Brumaire,* that even the counter-revolution was a kind of revolutionary progress, was an error of principle, rooted in Hegelian preconceptions of revolution, that Marx himself never fully acknowledged—and neither did Engels in his 1895 preface.[57]

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[55] This whole second chapter, on Hegelianism and Blanquism, was omitted from the older English translation with the misleading title *Evolutionary Socialism.* It is restored in Eduard Bernstein, *The Preconditions of Socialism*, ed. Henry Tudor (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
[56] This was the element in Marx that Bernstein calls "Blanquism." This was in contrast to the common view of "Blanquism" as distinguished by its methods, conspiracy and putschism, which Bernstein in fact defended up to a point, as not irrational in revolutionary situations. "On the other hand, June 1848 and May 1871 were, in the final analysis, Blanquist failures." *The Preconditions of Socialism*, p. 38 and fn.
[57] Bernstein, *Preconditions,* p. 43.

There is no need to trace the peripheral roles of the *Brumaire* through the "revisionist controversy."[58] I will only mention here one other example of a revisionist attitude to the text, Georges Sorel's 1898 article on conceptions of historical materialism in the *Sozialistische Monatshefte.* Frustrated with current attempts to understand Marx, Sorel emphasizes the need to go much more slowly, "as if you had lead on your feet," testing individual sentences against others while constantly keeping their circumstances in mind. In this way, many apparent paradoxes can be avoided. It was even necessary to investigate Marx's sources, when he cites original documents at all. In this context, Sorel describes the *Brumaire* as having "not a few errors, which rest on the fact that his news mainly comes from the camp of political refugees." Still, he complains, Marx cited his own work in *Capital* and was apparently ignorant of other work on agriculture and population.[59]

A profound shift in perspective can be illustrated by contrasting the use of the *Brumaire* by the *Sozialdemokrat* in 1887, with its use of "timely aphorisms" to show what Marx "still is for us," to the set of quotations that were published in *Vorwärts,* for the twentieth anniversary of Marx*'s* death, in 1903, under the different headline, "Thoughts from Marx's Works." A few of these passages are still famous, like the one under the heading "historical materialism," from the 1859 preface. Many others are now

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[58] Karl Kautsky appeals to the *Brumaire* only superficially, in one of his responses to Bernstein. He opposes Bernstein's argument that Marx's conception of history developed significantly later in his life by appealing to the 1890 letter in which Engels calls the *Brumaire* a model of materialist historiography. Karl Kautsky, "Bernstein und die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung," *Die Neue Zeit* (1898-99), Bd. II Nr. 27, p. 7 and 8.

[59] Georges Sorel, "Betrachtungen über die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung," in *Sozialistische Monatshefte* (1898), p. 321. He also refers to the *Brumaire* again later, p. 429.

relatively obscure, such as the passage on "proletarian world politics" from the "Inaugural Address" of 1864, or sentences from *Capital* on "education of the future" and "development of the family." The famous closing sentences of the *Manifesto* are placed near the end, but the last word goes to the passage from the preface to *Capital* that describes the American Civil War as "tocsin" for the European working class, and the coming transformation as one that can be "more brutal or more humane," because "one nation should and can learn from the others." The article has a wholly different character than the "Timely Aphorisms." Any relationship to the present is left implicit. Only one passage from the *Brumaire* is included, under "The Party of Order in France, 1848-1852."[60]

The adjacent article by Rosa Luxemburg, "Stasis and Progress in Marxism," expresses a spirit of restless innovation that necessarily involved a combination of appreciation and depreciation. "The most valuable of all his teachings, the materialist-dialectical conception of history," existed only as "a method of investigation, as a few inspired leading thoughts," offering mere "glimpses into the entirely new world ... endless perspectives of independent activity," inspiring "bold flights into unexplored regions." This potential in Marx significantly overshadowed the achievement, as "the theory of historical materialism remains as unelaborated and sketchy as it was when first formulated by its creators."[61]

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[60] "Gedanken von Marx' Werken," *Vorwärts,* March 14, 1903.
[61] Rosa Luxemburg, "Stillstand und Fortschritt im Marxismus," *Vorwärts,* March 14, 1903. Translation online at marxists.org as "Stagnation and Progress of Marxism."

Karl Kautsky's preface to the *Communist Manifesto,* from the same year, historicized Marx in a different way, defending the general characterization of capitalism but describing the classes in modern society as "no longer completely the same," or indeed "completely different" (*ganz anders*) than they were in 1848.[62] The large-industrial proletariat is vastly stronger, the lower middle classes and peasants are ever more exploited and helpless. The modern proletariat now struggles against colossal capital accumulation and its political consequences more than immiseration as such. In the *Manifesto,* the German bourgeoisie could still be revolutionary. Today there is no longer talk of a revolutionary bourgeoisie in Europe. In this grand narrative of modernity, the *Brumaire* depicts the moment of transition.

The readership of the *Brumaire* must have remained very small. The copies that were advertised for sale in *Vorwärts* in 1904 and 1905, along with other works by Marx, were presumably still unsold copies of the edition of 1885. The work was cited only occasionally in the same newspaper.[63] It was cited sometimes elsewhere, including in arguments about class and class struggle that are at least important in hindsight. Michael Tugan-Baranowsky took the *Parzellenbauern* in the *Brumaire* as evidence that class for Marx had degrees or Hegelian phases, as "class in itself," "class for others" (against some other class), and "class for itself," for example. Eduard Bernstein drew on this argument

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[62] This was first written for a Polish edition in 1903 and only slightly revised for the German edition of 1906 to reflect the most recent events in Russia. A translation from the original with variations noted is included in Richard B. Day and Daniel Gaido, eds., *Witnesses to Permanent Revolution: The Documentary Record*, Historical Materialism Book Series, v. 21 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2009).

[63] In September, 1904, for example, "K.E.," presumably Kurt Eisner, in an argument with Karl Kautsky about "Democracy and State Form," quotes the depiction of Bonaparte in the *Brumaire* as contradictory and prevaricating, as an example of "imperialism or Caesarism." "Demokratie und Staatsform," *Vorwärts*, Septempber 2, 1904.

in the *Sozialistische Monatshefte,* arguing against "conceptual fetishism" [*Begriffsfetischismus*], the tendency for groups in conflict to "hypostatize concepts" like "class" and "class struggle."[64] But the *Brumaire* is absent from the standard party guide for agitators, by the revisionist Eduard David, first published in 1907, which describes a whole course of political self-education in detail, from the study of nature and history to the daily practices of excerpting newspapers, speechwriting, and delivery. The section on history includes Louis Héritier's history of 1848. The recommended works of Marx and Engels, under "specialized socialist expertise," include *Revolution and Counterrevolution* and *Class Struggles in France*, but not the *Brumaire.* [65]

Otto Meissner (the press was now run by his sons) published a fourth German edition of the *Brumaire* in 1907. It had no conspicuous reception in the German socialist press and seems to have been first advertised in *Vorwärts* only the following year, along with other works by Marx, for the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death.[66] It was described here as a "brochure against the organizer of the *Lumpenproletariat"* that "also contains a caustic critique of the political cowardice and half-measures of the 'Bürgertum.'" Both parts of this description were integrally related to broader ideas in German party literature, as in Kautsky's grand narrative, that the *Brumaire* was supposed to reinforce. The use of quotation marks around *Bürgertum* apparently expresses the idea of the class forsaking its own ideals of civility and citizenship. On the same anniversary, the German

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[64] Eduard Bernstein, "Klasse und Klassenkampf," *Sozialistische Monatshefte* (1905), Bd. II.
[65] Eduard David, *Referenten-Führer: eine Anleitung zum Erwerb des für die sozialdemokratische Agitationstätigkeit nötigen Wissens und Könnens,* 3rd ed. (Berlin: Buchhandlung Vorwärts, 1908)
[66] *Vorwärts,* March 13, 1908, p. 12.

newspaper's Sunday *Beilage* asked, "How Should We Read Marx?"[67] It was still unusual to ask that question in particular, as opposed to asking generally how to study socialism.[68]

"Marx is no easy read," it admits, "least of all for workers, from whom modern society itself has withheld the most basic tools of scholarly culture." A fairly long course of study was nonetheless recommended. The reader was to begin with party programs and other short commentaries before reading the "much too little noticed historical texts," very heavily focused on the revolutions of 1848-9. "Revolution and Counter-revolution in Germany" was studied first, then articles from the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of 1848-9, *Class Struggles in France* and the *Brumaire*, and the "small but interesting" pamphlet *Marx Before the Cologne Jury,* in which Marx "presents the reasons and necessity of his revolutionary position to the judges," and finally, the writings on the Commune.[69] The "historical texts" were followed by repeated and intensive rereading of the first book of *Capital*, together with *Die Neue Zeit,* then the second and third volumes, and finally the early writings edited by Mehring, such as the "introduction" to the critique of Hegel's *Rechtsphilosophie.*[70] "To study Marx means at the same time to learn to think," the article concludes. "We exit the workshop of Marx's spirit as different than we were when we entered."

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[67] "Wie Sollen Wir Marx Lesen?" *Unterhalthungsblatt des Vorwärts,* March 14, 1908.
[68] Otto Bauer's curriculum for workers studying socialism, for example, was discussed at this time in *Die Neue Zeit* and *Vorwärts.* O.B. [Otto Bauer], "Die Arbeiterbibliothek," in *Der Kampf*, Vol. I (1908); "Wie geht Man an das Studium des Sozialismus?" *Beilage des 'Vorwärts' Berliner Volksblatt,* February 16, 1908.
[69] *Karl Marx vor den Kölner Geschworenen* (Berlin: Vorwärts, 1895) The pamphlet is from a trial of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in 1849.
[70] The first three *Nachlass* volumes edited by Mehring are a "collected works" of Marx and Engels from 1841 to 1850. Volume four is letters from Lassalle to Marx and Engels.

The details of this answer matter less than the posing of the question. To ask how to read Marx implied a recognition that Marx had been read and could still be read in different ways. "Thus each generation, each stage of life and level of education has its own Marx," Otto Bauer claimed.[71] Innovation rather than uncritical fidelity could even be construed as the true mark of orthodoxy. Franz Mehring praised Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Renner for using the "methods of our masters" to *liquidate* [*liquidieren*] their own inheritance, overturning earlier positions of Marx and Engels.[72] Contrary to Marx and Engels, in light of the 1905 revolution, Luxemburg embraced the use of the general strike. In the same way, Renner uses Marx "completely to throw the results of Marx over the heap." For Mehring, Marx was a staunch nationalist, who recognized Austria's right to exist only as a barrier to Russian expansion, but Renner argues that a reformed Habsburg empire could be the basis of a socialist transformation. Mehring calls the argument "successfully schooled on Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire.*"[73] The two works represent no "alleged revisionism" but "the authentic, the actual, the historical revisionism of Marx and Engels."[74]

The *Brumaire* sometimes found technical uses in arguments about the meaning of class struggle. In his 1907 *Streifzeuge,* originally published in the *Metallarbeiter-Zeitung,* Paul Kampffmeyer cites the *Brumaire* against the idea that every tension between any part of a union and a small group of businesses is a "class struggle." When the union

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[71] Otto Bauer, "Die Geschichte eines Buches," *Die Neue Zeit* (1907), Nr. 1, pp. 33.
[72] Franz Mehring, "Historisch-materialistische Literatur," *Die Neue Zeit* (1906/7), Nr. 41 (25 Jg., 2. Bd.), p. 503.
[73] Ibid., p. 507, 508.
[74] Ibid., p. 509.

movement is described as a "proletarian class-struggle movement," he insists that we clarify the concepts of "class," "class struggle," and "class consciousness," against the contemporary cult of "class struggle," which sees class struggle in every tension between any part of a union and a small group of businesses. He turns to Marx, "the class-struggle theoretician," for a definition of the concept of class, quoting the passage on the peasants as a class or not a class as having a "grundlegende Bedeutung … für die Klassenkampftheorie überhaupt."[75]

An anthology of supposedly timely socialist quotations, *What does the Time Want?*, edited by Eduard Bernstein, included six quotations from the *Brumaire*.[76] This was explicitly not a "party text." As he put it, the book was for reflection [*Nachdenken*] not imitative learning [*Nachlernen*]. The first two quotations are the sentences on tragedy and farce and on tradition as a nightmare, which had been quoted only rarely in the past. The last one is a passage that begins, "The parliamentary regime lives on discussion; how should it forbid discussion?"[77] I have not seen this passage quoted elsewhere, and it is still unfamiliar today. But the *Brumaire* seemed to have little more than a philosophical significance at this point. This was evident again in a *Sozialistische Monatshefte* article on the *Lumpenproletariat* from 1909. Whatever the *Lumpenproletariat* had been or done in the revolutions of 1848, the author writes, it no longer had any political significance. It

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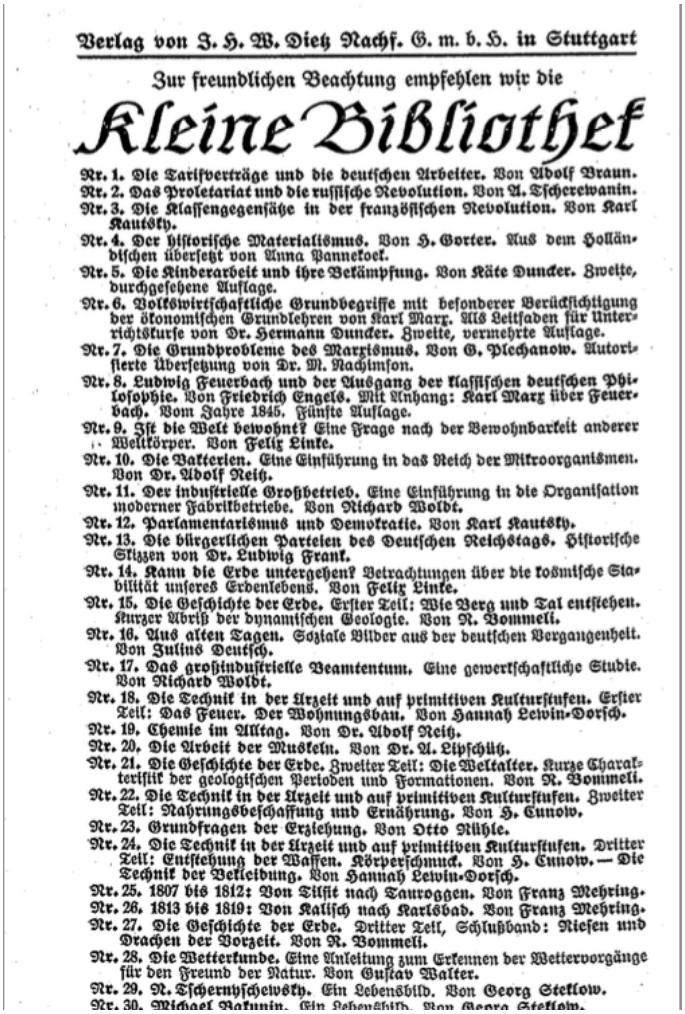
[75] Paul Kampffmeyer, *Streifzüge durch die Theorie und Praxis der Arbeiterbewegung* (Stuttgart: Schlicke, 1907), p. 99

[76] Eduard Bernstein, ed., *Was Will die Zeit? Der soziale Gedanke: Leitsätze aus den Schriften der Begründer des Sozialismus* (Berlin/Dresden/Leipzig: Verlag Soziales Erkennen, 1908)

[77] The other three are the one about "a nation and a woman" not being forgiven for their own violation, the one about distinguishing "what a man thinks and says of himself, and that what he really is and does," and the one about the petit-bourgeoisie and its representatives.

was now simply an object of social politics, social research, and even psychological study. This was a distinctly more modern perspective on the "problem" than those discussed in the socialist party press less than twenty years earlier.



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Nr. 29. N. Tschernyschewsky. Ein Lebensbild. Von Georg Steklow.
Nr. 30. Michael Bakunin. Ein Lebensbild. Von Georg Steklow.

Figure 2: Advertisement for the Kleine Bibliothek series

The last edition of the *Brumaire* in Germany before the First World War was published by J.H.W. Dietz in the *Kleine Bibliothek* series. The series was a short-lived venture, nowhere near as important as the old *Internationale Bibliothek,* published by the

same press, but clearly an attempt to reach a wider audience. It is characteristic of the Dietz Verlag at its prewar height, when it was able to cater to diverse readers. A column in December, 1910, in the SPD's bimonthly women's magazine, *Die Gleichheit,* edited by Clara Zetkin, recommends several of the "short popular treatises" as making "good Christmas presents for proletarians." It recommends Adolf Braun on tariffs, Karl Kautsky's *Class Contradictions in the French Revolution,* Käte Duncker on child labor, Plekhanov's *Fundamental Problems of Marxism,* and a book on of the possibility of life on other planets, by Felix Linke. At Christmastime in 1912, the series was recommended in more detail to "our [female] comrades, who think of the duty of self-education in giving and wishing for gifts."[78]

Of the thirty books in the series that were published before the *Brumaire,* only the book by Engels on Feuerbach (Nr. 8) is likely to ring a bell today. Plekhanov's *Fundamental Problems of Marxism* (Nr. 7) is also well known to students of Marxism, certainly better than the work of Heinrich Gorter (Nr. 4). The range of scientific topics represented here is truly astonishing, including earth history or "dynamic geology" (Nr. 15, 21), primitive technology (Nr. 22, 24), microbiology (Nr. 10), weather prediction (Nr. 28), and "reflections on the cosmic stability of life on earth" (Nr. 14). Franz Mehring's two volumes on the German "war of liberation" responded to what *Die Gleichheit* called a "flood of bourgeois-historical commemorative literature" on its hundredth anniversary.

Karl Kautsky's *Class Contradictions in the French Revolution* was very popular, and it was not a simplistic work, by the standards of popular history. Bertel Nygaard

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[78] *Die Gleichheit,* December 19, 1910, p. 96; December 11, 1912, p. 96.

considers the truly "popularizing" history of the French revolution for socialists to be the illustrated narrative of Wilhelm Blos, which had a straightforward chronological form. Contrary to his reputation, Kautsky took a more sophisticated thematic approach, analyzing various social groups (and factors like "the absolutist state") independently while integrating them into a greater totality. Despite his stark picture of economic determination "in the last instance," Kautsky forcefully challenged any reductive two-class picture of class struggle and also emphasized elements of autonomous movement.[79]

The republication of the *Brumaire* may be explained in part by the simple fact that the copyright on Marx's works in Germany had expired, under German law, thirty years after his death.[80] Its inclusion in this series also suggests a distinctive idea of the work as suitable for self-education. It can be contrasted to other popular editions of works by Marx at this time. Karl Kautsky's *Volksausgabe* of the first volume of *Capital,* also published in 1914, was designed for a different kind of intensive reading and re-reading, described in detail in the preface. The old pamphlet on the Cologne Communist Trial, republished by Vorwärts Buchhandlung in its "Sozialistische Neudrucke" series, edited by Franz Mehring, included a detailed critical preface that was typical of the series. This was historically the "agitation press" of the party, but it had expanded its offerings since 1900. The "Sozialistische Neudrucke" were relatively luxurious books in limited

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[79] Bertel Nygaard, "Constructing Marxism: Karl Kautsky and the French Revolution," *History of European Ideas* 35, no. 4 (2009): 450–64.
[80] In anticipation of the expiring copyright, there had also been discussions of a collected works. Götz Langkau, "Marx-Gesamtausgabe--dringendes Parteiinteresse oder dekorativer Zweck? Ein wiener Editionsplan zum 30. Todestag," *International Review of Social History* 28, no. 1 (1983): 105–42.

circulation of a few thousand copies.[81] A great deal of historical explanation was now required to "rescue" the lesson from the work, that the communists on trial were distinguished by their understanding and character, by what Marx calls their "purity." The case is supposed to be typical of the "fate of the fighting working class" amid the "slanders of its mortal enemies."

In contrast, the *Kleine Bibliothek* edition of the *Brumaire,* published around April, 1914, had only a brief publisher's note and some minimal aids for reading. The 1885 preface by Engels was omitted, but the brief publisher's note quotes from the paragraph on France as the "classical" land of bourgeois rule and proletarian struggle. Thus this edition lacks the more abstract ideas of Engels, including his complex idea of the *Brumaire* as "test" of the historical law of motion. Some footnotes were added with translations of words and phrases in French and English. David Riazanov contributed a "name register" [*Namenverzeichnis*] of 117 entries with brief identifications, which tries to convey a fairly ambitious amount of historical understanding and context, in fact containing much more background information than modern scholarly editions provide. Born in Odessa in 1870, Riazanov had little formal education but a passion for books that was conspicuous to friends early on. By 1905, he had made his debut in *Die Neue Zeit.* Politically, he was a "mass striker" and a Marxist critic of Lenin who remained neutral toward the Mensheviks. By 1909, he had funding from the Anton-Menger-Stiftung to

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[81]See "Buchhandlung Vorwärts" in *Lexikon Sozialistische Literatur.* The first five titles in Mehring's series were (I) Engels, *Der Deutsche Bauernkrieg* (1908); (II) Wilhelm Weitling, *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit* (1908); (III) Wilhelm Wolff, *Gesammelte Schriften* (1909); (IV) F.A. Lange, *Die Arbeiterfrage* (1910); and (V) J.B. von Schweitzer, *Politische Aufsätze und Reden* (1912)

gather material on the First International for publication, a project that would be interrupted by the outbreak of war. He also published a study of Marx's views about Russia and its role in Europe in *Die Neue Zeit* in 1909.[82] Riazanov was already developing a distinctive idea of Marx research.[83] He saw the lives and legacies of Marx and Engels as unique proof of the "creative strength of ideas and the decisive role of the historical personality." The task of Marx-research was to explain this achievement in historical terms. This meant especially going outside the lives and texts to study anything "from which they drew their impressions, impulses and stimuli," including especially the history of philosophy and political economy, the nineteenth-century revolutions and the workers' movement.

Vorwärts devoted a long article to the new edition, one of the few discussions of the *Brumaire* in the socialist press for some time and more sophisticated than most earlier ones, partly because it could draw on a vast amount of new ideas in recently published correspondence.[84] Recalling Lassalle's description of Marx as "Hegel transformed into an economist and Ricardo transformed into a socialist," for example, the anonymous author adds that Marx could also be called a Thierry transformed into a socialist. This idea comes from a letter to Engels, in which Marx praises the French historian as a father of the class-struggle theory but observes that Thierry held back from applying his theory to the present. While the *Brumaire* may be dated in some factual respects, the mysterious

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[82] Volker Külow and André Jaroslawski, eds., *David Rjasanow: Marx-Engels-Forscher, Humanist, Dissident* (Berlin: Dietz, 1993), 10–16.
[83] Colum Leckey, "David Riazanov and Russian Marxism," *Russian History* 22, no. 2 (1995): 133.
[84] "Marx der Geschichtsschreiber," *Vorwärts,* April 6, 1914

achievement is its engagement with its own time: "The most gifted archival historian [*Aktenhistoriker*] can not give a presentation of such vitality and depth; the atmosphere of the time can is also not to be replaced by the most diligent study."

Riazanov's name register would facilitate the understanding of "innumerable particulars" and "historical parallels," but the book was evidently a challenge. The reader was advised to consult the history by Héritier and the 1895 *Class Struggles* "for orientation." The review's depiction of the text is simplistic. In the French small peasant, for example, the author sees only a "reactionary class without political organization," obscuring Marx's more dynamic view. He refers to the "French bourgeoisie" in similarly monolithic terms, ignoring the dynastic conflicts that are a central drama of the book. The As the European *Bürgertum* in general grows "ever more reactionary and quietly permits the rule of saber and flint in 'dire times,'" the *Brumaire* uncovers the "roots of the political characterlessness of the *Bürgertum*." The *Vorwärts* reviewer shows no interest in Bonaparte or the corruption of his regime. On the whole, this interpretation in the party press has little clear relationship to the benign *Kleine Bibliothek* edition.

The republication was discussed much more briefly and in completely different terms in the revisionist *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, in one paragraph in Paul Kampffmeyer's review of books on history. For Kampffmeyer, the *Brumaire* has a "fundamental significance" for the understanding of the economic conception of history. Like other moderates before him, discussed in the previous chapter, he found the analysis of the French peasantry to be particularly important for understanding Marx's concept of class in general. But the text could not exert this influence on its own: "if one wants to

make these explanations wholly fruitful for more popular circles [*weitere Volkskreise*], one has to particularly emphasize them and provide sociological and historical commentary [*Erläuterungen*]." Kampffmeyer shows more enthusiasm for another text published by *Vorwärts,* perhaps intentionally juxtaposed to the *Brumaire:* an illustrated anthology of texts by the revolutionary satirist Adolf Glassbrenner. Glassbrenner's depictions of early nineteenth-century Berlin capture the "material and psychic world of the petit-bourgeoisie, which had not yet consciously distinguished itself from the proletariat."[85]

Perhaps the juxtaposition of the two reviews is pure chance, but it is a striking contrast, between Kampffmeyer's recognition of the need for theoretical and historical mediation in order to realize the value of the *Brumaire* and his suggestion that Glassbrenner's writings convey more directly a "material and psychic world" of the past and a fairly complex historical insight into the evolution of class identities. If the status of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* remained modest in Germany before the First World War, even as it was adapted for use in an increasingly modern context of social-scientific and natural-scientific popular education, including an increasingly diverse readership that apparently included women, it was perhaps in part because what many readers today would see as its main virtue—its sophisticated use of concepts of class in relation to their political representation—was neither exactly obvious nor exactly useful in a political sense at the

[85] The book reviewed is Franz Diederich, ed. *Unterm Brennglas: Berliner politische Satire, Revolutionsgeist und menschliche Komödie* (Berlin: Buchhandlung Vorwärts Paul Singer, 1912)

time. There was also no evidence yet of the powerful identification on the level of experience that would become evident in the Weimar Republic.

V. *The Eighteenth Brumaire* in the United States, 1897 to 1913

An English translation of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* was drafted by Wilhelm Pieper in 1852, shortly after the first edition. It failed to find a buyer, however, and the idea seems never to have been mentioned again. It became a reality only in the fall of 1897, when the first English translation of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* was serialized in the New York City *People,* the weekly organ of the small Socialist Labor Party (SLP). A note from the translator, also the editor of *The People,* Daniel De Leon, portrayed the work as highly relevant to a "critical moment" in American politics. The rise and recent fall of Populism, the more recent colonization scheme promoted by Eugene V. Debs, and "the hopeless, helpless grasping after straws" by trade unions were all signs of this crisis. The figures and parties depicted in the *Brumaire* "have their counterparts here so completely that, by the light of this work of Marx, we are best enabled to understand our own history, to know whence we come, whither we are going, and how to conduct ourselves."[86]

The German socialist press of the prior decade had certainly sometimes also identified the characters in the *Brumaire* with contemporary political figures in Germany, purporting to prove that Marx was not only a great economic thinker but also had political insights of lasting value. But De Leon went much further than this kind of occasional comparison, as in the quotation of "timely aphorisms," to identify the whole crisis depicted in the text with a new moment of decision. He even timed the publication of the translation to an important local election, to select the first mayor who would

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[86]"The Eighteenth Brumaire," *The People,* September 12, 1897, p. 1.

govern all five boroughs of New York City. The *Brumaire* was supposed to speak to the central issue in the race, municipal corruption, and the politics of urban reform that defined progressive politics at the time.[87] After Tammany Hall's candidate won, De Leon compared the Democratic organization to Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte's "Society of December 10," its clientele to "slum proletarians," and Tammany boss Richard Croker to Bonaparte himself.

It is possible that De Leon coined the term "slum proletarians," for *Lumpenproletariat,* which had a regrettable afterlife in American socialist literature. The slur epitomizes his greater determination to adapt the *Brumaire* to the political dynamics of the American metropolis. Understanding the translation in this political context requires a shift in perspective on De Leon and the Socialist Labor Party. The existing scholarship on De Leon's ideas about party organization and strategy, his struggles for power over unions and party presses, his relationships with European socialist parties, and his American immigrant identity, hardly mentions the electoral politics of the Socialist Labor Party or any of its specific campaigns. But this is the focus that is needed to explain how the *Eighteenth Brumaire* came to the United States and its fate in three editions as a book.

Shortly after its serial publication, in 1898, the translation was republished by the International Publishing Company, a small press owned by the Russian immigrant Alexander Evalenko. Evalenko tried to market the *Brumaire* along with other works on

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[87] Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 112 ff.

socialism for general readers, specifically in Great Britain, supposedly just interested in socialism as a political phenomenon of their time. Three years later, at the time of the founding of the Socialist Party of America, Eugene V. Debs purchased the rights to the *Brumaire* and several other translations from Evalenko. Debs sold them in turn, in 1906, to the cooperative socialist publishing house Charles H. Kerr in Chicago. Kerr immediately republished the *Brumaire* from the original plates, including De Leon's preface, and promoted it in his small journal, the *International Socialist Review*.

In these years, De Leon's political thinking underwent a dramatic shift. As the electoral fortunes of the SLP collapsed, after 1900, he began to reject the ballot as a means to power in the near future, what he had just recently called "the most powerful weapon" of the working class. Yet his belief in the value of the *Brumaire* remained unchanged and even deepened, to judge from the different ways that he referred to the text as his priorities shifted from winning votes to sustaining convictions. "Marx's *Capital* will not make Socialists," he declared in late 1905. "What it does make perfectly clear is the impossibility of humanity's well-being under capitalism … Marx's work that makes Socialists is *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*—that shows the way out."[88] By this point, De Leon was participating in a new project with a fraught and even hostile relationship to electoral politics, the founding of the Industrial Workers of the World.

Kerr's republication of De Leon's translation of the *Brumaire* was also the

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[88] Daniel De Leon, "Letter Box," *Daily People*, November 26, 1905. Cited after Donald Reid, "Inciting Readings and Reading Cites: Visits to Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*," *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 3 (November 2007): 545–70.

beginning of a noticeable move to the left by Kerr. He had previously conceived his audience as a socialist elite, his mission as "educating the educators." Now he sought larger audiences, promoted working-class writers, embraced the industrial unionism of the IWW, and came into increasing conflict with the leadership of the Socialist Party. In 1913, Kerr published a new edition of De Leon's translation with new type and a new claim, that recent developments had confirmed the translator's foresight, and "the spectacular figure of Theodore Roosevelt now offers a striking parallel to that of Napoleon the Little."[89] It still included De Leon's preface and his name as translator, but the reference to the Socialist Labor Party on the title page was removed.

Daniel De Leon's Translation and the Unification of New York City

Daniel De Leon was born in 1852 to a Reform Jewish family in Curaçao, in what was then the Dutch West Indies.[90] He was educated in Germany and in Amsterdam before coming to the United States in 1873, for reasons that are unclear.[91] He taught Greek, Latin, and mathematics at a high school in Westchester, obtained a law degree from Columbia in 1878, and briefly practiced law in Texas, before returning to New York

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[89]"Publisher's Note to Third Edition," in Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,* trans. Daniel de Leon (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, n.d. [1913])

[90] Claims about De Leon's origins are often made without citing sources. This sometimes led in the past to suspicions that his early biography was pure fiction. One valiant author of a dissertation from 1972, through a traveling friend, claimed to have "secured information on De Leon's family, including photostatic copies of the birth and death statements and pictures of his father's grave," p. 6, fn. 12.

[91] James J. Kopp, "Daniel De Leon," in *American Radical and Reform Writers: Second Series*, ed. Hester Furey, vol. 345, Dictionary of Literary Biography (Gale, 2009).

City.[92] His background in Reform Judaism is evident in one of his earliest publications, in the *Reformer and Jewish Times* in 1879, "Should the Jews Celebrate Christmas?"[93] Hired at Columbia as a lecturer in political science in 1883, De Leon began to show critical interests in diplomacy, imperialism, and international law, in both his academic work and in politics.

In 1884, De Leon supported Grover Cleveland's campaign with a pamphlet attacking Cleveland's Republican opponent, James G. Blaine. The pamphlet is a minute analysis of Blaine's role, as Secretary of State, in 1881, in an attempt to establish what De Leon called "a new East India Company, with Peru as its field of exploitation." De Leon's support for Cleveland was apparently deep, as he named one of his sons "Grover Cleveland." The pamphlet addresses the central issue of the presidential campaign, the same issue that Cleveland had highlighted as governor of New York State: corruption. This suggests a continuity in De Leon's political thinking, linking an early Latin American and anti-imperialist perspective to his later struggle with Tammany Hall and his later disillusionment with electoral politics. It also shows how his more distinctive interests intersected with a mainstream American scandal in his time and even concerns of Republican businessmen. The pamphlet is titled, "To Business Men," the subtitle asking of Blaine, "Is He a Safe Man to Trust as President?"

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[92]On De Leon's time at Columbia, see Lewis Hanke, "The First Lecturer on Hispanic American Diplomatic History in the United States," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 16, no. 3 (1936): 399–402; Rafael Khachaturian, "Statist Political Science and American Marxism: A Historical Encounter," *Contemporary Political Theory* 17, no. 1 (February 2018): 28–48, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-016-0079-6.
[93]Another overlooked source on De Leon's early relationship to Reform Judaism is the volume from his library discussed in D. de Sola Pool, "'Shemah Isbael,' A Magazine of the Reform Movement in Curaçao, 1864-1865," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, no. 26 (January 1, 1918): 239–41.

Between 1886 and 1890, De Leon moved quickly through several political organizations, supporting Henry George for mayor in 1886, joining a local assembly of the Knights of Labor in 1888, then the Nationalist movement inspired by Edward Bellamy's utopian novel *Looking Backward.* A second glimpse of his early political thinking is "The Voice of Madison," published in the Bellamy movement's magazine *The Nationalist.* For James Madison, De Leon argues, republican government presupposed a broad distribution of property and the widespread hope of acquiring it. Madison is supposed to have seen this as a fortunate difference between the United States and Europe but already to have feared for the future, when the class of the propertyless would increase.

This question of the difference between the United States and Europe and their possible convergence remained central to De Leon's thinking, including his thinking about the *Brumaire.* De Leon sees Madison's fears as having come to pass, and the Nationalist movement as the solution to the problem. A brief allusion to Marx shows that he had read *Capital*, but he does not base the argument on Marx. I see no evidence of real interests in either labor or poverty. What is far more evident in these early texts is a concern for the American political system, in which De Leon appears still to be a passionate believer in principle. This is essential for making sense of his changing relationships to Marx and European socialism as well as to the American labor movement.

In the late 1880s, as one party secretary put it, the Socialist Labor Party was "only

a German colony, an adjunct of the German-speaking Social Democracy."[94] When De Leon joined in 1890, his advanced education and English-language skills made him a conspicuous figure. Articles in the *Berliner Volkszeitung* that year already mention "Professor De Leon" mediating between the Socialist Labor Party and the primarily English-speaking Bellamy movement. In one, De Leon is already quoted as using the word "Lumpenproletariat."[95] He joined the party's new English-language weekly, *The People,* and was the SLP's candidate for governor of New York State in 1891. He had replaced the editor of *The People*, Lucien Sanial, by early 1892.

De Leon was not the very first to try to relate the *Brumaire* to contemporary American circumstances. In 1893, an article in *Vorwärts,* the small German-language weekly of the SLP, presented "Timely Aphorisms from the Eighteenth Brumaire" as evidence of Marx's relevance to American politics on the tenth anniversary of his death.[96] The first two paragraphs of this article are copied verbatim from the article with the same headline, discussed in chapter four, that had appeared in the German socialist party's newspaper, the *Sozialdemokrat,* six years earlier. Again, these paragraphs contrast the *Brumaire* to *Capital* and oppose the ignorant view that Marx's conception of history involves "a dull mechanism, a denial of the influence of intellectual currents and personal initiative." The German article of 1887 went on to explain how the *Brumaire* was

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[94] White, Charles M., "The Socialist Labor Party, 1890-1903" (University of Southern California, 1959), 45. There are no good figures on the nationalities of members. White cites an inventory of SLP groups of various types from 1893 that identified 65 as German, 17 as "American" (that is, English-speaking), 21 non-German foreign, and 54 unclassified (presumed to be mostly German).
[95] *Berliner Volksblatt*, January 23, 1890.
[96] "Zeitgemässe Aphorismen aus dem 18. Brumaire von Karl Marx," *Vorwärts,* March 18, 1893.

supposed to offer insights into the recent electoral victories of Bismarck and his supporters.

Because the idea of a "German Bonapartism" made little obvious sense in an American political context, the German-American copy naturally diverges from the original at this point. It focuses instead on passages that mock the democratic left in France, the compromise program of the French democrats and socialists in 1849. *Vorwärts* identified the French *démoc-soc* coalition of 1848-9 with the newly-founded People's Party, the Populists. It quotes a long passage about the failed street protest of June 13, 1849, against the French intervention in Rome, a turning-point in the fate of the French left and in the *Brumaire.* Removing specific references to that event, the description is applied to the "Hornberg shots that the People's Party of Kansas recently acted out." "Hornberg shots" are actions that make noise but have no real effect: here, a recent fight over election results in the Kansas state legislature, between Populists and Republicans, which led to a three-day armed standoff and Republican victory.

Vorwärts borrows the form and philosophical argument from the *Sozialdemokrat,* but solely to attack a rival party, without any figure corresponding to Bonaparte. While the German original has at least hints of self-critical dialogue with parties on the left that share a common opposition to Bismarck, the American copy became instead a warning against collaboration and a warning against futile political violence. De Leon certainly attacked Populism, several years later, including his preface to the *Brumaire,* but only incidentally, as one of several symptoms of the time. The political meaning of the text for him would be in some ways more affirmative and should perhaps be compared to another

representation of politics in *The People.*

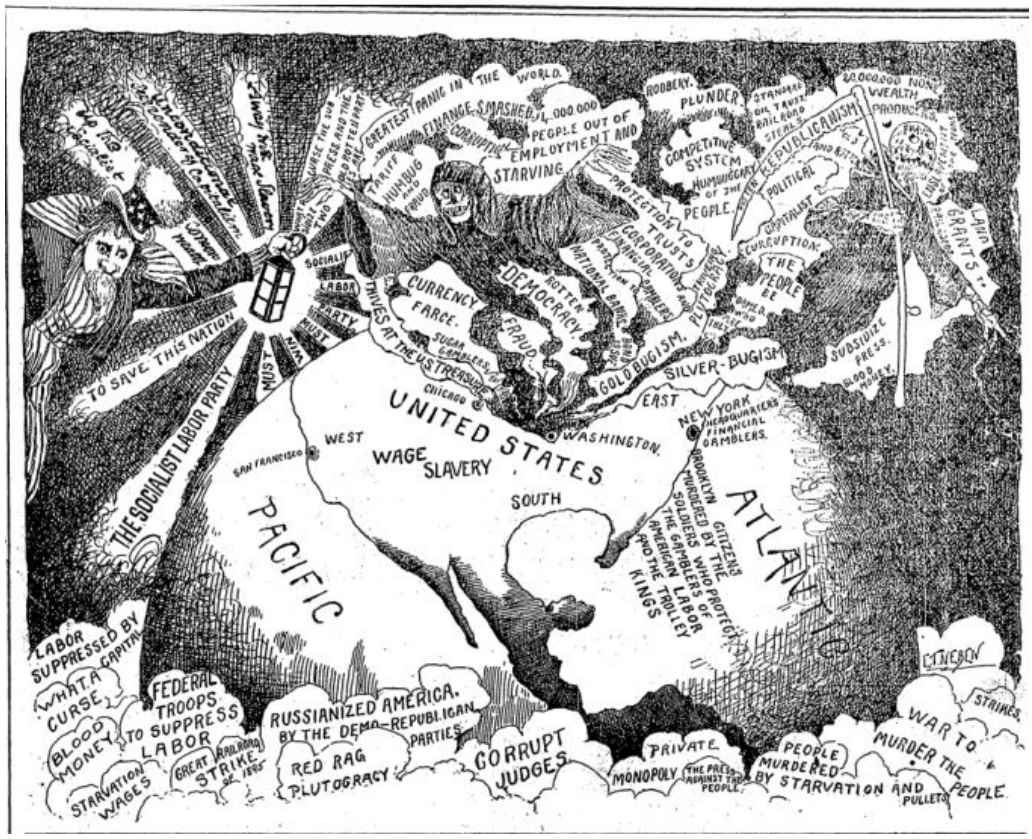

Figure 2: E.T. Neben, untitled cartoon from The People, February 2, 1896

Emil T. Neben's cartoon for *The People,* published on February 2, 1897, offers an extraordinary visual representation of the way that politics was imagined more broadly in the newspaper.[97] The Socialist Labor Party is depicted here as Uncle Sam looking in from

[97] I am grateful to Caleb Crain for guessing the artist's name, which I was unable to decode. E.T. Neben is listed as a delegate from Kings County to the SLP's 1896 convention. His name is also more legible in a later cartoon, "Wringing the Profit Out of Labor," in *The Comrade,* November 1904 (last page).

exile from a land that has been "Russianized by the Demo-Republican Parties." In other words, the two indistinguishable national parties are supposed to have transformed Uncle Sam's country into something like czarism. The parties themselves are simply Death. "Rotten Republicanism" has its skull exposed, expressing the idea of the Republicans as the openly plutocratic party, but the skull of "Rotten Democracy" is merely cloaked, showing that the difference is superficial. Both rise up from Washington, D.C., stuck here off somewhere between New York and Chicago. The text radiating from Uncle Sam's lantern declares, "To save this nation, the Socialist Labor Party must win."

A long caption that commemorates "Brooklyn citizens" killed in the trolley strike of 1895 noticeably highlights a local political experience, in which the "gamblers of American labor" are placed on the same side as the soldiers and the "trolley kings." This expresses the party's complete lack of faith in the modern goals of "pure and simple" trade unions, including the American Federation of Labor, which it justified in various ways, including the economic argument that strikes were useless in industries with high capital concentration and potential for mechanization.[98] After trying to win control of the Knights of Labor, a labor-fraternal organization that was dissolving by the 1890s, the SLP tried and failed to win influence in the AFL, which was beginning its ascent.

The SLP finally endorsed a new and tiny dissident labor organization, the

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[98] "Prospectus of the Cigar Rolling Machine Company," *The People,* September 12, 1897, p. 1, and "The Gateman," *The People,* September 19, 1897, p. 1. The union conflict is discussed in every history of the SLP, but it is still hard for a non-specialist to navigate the heated polemics and see clearly the issues at stake. A short version is Kipnis, *American Socialist Movement* (1952), 17-19. The term "pure and simple" came from Samuel Gompers, who used it positively. White, Charles M., "The Socialist Labor Party, 1890-1903," 86.

Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance.[99] Unlike other labor organizations that purported to be non-political, the unions in the ST&LA were supposed actively to support the Socialist Labor Party. One of De Leon's most popular speeches, published in *The People* in early 1896, presented an elaborate justification of this idea. "Reform or Revolution?" is a particularly doctrinaire expression of De Leon's Marxism, which came to the fore especially as he tried to justify his break with mainstream labor.[100]

De Leon is unusual for a Marxist of his time, before Lenin, in his focus on the question of "the State." The state must be transformed from a tool of class oppression to a means of coordinating free production. Inspired by recent anthropology and an older "noble savage" tradition, De Leon compares this goal to supposed forms of Native American community.[101] This communist goal of transforming the state defined "revolution" and De Leon's ideas of a "revolutionary" party organization. To express his main idea, the quasi-metaphysical contrast of reform and revolution, De Leon contrasts "external change," like a poodle being shorn in various ways, to "internal change," which is like the evolution of new species.

The main obstacle to socialism in the United States, as De Leon presents it here, was ultimately the sheer surplus of competing reform and utopian ideas: "the tablets of the minds of our working class are scribbled all over by every charlatan who has let

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[99] One list of member organizations, from 1898, includes "German Waiters," "Bohemian Butchers," "German Coppersmiths," "Bohemian Typographia," and "Swedish Machinists," to mention only those that explicitly mention nationality in their names. Paul F Brissenden, *The IWW: a Study of American Syndicalism* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1920).
[100] *The People,* February 26, 1896.
[101] De Leon cites Lewis Henry Morgan, whom he may have discovered through Engels. Paul Buhle, *Marxism in the United States: A History of the American Left*, Third edition (London: Verso, 1991), 51. But he also appeals to Benjamin Franklin and may also have been influenced by Montesquieu on cannibals.

himself loose." This constant cycle of reform and utopian movements led ultimately to "disappointment, stagnation, diffidence, hopelessness in the masses." In another evocative image, "[t]he scatterbrained reformer is ruled by a centrifugal, the revolutionist by a centripetal force." His solution is a vanguard party. The fate of movements depends "upon the head of the column—upon that minority that is so intense in its convictions, so soundly based in its principles, so determined in its action that it carries the masses with it."[102]

De Leon used the story of the Tower of Babel to express how he thought about the challenge of sustaining this cohesion and belief in a distant project:

> The Bible, which I recommend to you to read carefully, furnishes in its Tower of Babel story a warning worth taking to heart. When the Lord wanted to confuse the Jews so that they shouldn't build that tower and get into heaven by that route, he introduced the confusion of language among them. Thereupon, when a man said, "Bring me a brick," they brought him a chair, and when a man said, "Bring me a chair," they struck him over the head with a crowbar; and so, not being able to understand one another, the building of the tower was given up, and the people scattered to the four winds.

Sustaining the project of "building of the tower" is imagined here as above all a problem of communication. It is *not* a matter of discovering the right tactics, knowing what to do and giving the right practical commands. A kind of inexplicable confusion is supposed to occur between the command and its execution, producing contrary or even violent resistance to cooperation. Maybe De Leon's real problem was how to mobilize collective action with very few resources besides words, without even the elaborate cultural

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[102] James A. Stevenson, "Daniel de Leon and European Socialism, 1890-1914," *Science & Society* 44, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 207.

resources that had held the Knights of Labor together.[103]

After De Leon broke with the broader labor movement, *The People* began to draw sharper distinctions among European socialist parties, which it previously promoted with less discrimination.[104] In particular, it showed increasing enthusiasm for France and the Guesdists of the *Parti ouvrier français* (POF).[105] "The circumstances that English is the language of our country causes many to fall into the error that England is the country to which we have closest social, economic and political affiliation," declared one front-page article in February, 1896. "The country with which we bear closest affinity is not England, but France." De Leon would use the exact same language in his preface to the *Brumaire.* The article quotes an article in *Le Socialiste,* the newspaper of the POF, approving the SLP's "locking horns with capitalism, not on the economic field alone, but also on that of politics, where, owing to the deep-rooted spirit of democracy in the country, the success is all the surer."[106]

The supposedly "deep-rooted spirit of democracy" in France was the essential similarity that De Leon saw to the United States. Essentially, the SLP sought to inspire municipal socialism by linking it to a communist revolutionary tradition. The front page of *The People* for March 22, 1896, ran two front-page stories about France. One reports a speech by Lucien Saniel for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Paris Commune. By

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[103] Robert E. Weir, *Beyond Labor's Veil: The Culture of the Knights of Labor* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).
[104] Stevenson, "Daniel de Leon and European Socialism, 1890-1914."
[105] James A. Stevenson, *Daniel De Leon: The Relationship of the Socialist Labor Party and European Marxism, 1890-1914,* Diss., University of Wisconsin, 1977, pp. 113-119.
[106] Untitled article, *The People,* February 16, 1896, p. 1. For a similar contrast, appealing to a "great speech" in 1895 by Alexandre Millerand against "'pure and simplism' of the British and American sort," see "Policy of Labor," *The People,* May 31, 1896, p. 1.

recalling the history of "making commune," Saniel depicts the Commune in a tradition of municipal autonomy rather than that of proletarian revolution: in 1871, "Paris again proclaimed the commune, that is, its municipal independence." He places the "social republic" of 1848 in this municipal lineage as a Parisian vision crushed by the rest of the nation and only recently avenged at the polls.[107] The trajectory leads to a present in which, "in all the great cities, from Roubaix to Marseilles... Socialism is firmly rooted." This identification of the Commune with municipal socialism runs counter to later stereotypes of both. The adjacent story describes "Roubaix: Socialist Administration of a Great City," where the city council "has vastly improved the condition of the working class ... while the boodle party councils of America have steadily co-operated with the capitalists in the degradation of American labor."[108] The successes of the municipal program adopted by the POF at its 1891 congress at Lyons were repeatedly touted in *The People* through 1896 and early 1897.[109]

While appealing to such foreign examples, De Leon also sometimes reasserted distinctly and even peculiarly American values. In "Reform and Revolution?" he refers to one of his more distinctive role models, "one of our great men, a really great man, a man whom I consider a glory to the United States—Artemus Ward." In early 1897, De Leon

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[107] *The People,* March 22, 1896, p. 1 See also *Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Socialist Labor Party* (1896), p. 8; "Municipal Socialism," *The People,* January 17, 1897, p. 1; "Municipal Program of the Socialist Labor Party, May 23, 1897, p. 1.
[108] This is a partial translation and summary of an article from the *Almanac du Parti Ouvrier* for 1896,
[109] On this congress and the Guesdist justification for municipal politics, see Aaron Noland, *The Founding of the French Socialist Party (*New York: Howard Fertig, 1970), p. 27. Joan Wallach Scott, "Social History and the History of Socialism: French Socialist Municipalities in the 1890's," *Le Mouvement social*, 1980, 145–53.

wrote an article on Ward, the most popular American humorist before Mark Twain.[110] The article was translated into Yiddish and published first in *Die Tsukunft,* at a time of serious conflicts in the Jewish socialist press over De Leon's union policy and his related idealization of European socialists.[111] De Leon probably did not read Yiddish, let alone speak it or write it. The article was translated for him. The original was then published in *The People.* It sheds some light on his admiration for the *Brumaire* and also his thinking about "Americanization."

De Leon argues that the tyranny of public opinion in the United States, especially its "national vanities and national superstitions," is the origin of a distinctly American kind of subversive humor, "writings [that] have all the pungency of satire, and yet are clothed in the motley garb of the clown." Ward, a pen name of Charles Farrar Browne, was the first and best of these "jokists." De Leon draws a contrast to Cervantes who "undertook a long continuous story." For a more "mercurial" people, Ward "uttered himself in short, loose, disconnected articles, romances and lectures," but constantly mocking "flag bigotry, ancestral pretensions, business conceit, and jingoism." "Behind every word, frequently even in the spelling ... lurks a joke." De Leon often used English in a similarly creative way.

Now the nationalistic views that Ward attacked are only found among "those natives whose very lives and interests expose their viciousness, or those grovelling

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[110] David E. E. Sloane, "Charles Farrar Browne (Artemus Ward; 1837-1867)," in Jody C. Baumgartner, ed., *American Political Humor: Masters of Satire and Their Impact on U.S. Policy and Culture, Vol. 1.* Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2019.
[111] Tony Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York*. (Cambridge, Mass. London: Harvard University Press, 2011), 104.

ludicrous immigrants … so bereft of all self-respect as to delight in appearing 'more Parisian than the Parisians.'"[112] This peculiar remark about immigrants may be related to the internal tensions over De Leon's leadership. He explicitly recalls certain Jews who are supposed to have made themselves sick by eating pork, "in their anxiety to conceal their extraction." Although a closer investigation may be needed to show that this is directed toward his Jewish critics, the conflict that erupted just days earlier, and led to the founding of the independent *Forverts,* had been framed as one between remaining true to European-style socialism and being corrupted by American commerce.[113]

Beginning in the summer of 1897, the SLP faced another competitor on the left. In June, the railway-union leader Eugene V. Debs participated in the founding of the Social Democracy of America, in Chicago, an organization focused at first on a scheme to colonize a thinly-populated state to win an electoral majority. This was described as "American Socialist Methods" as opposed to "old German Socialist methods, with its 'class consciousness' club tactics." It was controversial within the SDA itself but also incredibly popular. By August, one member of the SLP in Philadelphia wrote to *The People* to propose a party merger, imagining that the SDA had 500,000 willing colonists already. "No Compromise!" read the headline in *The People* on September 5. Debs and the colonization scheme would be the subject of several articles that ran alongside the *Brumaire.* This is the "Debs movement" mentioned in the preface, not the later Socialist

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[112] "Artemus Ward: His Place in American History as an Agent of Civilization," *The People,* January 17.
[113] Tony Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Cambridge, Mass. London: Harvard University Press, 2011).

Party.[114]

Two weeks before *The People* began to publish the *Brumaire,* in late August, 1897, it published some uncredited and modified excerpts from Karl Kautsky's commentary on the Erfurt Program concerning the *Lumpenproletariat* or "slums," as it is translated here. To a description of this group as lacking "all sense of shame, honor, and self-respect," its members "giving precedence to their own personal and immediate wants rather than to regard for their own reputation," De Leon inserts a reference to William "Boss" Tweed, "the shining star of Tammany twenty years ago." When Tweed "was unmasked and brought to justice for his wholesale plunder of the public treasury, it was this class among the population of New York City that stuck to him fastest."[115] This clearly anticipates his later association of the *Brumaire* with Richard Croker.

On September 10, 1897, De Leon's forthcoming translation was announced in the party's German-language daily, the *New Yorker Volkszeitung.* The *Volkszeitung* urged its readers to recommend the translation to "*thinking* English-speaking workers and comrades," for "he who wants clarity about the course of history can find it in this small but nonetheless important text by Marx." This clarity was needed not only by English speakers, the paper added, but even by Germans.[116] The *Volkszeitung* recommended the translation to Germans again three days later, noting that "those who do not have access to the German original can also learn much from this translation." The author copies

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[114] *The People,* September 12, October 24, and November 7. On the Social Democracy of America and the colonization scheme, see Ira Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 43–61.
[115] *The People,* August 22 and 29, 1897.
[116] Untitled article, *New Yorker Volkszeitung,* September 10, 1897, p. 2.

without quotation marks or acknowledgment sixty words from the 1885 preface by Engels that define historical materialism.[117]

Like *Vorwärts* four years earlier, the *Volkszeitung* also adds its own American interpretation, but the new comparison is more emphatic and extensive. Not just a few aphorisms but "whole pages ... sound as if they literally describe American conditions." Marx's "representation of the *Lumpenproletariat* applies word for word to the role that the *Lumpenproletariat* plays in American politics, and especially how it is organized in New York in Tammany Hall." When he describes the dynastic conflict between Legitimists and Orleanists, the representatives of large landed property and the "financial aristocracy," "Does it not fit, word for word, the electoral contest of last year, between Bryan and his farmers, and McKinley and Hanna with their capitalist followers?" The defeat of William Jennings Bryan by William McKinley and his prominent supporter, industrialist Mark Hanna, is supposed to have revealed once again, in Marx's words, "the old contradiction of city and country, the rivalry between capital and property in land."

Both analogies are hyperbole with a limited aim, to correct those who speak in "general expressions" and "misunderstood slogans" about the "class struggles of the workers."[118] This remark may be understood again in the broader context of the conflict over De Leon's union strategy. It is evident that the point of the article is not to *reveal* hidden forces in politics by appealing to Marx. The reader is supposed to know already

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[117] "Ein gutes Werk," *New Yorker Volkszeitung,* September 13, 1897, p. 3. The passage begins "alle geschichtlichen Kämpfe..." Compare Karl Marx, *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonparte* (Hamburg: Otto Meissner, 1885), p. iv.
[118] Ibid.

how Tammany Hall is organized and, at least vaguely, the interests allied with the two political parties. Rather, the aim is to show that Marx is *relevant* to American politics, in the context of the greater debate about European and so-called American socialism. This *Volkszeitung* article is noticeably more complex than the earlier anti-Populist "Timely Aphorisms" in *Vorwärts.* It is clearly influenced in part by the SPD's formalization of Marxism into a programmatic party literature, marked by concepts like *Lumpenproletariat* and some appreciation of the "agrarian question."

The serial publication of De Leon's translation was timed to an election season in which national and local politics intersected in particularly complicated ways. Although it was an off-year election season, with no presidential race or Congressional midterms, the mayoral race in New York City that year was particularly important. It would determine the leader of the new metropolis, known then as "Greater New York," that would unite the five boroughs under one charter for the first time, effective January 1, 1898. It was a particularly important contest for the Democrats of Tammany Hall, who had lost to reformers in the previous election, after a state-senate investigation into police corruption. In connecting the *Brumaire* to corruption and Tammany Hall, De Leon was addressing the major theme of the race as all parties understood it. De Leon also saw a similarity to the *Brumaire* in the weakness of the "bourgeois" opposition to Tammany, with Republicans and the independent reform party, the Citizens' Union, trying and failing to unite.

The Socialist Labor Party was one of several smaller parties that could only be competitive in lower-level races. It was also running candidates in various municipal and

state races elsewhere in New York State, as well as in Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. In these contests, it could compare itself favorably to other third parties, including Populists, Prohibitionists, nativists such as the American Party in Michigan, or the Negro Protective Party in Ohio, founded in a response to inaction over lynching. Most of all, the SLP could be proud of winning more votes that it had in the past.[119]

Part I of the *Brumaire* ran on September 12, 1897, along with an editorial note that later became the preface of the book. The preface relates the *Brumaire* to a "critical moment," with symptoms that include "the recent populist uprising," "the still more recent 'Debs movement,'" and the "hopeless, helpless grasping after straws that marks the conduct of the bulk of organized labor." Other symptoms of the time mentioned in the preface are more general, such as "empty-headed, fishy figures who are springing into notoriety for a time and have their day." The preface also repeats the appeal to the historical affinity of the United States and France:

> The teachings contained in this work are hung on an episode in recent French history. With some this fact may detract of its value. A pedantic, supercilious notion is extensively abroad among us that we are an "Anglo-Saxon" nation, and … to look to England for inspiration, as from a racial birthplace... What we have from England... rather partakes of the nature of "importations." We are no more English on account of them than we are Chinese because we drink tea. Of all European nations, France is the one to which we come nearest.

The People sees the greater similarity with France in a shared republicanism and in the drastic form of its political conflicts, "directness," the "unity of its actions, the sharpness that marks its internal development." By virtue of this "sharpness," the political leaders

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[119] "Further Returns," *The People,* November 14, 1897.

and parties depicted in the *Eighteenth Brumaire* are supposed to "have their counterparts here so completely that, by the light of this work of Marx, we are best enabled to understand our own history, to know whence we come, whither we are going, and how to conduct ourselves."[120]

The biggest story that ran alongside *The Eighteenth Brumaire,* with four front-page stories in three consecutive issues, were reports on the "Hazleton massacre," on September 10, of nineteen striking coal miners, mostly Central Europeans, in Pennsylvania. A report on SLP protests quotes a characteristic remark by De Leon: "The working class must lie in what bed it makes for itself. It now chooses to make for itself the bed of capitalism, by upholding the capitalist system with its ballot." A string of quotes from protestors reiterates this theme. "We pledge ourselves to our murdered brothers to avenge them on election day"; the miners "voted into the hands of their future murderers."[121]

On October 17, the serialization of the *Brumaire* was interrupted to make room for a speech by Lucien Sanial, the party's candidate for mayor, about the upcoming local elections: "The Issue in Greater New York: Republican, Tammany, Henry George, and Seth Low Capitalistic Platforms as Compared with the Municipal Programme of the Socialist Labor Party."[122] Saniel briefly reiterated the main idea of the party, that only a socialist government can be "of the people, by the people, for the people." American

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[120] "The Eighteenth Brumaire," *The People,* September 12, 1897, p. 1
[121] "Protest," *The People,* September 26, 1897, p. 1
[122] The election is summarized in Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 1206-1208.

democracy could only be realized as what American socialists often called the "co-operative commonwealth." He then compared the views of the Republicans, Tammany Hall, Henry George, and Seth Low, on issues including good government, free trade, money, the privatization of public services, taxation, education spending, and free speech, to the positions of the SLP, which also had issues of its own, such as "Homes for the People—Coal and Drugs at Cost, & c."

Terrell Carver, who translated the *Brumaire* a century later for Cambridge University Press, once called De Leon's translation "the worst of the classic early translations of Marx, producing muddle, inaccuracy, and wodges of a language that is neither German nor English."[123] This is hyperbole. De Leon's language is certainly creative at times, but it is sometimes fortunately so. Carver's professional translation is naturally more accurate, but most of the important passages in the text pose challenges to translation that do not allow for easy judgments of "accuracy." This is true even of the first very short and simple sentence about tragedy and farce.

"Hegel says somewhere," De Leon's translation begins, "that all great historic facts and personages recur twice." This differs in no fewer than six ways from Carver's version of the same sentence.[124] De Leon has "facts" and "personages" for *Tatsachen und*

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[123] Terrell Carver, "Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte:* Democracy, Dictatorship, and the Politics of Class Struggle,*"* in Peter Baehr and Melvin Richter, eds., *Dictatorship in History and Theory: Bonapartism, Caesarism, and Totalitarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). A "wodge" seems to be just a large quantity of something. Carver gives examples from the very different anonymous translation in the *Collected Works,* mistakenly attributing one of the examples to De Leon, but his footnotes are correct.

[124] Carver has, "Hegel observes somewhere that all the great events and characters of world history occur twice, so to speak." The other two differences I think are less important. De Leon has "says" for *bemerkt,*

Personen, for example, where Carver has "events" and "characters." Most strangely, De Leon has "recur" for *sich ereignen,* which means "occur." This is definitely a "muddle," perhaps combining several ideas.[125] Things that "recur" twice would "occur" three times. De Leon also omits an important little phrase that modifies the verb in German, *sozusagen,* "so to speak," which shows that Marx himself does not use the verb "occur" too precisely.

As in my discussion of De Leon's French contemporaries, I emphasize again that translation is not just a series of independent substitutions of words or sentences in one language for those in another, that translators come to texts with vast conceptual and textual "grids."[126] In one case where, according to the dictionary, De Leon is right, this helps to explain Carver's "wrong" choice. *Tatsachen* are facts, not events. Carver may mean to express the commonsense view that what happens in history are events, that it hardly makes sense to say that facts "occur," and that this text as a whole has to do with repeating an event, "eighteenth Brumaire." But this tension between the compound subject, facts and people, and the verb "occur," is important and should not be concealed. Marx places the word *sozusagen* ("so to speak") inside the verb, *sich sozusagen ereignen,*

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where Carver has "observes." De Leon has "historic" for *weltgeschichtliche,* where Carver has (later in the sentence) "of world history." I have discussed this word in connection with the French translation, in chapter three.

[125] De Leon may be thinking of the old-fashioned sense of "recur" as "go back," as in recurring to a prior thought or consulting a book again. Marx also goes on to describe a kind of triple occurrence, the double recurrence, that Marx goes on to describe, of Roman republic and empire, in 1789-1815 and in 1848/1852. Finally, the verb may attempt to solve the problem of subject-verb agreement. Unlike occurrence, recurrence does not always involve events. A chord, a cancer, an image or symbol can be said to "recur." But none of these solutions is particularly satisfying.

[126] Melvin Richter, "Introduction: Translation, The History of Concepts and the History of Political Thought," in *Why Concepts Matter: Translating Social and Political Thought*, ed. Martin J. Burke and Melvin Richter, Studies in the History of Political Thought 6 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2012).

to emphasize that facts and people do not technically "occur." This strange tension between subject and verb, within the idea that facts and people occur, is typically overshadowed by the other idea, that they repeat. Both translators resist the idea that people repeat, choosing terms that might refer to fictions or types, "personage," "character." But *Personen* is not really a negotiable word. It means "people."

I discussed in chapter two the sentence fragment, "And the same caricature in the circumstances under which the second edition of the Eighteenth Brumaire is issued." Again, it ends with a period in the first edition, where it is followed by an example, and an exclamation mark in the second, where the example is removed. De Leon, who is working from a later edition, removes the initial conjunction and adds a verb to make a complete sentence: "The identical caricature marks also the conditions …" Most creatively, he changes the exclamation mark back to a period. In this way, I propose, he transforms an ungrammatical fragment, a kind of outburst in the revised version, into a seemingly close observation.[127]

In the quotable sentence that follows, "Man makes his own history, but …," De Leon translates the German idiom *aus freien Stücken* with an English idiom: "he does not make it out of the whole cloth; he does not make it out of conditions chosen by himself, but out of such as he finds close at hand." This is beautiful but a little dubious. In everyday use, *aus freien Stücken* means willingly, of one's own accord, while "made out of whole cloth" means imaginary, false. Even if Marx is not using the idiom *aus freien Stücken* according to the idiom dictionary, he certainly does not repeat the preposition

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[127] Carver is mostly more reliable, although he writes "cartoon-quality in the circumstances."

"aus" as De Leon repeats "out of" here, "out of conditions," "out of such as he finds."

In this construction, the conditions appear first as the ingredients or matter out of which history is made. Making history appears as a forming of materials, like making a coat out of cloth. This is not really in this sentence, as far as I can see, but it is well justified by referring to the larger context, where Marx discusses things "borrowed" from the past. "Out of" here may also have the other sense, describing position, where one is making history from—opposing the impossibility of choosing "conditions" to the actual making in those discovered or encountered more immediately, *vorgefunden.* A direct comparison with Carver is complicated, because the two translators work from different editions and the sentence was one of those revised by Marx, but at the level of the sentence, Carver's "just as they please," "in circumstances," appears more accurate.[128]

Where Marx goes on to describe this making in much more detail, however, Carver is not able or willing to follow him accurately. For example, where De Leon has, "men appear engaged in revolutionizing things and themselves," Carver carves out the verb that De Leon translates as "engaged in," *beschäftigt damit.* The men just seem to be revolutionizing, with no concern. Where De Leon has them "conjure up into their service the spirits of the past," Carver carves out "into their service," as if the summoning has no practical aim. Carver has them borrowing "marching orders" from the past, for *Schlachtparole,* where De Leon has "battle cries." I might suggest "battle slogans," but I do not see "marching" or "orders" in *Schlachtparole*. De Leon understands the past as

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[128] On the many uses of this sentence in the past, see Donald Reid, "Inciting Readings and Reading Cites: Visits to Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*," *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 3 (November 2007): 545–70.

enabling an inspiring communication, Carver as an oppressive power.

De Leon compares the revolutionaries to "the beginner who has acquired a new language." Carver has "a beginner studying a new language." De Leon is right. In Marx, the beginner has already learned the language, *erlernt hat*, even if he still translates it back. Both translators struggle with what Marx says about the more advanced language user, that "he has appropriated the spirit of the new language and can produce freely in it." De Leon has "grasped the spirit" and "able freely to express himself." Carver has "entered into the spirit" and "gained the ability to speak it [the new language] fluently." Neither is on solid ground. For Marx, this appropriation and free production is possible only when the speaker of the new language, as De Leon rightly has it, "moves in it without recollection of the old and has forgotten in its use his own hereditary tongue." In actual language learning, that shift happens long before fluency or any satisfying self-expression. Carver has "use it without referring back, and thus forsake his native language," but De Leon is closer again. Strangely, Marx has "move in it" (not "use it"), and obviously also "forget," not "forsake," that is, renounce, the mother tongue.

De Leon's only lasting accomplishment as a translator, however, may be his brilliant discovery of the word "grub" in the famous sentence, "Well grubbed, old mole!" One old sense of the word "grub" is obvious here. Grubs and moles both turn in the earth, undermining, subverting. This is the (double) meaning of the verb *wühlen*.[129] The translator who influenced Marx (Schlegel) compresses into one verb the English phrase

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[129] For discussions of this passage in translation, see Martin Harries, "Homo Alludens: Marx's Eighteenth Brumaire," *New German Critique*, no. 66 (1995): 53 ff.

work i' th' earth, "Canst work i' th' earth so fast?" De Leon used the verb "grub" elsewhere to mean thankless work, tedious work or scrounging, as in the preface to his translation of August Bebel's *Woman Under Socialism* (1904), where he describes men as "forced to grub and grub for bare existence," or in other writings, "to grub its existence out of nature," "to grub for his material sustenance all his life." By choosing this verb, De Leon created a powerful association between the struggles of nineteenth-century conspirators, the work of a mole, and more everyday struggles for survival and dignity. This is why his translation survives so well. Even Carver borrows it, while giving it a fresh twist of his own: he has "grubbed up."[130]

The *Brumaire* was already typeset in *The People* with the intention of republishing it as a book, in wide columns and with thirty-one new footnotes, added to the four by Marx in the original German text.[131] Most of the new footnotes are just translations of French expressions. *Républicain en gants jaunes* is cleverly translated as "silk-stocking republican," a term used in New York City politics for Republicans from the Upper East Side. A pejorative word used by Proudhon, *blagueurs* (misspelled as *blaqueurs*) is translated as "fakirs," as in one of De Leon's favorite phrases, "labor fakir."

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[130] The O.E.D. has grub "connoting the idea of mean or grovelingly laborious occupation," commonly agricultural labor, also "to lead a meanly plodding or groveling existence; to live laboriously or ploddingly," etc. To grub *up* is more specific, to root around in the earth, as a pig or bird does, or to dig up by the roots, to uproot, as Carver presumably means it here. "grub, v." *OED Online*. September 2021. Oxford University Press.

[131] Oddly, all four of the original footnotes are to the penultimate paragraph in section VII. Marx explains the double meaning of the French word "*vol*" (as "flight" and "theft"); he translates a quotation from Italian; he claims that Balzac modeled a character in *Cousin Bette* on an actual newspaper editor; and he attributes another quotation to Delphine de Girardin. It is mysterious to me why just this paragraph is footnoted in this way.

Some other footnotes provide historical information, mainly to clarify insults. The only French political figure identified in a footnote is Henry V, for example, because a crowd uses his name to taunt a Legitimist wearing a tricolor scarf.[132] The only biographical details provided about Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte clarify references to his illegitimacy and earlier attempts to claim the throne, while another footnote on "Clichy" clarifies a reference to his personal debt.[133]

While these footnotes mainly seek to clarify pejorative force and humor, a few others have different purposes. To the important passage contrasting the United States to Europe, as having classes "in constant flux and reflex," a relative scarcity of labor, and a "feverishly youthful" intellectual life, De Leon adds the footnote, "This was written in early 1852," implying doubt that the contrast still stands.[134] De Leon's own view, supporting his arguments for similarity and solidarity with France, was that the United States had become more similar to Europe, although the footnote does not consider that France in 1897 may no longer resemble France in 1852.

De Leon used footnotes especially in section VII, to clarify the political tendency and situation of the small French peasant, the *Parzellenbauer,* translated as "allotment farmer." One footnote explains this translation: "The first French Revolution distributed the bulk of the territory of France ... in small patches among the cultivators of the soil. This allotment of lands created the French farmer class."[135] As typical as it might be in

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[132] *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (1913), p. 51. (Pierre Antoine Berryer)
[133] Ibid., pp. 30, 44, 158
[134] "Early" was changed to "at the beginning of" for the book version. *Eighteenth Brumaire* (1913), p. 22.
[135] *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (1913), p. 144

another context, this kind of historical explanation is unique in this translation and justifies De Leon's translation "allotment farmer," a term that was not common and clearly emphasized the unusual origins of the plots rather than their size. Where later translators have "small-holding property" for *Parzelleneigenthum,* De Leon has "the system of the small allotment" or "allotment system." His choice of "farmer" for *Bauer* suggests more similarity to American society than "peasant" could.[136] (In other discussions of "small farmers," the SLP counted them as "middle class," on the grounds that they thought of their property as their own even when it was heavily mortgaged.) Other footnotes clarify the historical allusions in this sentence: "The Bonaparte dynasty does not represent the revolutionary, it represents the conservative farmer... not his modern Cevennes; but his modern Vendée."[137] De Leon uses footnotes to emphasize the political heterogeneity of the farmers and their political potential, with the opposite effect of the pejorative, sometimes humorous, morally "characterizing" roles that most of the other footnotes play.

The footnotes on farmers also contrast with the treatment of the "slum

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[136] Eric Hobsbawm once used the French peasants in the *Brumaire* as a limit case of "peasant," describing them as something like "individual commodity producers, possibly shading over into commercial farmers." Eric Hobsbawm, "Peasants and Politics," *Journal of Peasant Studies,* 1:1 (1973) De Leon had to make some similarly complex choices in passages such as, "the first revolution had converted the serf farmers [*halbhörigen*, or "half-bonded," *Bauern*] into freeholders [*freie Grundeigenthümer*]" or "These are the material conditions that turned the French feudal peasant [*Feudalbauer*] into a small or allotment farmer [*Parzellenbauer*]." In the article cited above, the German-American *Volkszeitung* calls the Americans *Farmern,* the common term that Germans used to refer to Americans. See Karl Kautsky to Algernon Lee, May 19, 1910, responding to an article on American conditions for *Die Neue Zeit:* "As to the cultivator of the soil, it is not necessary to translate the word 'farmers,' as we in Germany use already the English word to signify the American farmer."

[137] One footnote reads, "The Cevennes were the theater of the most numerous revolutionary uprisings of the farmer class"; the second footnote explains, "La Vendée was the theater of protracted reactionary uprisings of the farmer class under the first Revolution."

proletariat," as De Leon usually translates *Lumpenproletariat,* twice just using "slums."[138] The meaning of this term had been explained in the Erfurt Program that De Leon had translated just before the *Brumaire*.[139] There is no footnote in the *Brumaire* defining the term. Near the end of the text, the Society of 10 December is described as "a noisy, restless 'Bohème,' greedy after plunder, that crawls about in gallooned frocks with the same grotesque dignity as Soulonque's [sic] Imperial dignity."[140] A footnote identifies "Soulonque," that is, Faustin Soulouque, as "the negro Emperor of the shortlived negro empire of Hayti."[141] The name was no longer so familiar as it had been even to German-American radicals in the 1850s, for whom it suggested a strong contrast to the hero, Toussaint Louverture.

The last footnote in the De Leon's translation is to the last, prophetic sentence: "But, when the Imperial Mantle shall have finally fallen upon the shoulders of Louis Bonaparte, then will also the iron statue of Napoleon drop down from the top of the Vendôme column." There are several ways that this is generally understood. Marx later said that it referred to a decline of the Napoleonic legend that began in the 1850s. Others took it to predict the fall of the Second Empire, or more literally still, the removal of the statue of Napoleon. De Leon's footnote is unique: "By order of the Emperor Louis

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[138] *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (1913), pp. 20, 74.
[139] In some later use, "slum proletariat" may also have connoted illiteracy. Kipnis, *American Socialist Movement* (1952), p. 245, characterizes the later attitude of Morris Hillquit, a former SLP member, historian, and leader of the Socialist Party of America: "Obviously, 'slum proletarians' could not be expected to understand the written word." In the context of the conflict with Tammany Hall, however, as in the Erfurt Program itself, what matters is the supposed moral character of this group, especially its pursuit of "immediate wants" at the expense of "reputation."
[140] Several words here might be translated better. The repeated "dignity" might be "grandeur" and "grandees," respectively, *Würde* and *Großwürdenträger.*
[141] *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (1913), p. 158

Napoleon, the military statue of the first Napoleon that originally surmounted the Vendome column was taken down and replaced by one of the first Napoleon in imperial robes." It is unclear whether this is supposed to be an interpretation of Marx or something to the contrary, but the Napoleonic myth is plainly altered, not undermined. The 1869 preface with the contrary interpretation by Marx is not included here.

De Leon's Translation as a Book, 1898-1913

One letter published in *The People,* on December 5, 1897, denounced the newspaper as "mere rubbish," because "it fills its columns with such stuff as 'The Eighteenth Brumaire.'" The author adds, "Three cheers for Debs for President." Whether or not the letter is authentic, De Leon must have assumed that this lack of taste for Marx would reflect poorly on Debs and his followers. The following month, *The People* published a reply to a reader from Long Beach, Mississippi, who had apparently asked about the meaning of "Brumaire." The same reader apparently asked about "proletariat." "'Proletariat' means the working class," the paper responded. "The word stands for the masses of the disinherited as they have come down through the several social systems that the human race has traversed." In the same issue, one article on recent politics in Italy mocks Francesco Crispi's invasion of Ethiopia with an allusion to the protagonist of the *Brumaire*: "What? Crispi a Caesar? And why not? Had not Napoleon-the-Little

attempted to be one?"[142]

The most prominent allusion to the *Brumaire* in *The People* was in an article on January 30, 1898, by Dr. Harriet E. Lothrop, a pathologist at the New England Hospital for Women and Children and the translator of Paul Lafargue's *Right to Be Lazy*.[143] Lothrop declared that the "Chief of the 'Society of December 10'" was now "casting his shadow ahead in Boston," prefiguring Josiah Quincy, the Democratic mayor. Lothrop echoed De Leon's interpretation of the *Brumaire* as a warning: "Will the proletariat of America follow in the footsteps of the French proletariat of 1848-51 and annihilate itself? Or will it profit by the past mistakes of other nations?" In the context of a struggle between the city's Common Council and the mayor over the education budget and school administration, Lothrop particularly attacks the mayor's collaboration with the Central Labor Union. "The proletariat eager for its own disgrace and ruin," it concludes, "will have weighty reason to applaud the man who would himself appoint boards and commissions and turn all things toward the establishment of a vast bureaucracy à la the 'Society of December 10.'"

Shortly after the *Brumaire* appeared in the *People*, the SLP began to make arrangements for republication as a book. SLP secretary Leon Malkiel wrote to an old friend, Alexander Evalenko, the proprietor of the International Publishing Company. Evalenko was a member of the Russian Social Democratic Society who was likely also a spy for the Russian government, paid to infiltrate the press operations of revolutionaries

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[142] *The People,* January 9, 1898.
[143] This Lothrop is not the author of children's books with the same name. Dr. Lothrup got her degree in Zürich in 1890. She later translated *Wage-Labor and Capital.*

in exile.[144] In 1893, he had founded what claimed to be "the only Russian weekly newspaper in the country."[145] Evalenko responded to De Leon on November 30, addressing him as "comrade," to say that he would like the *Brumaire* for the first volume of a new International Socialist Library that he had been planning. He was too busy to handle the details himself and entrusted further negotiations to his son William.[146]

In the discussion of the sale of the translation, the *Brumaire* was treated as a purely commercial product, not one with any distinctly political meaning. De Leon wrote to William Evalenko with an initial proposal of terms. Addressing the translator as "Dear Sir" and "Yours very Truly," rather than with his father's "Comrade" and "Fraternally," William's response marks the beginning of the translation's political disaffiliation. Rather than offering De Leon any monetary sum, he offered one thousand copies of the first edition, which could be sold for 25 cents each. In exchange, "you resign all rights in the copy right to us." "There is little or no profit on the first editions of most publications," Evalenko claimed, "and according to our calculation we find that we will experience a little loss, as it will be necessary for us to distribute our share of copies of the first edition

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[144] Tony Michels, "Toward a History of American Jews and the Russian Revolutionary Movement," in *A Century of Transnationalism: Immigrants and Their Homeland Connections*, ed. Nancy L. Green and Roger David Waldinger, Studies of World Migrations (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016). Donald Senese, *S.M. Stepniak-Kravchinskii: The London Years* (Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1987), pp. 101-2, claims that Evalenko came to New York City in late 1891 to infiltrate and undermine a press operations run by Russian revolutionaries in exile. Robert A. Karlowich calls him "an informant for the czarist government" and "an agent provocateur."

[145] Robert A. Karlowich, *We Fall and Rise: Russian-Language Newspapers in New York City, 1889-1914* (Metuchen, N.J. :, 1991).

[146] In the meantime, Evalenko suggested that De Leon contact the printer, Isaac Goldmann, as "Mr. Goldman told me that he could not keep the metal any longer." I am not sure, but I take "keep the metal" to mean that the type used to print the text in *The People* was being held in its form until electrotype plates could be made, and that Goldmann was eager to use the type for other things, a common problem for small publishers.

among agents of England, while you do so here."[147] *The People* reported on December 26 that the party's National Executive Committee had approved the deal. On January 6, 1898, the copyright was registered and a copy of the book was received by the Library of Congress.[148]

The *Brumaire* was first advertised for sale in *The People* on March 6, "bound as an elegant volume of 78 pages, with Marx' picture as frontispiece." The work is no longer described in more detail: it is simply promised, "This work is of great value." Modifying somewhat the earlier recommendation of the book "for the serious study of the serious," the advertisement adds, "No Socialist, even though he be no student, and no student, even though he be no Socialist, can afford to be without it." This positively downplays the political meaning and appeals to anyone with a general intellectual interest in the work. It is safe to assume that the translation always had or was supposed to have this broader interest, apart from any specific political interpretation. On this view, its publication during election season may be explained in part by a general desire to attract new readers to *The People* and its far more specific political arguments.

The 1898 edition of De Leon's translation is nearly identical to the version that was published in *The People.* The title page recalls the context of its initial publication: "Translated for The People, the Organ of the Socialist Labor Party, by Daniel De Leon."

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[147] William Evalenko to Daniel De Leon, December 9, 1897

[148] "Party News," *The People,* December 27, 1897, p. 4. It was typical to sell plates and copyright together: see Michael Winship, "Manufacturing and Book Production," in *The Industrial Book, 1840-1880*, ed. Scott E. Casper et al., A History of the Book in America, v. 3 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 46. Copyright notice, January 6, 1898, Box 1, Folder 120, Charles H. Kerr & Company Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL.

The introductory text from *The People* that I have called the "preface" is included here as a preface, only very lightly edited. The word "fishy," in reference to the "figures that are springing into notoriety," for example, is changed to "ominous," giving this comparison a distinctly more forward-looking orientation. With a similar effect, the phrase "present or threatened" is inserted into the claim that figures in the text have their "counterparts ... here." The later editorial referring to Tammany Hall is not included in the book.

One review in the radical magazine *Twentieth Century* in May praised the translation itself but had little to say about the content. It focused instead on the difficulty of translating German and the dilemmas of translating Marx, "whose style and whose thought tax the idiom severely." Faithful translations of Marx, the reviewer thought, were often stilted, but "to translate him freely is to miss the best points he makes." The review also praised the typography, although it noted several typos and added, "at the risk of seeming pedantic …. 'Here is the rose, now dance!' does not impress us as a felicitous rendering of 'Hic Rhodus, hic salta!'" It is unclear from this wording whether the reviewer recognizes that the translation was an accurate rendering of a play on words, copied by Marx from the preface to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right.*

The description of Marx is distinctly modern, almost Benjaminian, especially emphasizing his insight into fleeting phenomena rather than long-term laws of social development, and it was just this prismatic effect that De Leon had effectively rendered:

> It has been said of Marx that he throws flashes athwart the gloom of our social system that light up for an instant the whole structure and make our perception the more vivid for being the more transient. His search light …. while it may not rest long upon any one thing, that thing is fully revealed while under the glare. Mr. De Leon has been especially fortunate in catching every ray of the great luminary.

The review also praised the accurate translation of those passages that summarize the philosophy of history, but objected, "there is a certain exuberant richness of ideas in Marx's work, a sort of running riot in the brain that may confuse." It mentions the historical background in his preface but not his arguments about France and the United States or any contemporary relevance. De Leon might have added "a few more explanatory notes."

The issues that had been dominant in *The People* for much of 1897 gave way to others the following year. The most notable was opposition to the Spanish-American War. This coincided with a more emphatic internationalism, definitely not conceding to any pressure to "Americanize." The cover of the May Day issue of *The People* for 1898 carried a huge portrait of Marx, superimposed on a globe, encircled with the slogan of the *Communist Manifesto.* This kind of iconography was unprecedented in the paper. At the same time, a recurring list of socialist texts advertised for sale under the title "Socialist Tracts" was nearly doubled in size, mostly by the addition of canonical Marxist texts, now including the *Brumaire.* The title was changed to "Socialist Literature." Titles such as August Bebel on women and socialism, Engels on utopia and science, the pamphlets adapted from Kautsky, and the *Communist Manifesto* had only been occasionally advertised in earlier issues under the heading, "Books That Should Be Read."[149]

Some sales figures were published one year later, in a report in *The People* May Day issue for 1899. "Time was when 'Merrie England' was almost the entire stock in

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[149] "Socialist Tracts," *The People,* April 24, 1898, p. 3; "Socialist Literature," *The People,* May 8, 1898, p. 3.

trade," the paper reported, referring to the very popular book by the British journalist Robert Blatchford. The party's Labor News Company had sold more than 5,000 copies of *Merrie England* in 1898.[150] Now "'Merrie England' has been dethroned... and is now largely replaced by that class of literature which is imbued with the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat and swayed by the mighty genius of Karl Marx."[151] This disparagement of *Merrie England* clearly echoes De Leon's comments about England in the preface to *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. In the seven months from August 1898 through February 1899, however, the SLP had sold only 446 copies of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, 551 of the *Communist Manifesto,* and 108 of *Capital.* By "that class of literature," De Leon can only have meant his own speeches. A lively economic lecture, "What Means this Strike?" sold nearly three editions of 5,000 copies each in the prior year. This was still not so popular as *Merrie England* generally, which was advertised in *Twentieth Century* at this time, for example, as "over a million copies sold."

One owner of the 1898 International Library edition was Algernon Lee, a young agitator for the Socialist Labor Party in Minneapolis at the time and a serious reader of Marx.[152] Lee kept a remarkable diary of his "conversion" to socialism and carefully reflected on his own influences. He discovered socialism as a student at the University of Minnesota in the spring of 1895. His disillusionment with Populism and a reading of

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[150] As Jason D. Martinek documents, *Merrie England* remained one of the most popular socialist texts in the United States in the late 1890s, earning the title of "The Workingman's Bible." Because its author had not registered the American copyright, several different publishers put out cheap editions. Jason D. Martinek, *Socialism and Print Culture in America, 1897-1920* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), pp. 11-32.
[151] *The People,* May 1, 1899.
[152] Lee's copy of the 1898 edition is at the Tamiment & Wagner Library, NYU.

Merrie England, he claims, led him to study *Capital*.[153] In December he gave his first lecture for a section of the SLP, on the theory of surplus value.[154] By March, 1896, socialism apparently defined much of his own social life, his close friends and flirtations, and had, he thought, essentially replaced religion in his thinking. After one square dance to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Commune, Lee reflected that he had, over the prior year, become "an atheist, a materialist." Marx was only one of many influences that had led him in this direction. Besides *Capital,* Lee mentions Benjamin Kidd's *Social Evolution;* Harlow Gale's lectures on physiological psychology; his study of zoology; and Gabriel Deville's *Philosophie du socialisme*. He also noted the influence of studying history or the philosophy of history with Willis Morris West.[155] He was also clearly influenced by a friend, George Leonard, the leading intellectual in the Minneapolis section.[156]

By the spring of 1897, Lee was writing for a local political newspaper, speaking at open-air meetings in St. Paul, and debating with Populists.[157] He wrote a thesis on the

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[153] Reel 62, typed manuscript, pp. 118-9.
[154] In a note later added to his diary, he reflected, "Those who knew the subject better than I did understood me, no doubt; to others it must have been a puzzle."
[155] A detailed outline of West's course in modern European history at this time, *Outlines and References for European History in the Nineteenth Century* (Minneapolis: The University Book Store, 1896), does not mention Marx but includes some histories by socialists as well as histories of socialism in France and Germany. By April 1897, Lee admits that he skipped "[Charles L.?] Wells and [Frank L.?] McVey," with whom he was supposed to be studying philosophy of history and the economic history of England, but attended a lecture by the historian of philosophy Frederick Woodbridge. His reading at this time included John Fiske's *Critical Period of American History.*
[156] G. B. Leonard, "History as Viewed by a Socialist," a speech for the Minneapolis section, *The People,* June 13, 1897.
[157] "May Day: Celebrated on the Streets of Minneapolis, Minn," *The People,* May 16, 1897. One of the only mentions of the party in New York City is a note that their section of forty "voted unanimously in favor of the Party taking control of the Jewish papers" in New York City. Lee debated a Populist on the topic, "Is Class Socialism True Socialism?"

topic, "Is There a Science of History?" He read Gabriel Deville's introduction to *Capital* and wanted to translate it, judging the popular introduction in English by Aveling, *Student's Marx,* very poor. The Minneapolis circle clearly knew about the *Brumaire* before De Leon published his translation. In July, 1897, Lee and a comrade wrote a detailed critique of references to socialism in a European history textbook used in Minneapolis high schools, which they sent to the city's Board of Education and to *The People.* Their first point concerns the French revolution of 1848: "the French national workshops … are seriously misrepresented and the atrocities of Cavaignac's repression are slurred over." One of four sources they cite, still in German, is the *Eighteenth Brumaire.*[158]

One of two copies of the 1898 edition of the *Brumaire* in the Tamiment Library was donated by Lee. To be sure, this does not show when it was purchased. The *Brumaire* is mentioned in Lee's diary only much later, in an entry from September 1904, and in a different edition: "Have read Marx' 'Class Struggles in France' and part of the 'Eighteenth Brumaire' in French." He had clearly acquired a copy of the Leon Rémy translation, edited by Augustin Hamon. A later note recalls that he was "on a steamer returning from a trip to Europe … translating to Florence as I read." Reading the works on France together with the excerpts from the self-critical preface by Engels, reflecting on their exaggerated hopes of the time, Lee had an impression of Marx that was clearly new. "Interesting to note how Marx deceived himself," he writes; "equally so, how he

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[158] "Well Done, Minneapolis! The Section Raps a Vicious Falsifier of History to Order," *The People,* July 11, 1897. I have not been able to determine whether Lee read German.

discovered his mistakes." He added, "The opening pages of the 'Eighteenth Brumaire' contain more political wisdom than anything else I know of." This new appreciation for the passages on "tragedy" and "farce" and for Marx's own intellectual evolution may contain some self-criticism, a change in perspective over the prior few years.

The Social Democracy of America and its colonization scheme did not last long. A minority that included Debs and also many former members of the SLP left that organization to found, with Victor Berger and Frederick Heath, the Social Democratic Party, in June 1898. That fall, the new party had a significant breakthrough in Massachusetts and began to attract more support from within the SLP, most notably, in the *Volkszeitung,* long regarded as an unofficial party organ. By the end of 1899, there were also calls for alliances with Debs and Berger, including from Algie Simons, the editor of the SLP's party organ in Chicago, *The Worker's Call.*[159] By January, 1900, the Debs party's *Social Democracy Red Book* already relegated the SLP to a "gestation" phase, from 1888 to 1897, between "immigrant socialism" and "American socialism." Its "transplanted methods" had "failed to reach the American ear."[160]

At this time, International Publishing Company was still trying to sell its International Library of Socialism. A sixteen-page catalogue from 1900 or 1901 begins with a quotation, "We are all socialists now," attributed to "a very prominent conservative cabinet minister." Socialism was such an "all-embracing movement, that it must be

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[159] Few recent accounts discuss party formation in any more detail than Ira Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952).
[160] *Social Democracy Red Book,* January 1900, p. 4.

studied by every man of intelligence who wants to keep up with the march of the times," in European politics or in philosophy and social science. In the United States, socialism was studied "in the foremost colleges and universities." Although it was also making headway as a political force, the conversation on socialism was supposedly driven by other factors, by the growth of industry, the debate about trusts, and at the municipal level, by "men who are known to be very conservative in other spheres."[161]

On May 31, 1901, the International Library Publishing Company sold the rights, plates, and an unspecified number of unsold copies of De Leon's translation of the *Brumaire* to the Debs Publishing Company, along with four other translations, for $250.[162] Two months later, in late July, a coalition of SLP dissidents, Social Democrats, and others united to found the Socialist Party of America. The Debs Publishing Co. announced in the *International Socialist Review* that it had bought the "pamphlet department" of the International Library Publishing Co., including "the entire stock of pamphlets, plates and copyrights," including the *Brumaire, Wage-Labour and Capital,* and *The Civil War in France*. The seventeen pamphlets advertised could be purchased from Debs Co. individually, as a set, or in bulk at a discount for "socialist branches, agents, and speakers."[163] By "agents," the advertisement presumably means other socialist booksellers. The *Brumaire* was also one of a number of books offered at a discount to stockholders in the *International Socialist Review.*

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[161] *A Catalogue of the International Library* (New York?: c. 1900), in the microfiche series *Pamphlets in American History (Socialism*).
[162] Dated contract, Box 1, Folder 120 (Author Files, Karl Marx), Charles H. Kerr & Company Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL.
[163] *International Socialist Review,* August 1901, p. 160.

The *International Socialist Review* was the flagship publication of Charles H. Kerr & Company in Chicago, which had only begun to publish socialist literature in 1899. The firm had originally published Unitarian tracts, but Kerr came to socialism through reading Edward Bellamy, through Populism, and through Algie Simons, a fellow alumnus of the University of Wisconsin and the editor of an SLP organ in Chicago, whom Kerr met in the spring of 1899. By June of that year Kerr announced his conviction that "half-way measures are useless," and that the future publications of his press would be devoted to "scientific socialism." After an initial collaboration with Kerr on a Pocket Library of Socialism, Simons became the vice-president of Charles H. Kerr & Company in January 1900 and the editor of the new *International Socialist Review.*[164]

This was not a mass magazine at first but one that targeted a smaller demographic of self-educated activists and "brain workers" new to socialism. Kerr also hoped to appeal to former Populists, who "ten years ago were studying the question of national finance in faulty textbooks."[165] The second issue of *International Socialist Review* included a translation of the speech by Paul Lafargue, "Socialism and the Intellectuals," to which Kerr added a brief editorial note that shows his own thinking as a publisher. In

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[164] The pamphlets were a series of booklets wrapped in red cellophane, the Pocket Library of Socialism. Early titles included *Woman and the Social Problem*, by May Wood Simons; *Imprudent Marriages,* by Robert Blatchford; the meatpacking exposé *Packingtown*, by Algie Simons; and Clarence Darrow's *Realism in Literature and Art*. Within three years, there were thirty-five "little red books," as they came to be called, and more than 500,000 total copies in circulation. Allen Ruff, *"We Called Each Other Comrade": Charles H. Kerr & Company, Radical Publishers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 85. Beasley Books in Chicago has compiled a list of titles in the series: https://www.beasleybooks.com/media/home/plscatalog.pdf.

[165] Quoted after Allen Ruff, *"We Called Each Other Comrade": Charles H. Kerr & Company, Radical Publishers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 92.

the United States as in France, he noted, the socialist movement increasingly attracted "brain workers." These intellectuals could be a "mighty help or a petty hindrance." If they "frankly join the movement as comrades," not "self-appointed leaders," their services may prove essential in the transition to socialism. By the spring of 1901, the journal claimed 3,500 subscribers and the same number of sales on newsstands.[166]

Over the next several years, the Kerr Company began to produce an increasingly high quality of self-consciously American socialist literature, such as Simons's *The American Farmer* (1902), which dismissed European literature on the "Agrarian Question" as irrelevant to American conditions and argued that the American farmer had a distinctly proletarian and revolutionary sensibility and was "even more susceptible to revolutionary propaganda than the city wage-worker." Simons tried to synthesize Marxism with ideas from major American thinkers of his time, including Frederick Jackson Turner, Thorstein Veblen, John Dewey, and W.E.B. Du Bois.[167] The "Americanization" of Marxism in the *International Socialist Review* sometimes made racist and anti-immigrant elements more conspicuous. For example, its report on the founding of the Socialist Party proudly characterized the majority from the West and Southwest as "descendants of that race of hardy fighting pioneers who … now finds itself confronted with social conditions more pitiless than the wild beasts or the native Indians

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[166] For this paragraph, see Ruff, *"We Called Each Other Comrade,"* 91–92.
[167] William A. Glaser, "Algie Martin Simons and Marxism in America," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 41, no. 3 (1954): 419–34. On his use of Du Bois, see Martinek, *Socialism and Print Culture in America.*

of the primeval forest."[168] At least one popular introduction to socialism published by Kerr assumed that the "co-operative commonwealth" would be segregated.[169]

In 1900, Daniel De Leon still described the ballot as "the most powerful weapon" of the working class. In 1901, he wrote, "The SLP is not after VOTES; it is after SOCIALISTS"; in 1902, "it should not matter whether we have the ballot at all."[170] He still referred to the *Brumaire* in various ways. Near the beginning of one of his new texts on strategy and tactics, "Two Pages from Roman History," first published in the *Daily People* in April, 1902, he recalls "that remarkable brochure... 'The Eighteenth Brumaire,'" which "says that when man wants to interpret what is going on in his own day, he tries to find a parallel in the past." This is an unusual transformation of the passage about "making history," in which the use of borrowed symbols to excite ("battle cries") has been replaced by the idea of the past as a means to interpret a confusing present. De Leon also paraphrases the passage about revolution as a language, "he always keeps on translating that language into his own, the new language being the new event, his own being the events that lie behind him."[171]

These allusions to the *Brumaire* were only to justify De Leon's searching excursus into Roman history. Other references to the *Brumaire* in *The People* are more

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[168] "Editorial: A New Milestone for American Socialism," *International Socialist Review,* September, 1901, p. 285.
[169] Martinek, *Socialism and Print Culture in America,* pp. 38, 40; see also p. 82, on how race was discussed at the founding of the Socialist Party.
[170] These examples are from Don K. McKee, "Daniel De Leon: A Reappraisal," *Labor History* 1, no. 3 (1960): 264–97.
[171] "Two Pages from Roman History," *Daily People,* April 14, 1902, p. 5.

superficial and show no particular pattern. One editorial note from December of the same year instructed, "Turn to Your Eighteenth Brumaire."[172] In the context of an attempted boycott of the Tobacco Trust, it attacks retail tobacco dealers; the idea that De Leon borrows from the *Brumaire* is just the idea of the petit-bourgeoisie (he calls it the "middle class") as a "transition class," with equal "wrath" for capitalists and workers, imagining itself as transcending class conflict altogether, as "the people." A negative review of Antonio Labriola's *Essays on The Materialist Conception of History* in the *Daily People,* from January 17, 1904, refers to the *Brumaire* as a model of "the kind of 'working of theory into the living happenings of the living present' that is needed," quoting Laboriola's own description of Marx against him; "one such work is worth all new disquisitions on theories."

By far the most significant reference to the *Brumaire* in SLP literature is from later that year, in the party's report to the International Socialist Congress in Amsterdam. As a response to "frequent expressions of astonishment from European sources at what they call the backwardness of the Socialist Movement in America," the report quotes the passage in the *Brumaire* contrasting European conditions to those in the United States, where classes are in constant flux, labor is in short supply, and "the feverishly youthful life of material production … has so far left neither time nor opportunity to abolish the illusions of old." Just like De Leon's footnote in 1897, the report adds, "This was written in 1852," but now it continues: "The giant strides since made by America … would seem to remove the contrast. It does not." The peculiar nature of class in America was

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[172] *Daily People,* December 24, 1902

supposedly illustrated by the fact of "families with members in all the classes," while "natives' old illusions regarding material prospects draw the bulk of the immigrants into the vortex."[173]

In these conditions, the SLP now argued, the success of a socialist party should not be judged by the number of its votes at the polls, but rather by the character of its propaganda and its discipline. De Leon still believed that the *Brumaire* had some propaganda value. "Marx's *Capital* will not make Socialists. What it does make perfectly clear is the impossibility of humanity's well-being under capitalism, and why. It is purely economics," he wrote in late 1905. Marx's work that makes Socialists is *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*—that shows the way out."[174]

Algie Simons initially saw the IWW as "a decisive turning point in American working class history," but he was quickly disillusioned with the organization's tendency toward syndicalism and its opposition to electoral activity and union contracts. He joined the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party and began to withdraw from *International Socialist Review.*[175] The journal, meanwhile, by the end of 1906, was still not meeting its expenses, raising doubts about its survival. Kerr announced his intention to make the journal more popular, without abandoning its aim, "not to show the man in the street why he should vote the socialist ticket," but rather to teach socialist party

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[173] Daniel De Leon, *Flashlights of the Amsterdam International Socialist Congress, 1904* (New York: New York Labor News Company, n.d.), pp. 103-111.
[174] Daniel De Leon, "Letter Box," *Daily People*, 26 November 1905.
[175] Ruff, *"We Called Each Other Comrade,"* p. 116

activists themselves, "to write better articles and leaflets, make better speeches, and talk to their neighbors in a more convincing way."[176] In the meantime, he received a significant subsidy from Eugene Dietzgen, covering about nearly half the expenses of the journal but also requiring Kerr to use some of the funds to pay for contributions from leading European socialists.[177]

In February 1907, Kerr announced that he had purchased the books, plates, and copyrights of the Standard Publishing Company, as the Debs Publishing Co. was now known. A more detailed announcement in the next issue claimed that the *The Eighteenth Brumaire* "has never yet been adequately advertised among American socialists, and it should have a rapid sale." The company reprinted the text from the original plates, with De Leon's preface. The frontispiece portrait of Marx was removed, as was the mention of the Socialist Labor Party on the title page. It became just "Translated by Daniel De Leon." A "Publisher's Note to Second Edition" explained that there had been no change except one: "we are correcting the curious slip on page 8 in which the Latin sentence was translated 'Here is the rose, now dance.'"

This was a less ambiguous version of the complaint in the 1898 *Twentieth Century* review. In "translating" *Hic Rhodus, hic saltus* as "here is the rose, now dance," Hegel is said to have meant, as one of his translators puts it, "Philosophy may 'dance' for joy in this world; it need not postpone its 'dancing' until it builds an ideal world elsewhere."[178] Kerr's publisher's note claims, however, "The allusion was very obviously

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[176] "The Future of the Review," *International Socialist Review,* November 1906, p. 256.
[177] Martinek, *Socialism and Print Culture,* p. 90; Ruff, *"We Called Each Other Comrade,"* p. 110.
[178] *Hegel's Philosophy of Right,* trans. and ed. T.M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 303.

to Aesop's fable of the boasting traveler." In this interpretation, the phrase leaves the prospects of revolution (the "jump" or "dance") in doubt, implying that it may be an empty boasting.

Robert Rives LaMonte reviewed the *Brumaire* in the *ISR* in August, 1907. The review begins with the claim that *The Eighteenth Brumaire* offers "insight into the practical applications of the doctrine of historical materialism." It draws a new analogy to the present: "Farmer support enabled both Louis Napoleon and Theodore Roosevelt to dictate to a divided and incompetent bourgeoisie." The most conspicuous difference is that, "the French bourgeoisie of 1849-1852 ... had not yet arrived at maturity, while the American bourgeoisie of 1906-07 ... is rotten ripe and only waiting to be mowed down by the scythe of the Class Conscious proletariat." The reviewer also quotes a passage that is supposed to show "the way in which the psychology of the individual is moulded by material class conditions."[179]

By mid-1907, Kerr showed some signs of sympathy for French syndicalism. In June, he translated and published an article by Hubert Lagardelle on "The Intellectuals and Working Class Socialism," which drew a hard line between "the socialism of political parties" and "the socialism of working-class institutions." The "intellectuals," here, were "all the people who make a profession of thinking and derive profit from it," so that "*intellectual* does not mean *intelligent* and *mental worker* does not necessarily mean *thinker*." Algie Simons formally left the *ISR* in January of the following year, and

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[179] Robert R. LaMonte, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," *International Socialist Review,* August, 1907.

Kerr took over editing the journal. One of the first changes that he made was to introduce a letters column, "News and Views," from "rank-and-file socialist readers." He also added illustrations and made the articles shorter. Circulation quadrupled in 1908.[180]

In a column for new readers in January 1909, Kerr rejected the former view of the journal, "that the problems of social evolution must be deliberated on in advance by a select few ... who should later on diffuse the results of their deliberations among the common man." He now saw that "ordinary working people have an instinctiveness of what is good for them" that was more reliable than any theory.[181] By the fall of that year, he was defending "revolutionary unionism," as a "new method of warfare against organized capital" and fomenting a "proletarian" rebellion of the left wing in the Socialist Party, against Simons among others. In 1910, he reiterated the criticism of his former plan "to educate the educators," declaring the *Review* "of, by, and for the working class." The *Review* also looked more and more like an illustrated magazine. Readers were invited to submit "photographs with action in them."

These changes in the character of the *International Socialist Review* and its conflict with the conservative leadership of the Socialist Party have been detailed well by Allen Ruff. My own question is only whether they help to explain the decision to publish a new edition of De Leon's translation, now in hard covers and from new plates, in larger type on smaller pages, in 1913.[182] A note from Kerr emphasizes, "We are reprinting the

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[180] Ruff, *"We Called Each Other Comrade,"* p. 118
[181] Ibid.
[182] The note mentions that there were also "a few slight verbal corrections." I have not looked thoroughly for these. I notice that the translation of Proudhon's French phrase has been corrected, although "blagueurs" is still misspelled "blaqueurs." (This is on p. 29 of the 1907 edition, p. 59 of the 1913 edition.)

introduction by the translator just as originally written. The events of sixteen years have in many ways confirmed his forecast, and the spectacular figure of Theodore Roosevelt now offers a striking parallel to that of Napoleon the Little."[183] The history on the Kerr Company's website today plausibly interprets the republication of the *Brumaire* in a translation by "the SP's sternest left critic" as evidence of the company's move to the left.[184] It is possible. Although the text was already republished in 1907, before a move to the left is supposed to have become clear, that was only a use of purchased plates. Resetting the text and making new plates was an additional expense. The 1907 edition did not include any reference to the translators' foresight.

This is a remarkable aspect of the 1913 edition: it is not Marx, but Daniel De Leon, not the *Brumaire* but the interpretation, that is supposed to have been confirmed by the rise and recent defeat of Theodore Roosevelt. The 1913 edition was also marketed in a different way, as a part of a series, as number 18 in a "Library of Socialist Classics" in twenty-six volumes. These were supposedly arranged in an educational order, as a course in reading, beginning with *Socialism for Students,* by Joseph E. Cohen, "a practical, simply-written manual of Socialist theory by an American wage-worker who has educated himself … and has in this book outlined some of the best methods of study." This notion of a guide to socialism by a worker is one of several titles in the series that suggest the publisher's move toward the idea of a worker-led or "workerist" socialism. In

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[183] Charles H. Kerr, "Publisher's Note to Third Edition," in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (1913).
[184] Charles H. Kerr Company website, https://charleshkerr.com/page/history. "In 1913," it notes, "shortly after being investigated by the Socialist Party leadership for its heterodoxy, the Kerr Company published a translation of Marx's The Eighteenth Brumaire done by the SP's sternest left critic..."

this advertisement, the *Brumaire* is described as showing "how the fall of the republic was brought about by the cowardice and inefficiency of the little capitalists who cared more for their property than for the freedom of any one, even their own."

This anti-petit-bourgeois interpretation differs from the one in the publisher's note in the book, in which the villain is supposed to be Roosevelt as Bonaparte. It is followed in the series by Austin Lewis's *Militant Proletariat*, "a study of present conditions in the United States, and especially of the rebellious wage-workers," attacking the "middle-class, reactionary elements in the Socialist party" and predicting that economic developments will "bring the militant proletariat into control." Similarly, one of the "advanced" essays in a collection by Robert Rives LaMonte is recommended as a "particular aid to self-understanding for the Socialist who comes from the capitalist or professional class … It will help him to a healthy distrust of his own inherited prejudices and a healthy respect for the instinctive ideas of the wage-workers."

VI. Three Editions in the Weimar Republic

The SPD's *Kleine Bibliothek* edition of the *Brumaire* was republished each year during the postwar period of revolutionary crisis, in 1919, 1920, 1921, and 1922. Even if these were still small editions, the *Brumaire* must have had more readers in Germany in these few years alone than in its whole prior history. It was also quoted in dramatically new ways, across the chaotic political spectrum of the left, in relation to the new experiences of revolution and defeat. Most notably, the opening passages, on history as tragedy and farce and on politics as a performance, as well as the image of the "old mole" near the end, take on a currency in German left-wing journalism of these years that they had never had before. The *Brumaire* staked claims to new kinds of contemporaneity that this chapter will analyze more closely.

One compelling example of this new contemporaneity is the edition published in the fall of 1924 by Taifun Verlag in Frankfurt, an ephemeral press that was covertly sponsored by the Comintern, in a series of small paperbacks that included works of reportage, criticism, experimental poetry, and fiction. Advertised in high-art magazines as well as Communist newspapers, this *Brumaire* also has a newly "artistic" appearance, with colored covers that reproduce broad brushstrokes and hand-lettering. The title of the series, *Signals,* expresses the idea of instaneous communication and even seems to allude to the hidden political commitment. One copy of this edition in the Berlin State Library is

full of a reader's penciled comparisons to politics from the time, many just reading "SPD!"[1]

The history of the *Brumaire* in the Weimar Republic cannot be reduced to a simplistic story of Communist appropriation and Socialist repudiation, or dueling editions and interpretations. Taifun Verlag was a fleeting venture, and the edition published three years later by the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow had a completely different character. It was edited by David Riazanov, who had provided the historical glossary for the Dietz edition of 1913. After returning to Russia in 1917, Riazanov had joined the Bolsheviks and played the leading role in organizing the first state-sponsored research into the works of Marx and Engels, as the director of the Marx-Engels Institute, necessarily working with the SPD and its party archive. His *Brumaire,* with a preface dated February, 1927, belongs to a brief period of collaboration that broke down by early 1929 and grew increasingly hostile, as the radicalization of Soviet propaganda and policy after 1928 meant a new subordination of cultural institutions and the press to mass propaganda.

Riazanov was finally arrested in early 1931 and denounced in *Pravda* for his "objectivity," but his work had already inspired some German scholars who sought a "revitalization" of Marxism within the SPD. One example was J. P. Mayer, whose rediscovery and promotion of the "young Marx" of the Paris manuscripts of 1844 was partly inspired by Riazanov and had elements of an internal opposition, as a response to the political crisis in Germany and the perceived stasis of the older generation in his own

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[1] Copy of Karl Marx, *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte* (Frankfurt: Taifun Verlag, 1924), in Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, call number X 9249-15/18. I discuss this copy further below.

party. The edition of the early writings that Mayer would edit with Siegfried Landshut, published in 1932, was not only competing with the more expensive and scholarly volume in the Marx-Engels *Gesamtausgabe*, but also with more popular Communist anthologies that Mayer explicitly called for the SPD to imitate with editions that presented a more dynamic and developmental perspective on Marx.

Mayer's 1932 edition of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* was the first published by the SPD in a decade. His preface is the first in German to discuss the "actuality" of the work, as Riazanov in particular had not, and it does so in a subtle way, strongly opposing simplistic analogies with the present situation. By early 1933, in the press of the SPD, the historical analogy to Hitler could be used to dismiss him as a "farce" and even more perversely, to portray him as a kind of fulfillment of a Marxist prophecy. For Mayer, the actuality of the *Brumaire* is as an example of how to analyze the structure of a historical situation that includes specific theoretical generalizations. For example, the role of ideology in class formation is supposed to clarify the crucial question of white-collar workers, the *Angestellte.* Mayer's other writings at the time, as in the important critical journal *Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus,* suggest a broader attempt, interrupted as it was, to rethink Marxism and sociology, especially in relation to phenomenology.

The *Brumaire* in Revolution and After, 1918-1924

The *Eighteenth Brumaire* had little obvious relevance to the First World War. For German socialists, the supposed expert in military questions was Friedrich Engels, "The General." The last volume in the *Kleine Bibliothek* series collected Engels's essays on the war in northern Italy in 1859. It was edited by Eduard Bernstein and published around April, 1915. *Vorwärts* observed that these texts had been cited very often recently, "without the reader being in a position to check them, let alone to acquire knowledge of the whole content of both works."[2] Shortly after this volume appeared, Bernstein came out against the war as one of aggression rather than defense, a distinction that socialists had long used to define the limits of their support for wars.[3] In July, 1915, on the twentieth anniversary of the death of Engels, an author in *Die Neue Zeit* also referred to the recent use and abuse of citations from his work at this time, while also making a broader argument about historical repetition.

"The capitalist economy is, up to a point, a constant process, in whose course certain phenomena repeat," the author notes, but in great historical events, the unique is the decisive*:* "If Marx, for example, depicts the prehistory and course of Napoleon III's coup d'état in the *18 Brumaire,* it is clear that this is not meant to illustrate the conformity to [causal] law [*Gesetzmäßigkeit*] of the coup d'état," but only the specific conditions and circumstances that made this one possible. "Only insofar as the same conditions repeated,

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[2] *Vorwärts*, April 20, 1915.
[3] For a good recent summary, see Marc Mulholland, "˜Marxists of Strict Observance"? The Second International, National Defense, and the Question of War," *The Historical Journal* 58 (2015).

would the same result be expected, and Marx's words would again be fully applicable." To say this did not diminish the value of the work. The *Brumaire* still showed the "dangerousness of even partial moments [*Teilmomente*] that can lead to military dictatorship," and it taught above all the method of investigating historical situations.[4]

This was consistent with patterns of use of the *Brumaire* in the socialist press of the late nineteenth century, discussed in earlier chapters. With the conspicuous exception of Daniel De Leon, earlier readers of the *Brumaire* tended to be cautious in their comparisons to the past, often drawing contrasts as well as comparisons, as in the case of Boulangism. The idea of the work as an example of how to investigate a historical situation recalls the original idea of the *Brumaire* as a "picture" of the situation in France, but it is really more novel. That idea of the "picture," I argued, emphasized surface information and relationships between elements on the same plane, while this one implies a more reflective relation to evidence. In the original meaning, remember, the picture had also provided a new support for a prior historical concept of France as the land of revolution. Here the text seems to be assimilated to a much more conventional kind of pragmatic history.

One of the SPD's responses to the arguments provoked by war was a valiant effort to rediscover and republish the whole range of texts that Marx and Engels had written about international affairs and war: David Riazanov's first major editorial project, sponsored by the SPD, was a collection of the hundreds of newspaper articles that Marx

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[4] Gustav Eckstein, "Engels-Zitate: Zum zwanzigsten Todestag Friedrich Engels," *Die Neue Zeit,* July 30, 1915 [33 Jahrg., Bd. 2, Nr. 18], p. 555.

and Engels wrote between 1852 and 1862, most of them completely unknown at this time. Riazanov's preface, dated October, 1916, describes this as a major contribution to the "passionate literary struggle" that broke out with the war, a first step to "critical re-evaluation" of the Second International. It was at least a first step toward his own wonderful vision of "Marx research," as embracing not *only* life and works but also all the *objects* of Marx's own thinking. But only two volumes out of four were published. In May 1917, Riazanov returned to Russia.[5]

Initial attempts to reinterpret Marx's work as a whole, especially his thinking about the state, took other forms, in which the *Brumaire* also played little role. One early example is Heinrich Cunow, whose support for the war and later opposition to Bolshevism led him to propose a systematic new interpretation of Marx's political ideas.[6] Cunow was a long-time orthodox Marxist, a socialist since the "outlaw years" and a close collaborator with Karl Kautsky through the revisionism controversy. While Kautsky joined Bernstein in opposing the war, however, Cunow emerged on the other side and even replaced Kautsky as one of the party's official interpreters of Marx after 1917. Cunow's "German Social Democracy and Marx's Theory of the State" was published in the pro-war socialist newsletter *Die Glocke* beginning in January, 1917.[7] Against the supposedly revolutionary idea of the state as a means of class oppression to be dissolved

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[5] Four volumes were planned, only two appeared. Volker Külow and André Jaroslawski, eds., *David Rjasanow: Marx-Engels-Forscher, Humanist, Dissident* (Berlin: Dietz, 1993), 17.
[6] On Kautsky and Cunow, see Gary P. Steenson, *Karl Kautsky 1854-1938 Marxism in the Classical Years* (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 187. Bernd Florath, "Heinrich Cunow Oder Der Narren Muhsal," *Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz Zur Geschichte Der Deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* 41, no. 4 (2005): 496.
[7] For a recent (hostile) account of the *Die Glocke* group, Mike Macnair, "Die Glocke or the Inversion of Theory: From Anti-Imperialism to Pro-Germanism," *Critique* 42, no. 3 (July 3, 2014): 353–75.

by a dictatorship of the proletariat, Cunow argued that "the state-theoretical views developed by Marx in various places in his writings do not present any unified and self-contained conception at all, but rather contain certain contradictions." He called for a vast historical criticism of Marx's political ideas, from their intellectual-historical roots in social-contract theories and Hegel, and in their evolution from the *Manifesto* to a decentralized communitarianism in the writings on the Paris Commune. This was a project that Cunow would pursue himself over the next several years, which can be opposed to a more radical conception put forward by Mayer among others.

A far more enduring product of the intense struggle to define the political meaning of Marx's work as a whole is Franz Mehring's *Karl Marx*, with a preface dated March, 1918. Although biographical arguments had always been used to interpret Marx's writings, this was the first significant biography. It responded to the apparent problems of political interpretation, including the peculiar use of Marx's work to support wartime patriotism. Mehring's chapter on the *Brumaire* is strange. It focuses entirely on the material process of its production, offering no comment at all on its past or present political meaning, while also noticing that the relative prestige of the work was growing. "Marx's book appeared like a literary Cinderella beside its more fortunate sisters," the works on the same events by Hugo and Proudhon, "but while the latter have long since become dust and ashes, his work still shines in immortal brilliance to-day." It was also surpassing other work by Marx that had once been just as highly regarded. In particular, for Mehring, *Herr Vogt* had become almost completely incomprehensible. It would take extraordinary work just to explain. "It has receded more and more into the background,

while *The Eighteenth Brumaire* and his polemic against Proudhon have come more and more into the foreground with the passage of time."[8]

When Heinrich Cunow replaced Karl Kautsky as the editor of *Die Neue Zeit* in 1917, Cunow promoted his idea of a systematic sociology in the journal, opposing this project to the "vulgar" use of Marx as a "collection of mottos and specific conduct-instructions [*Einzelverhaltungsanweisungen*] for the justification of specific daily opinions."[9] But in the same year, apparently attempting to capture and channel some kind revolutionary energy, the Vorwärts party press published *Historical Deed* [*Geschichtliche Tat*], a collection of quotations from Marx, organized into topical groups, some 165 pages worth. The editor, Franz Diederich, chose only four quotations from the *Brumaire*. One was the old standby on "bourgeois and proletarian revolutions." The other three were also fairly traditional, under the heading "class ideology, party representations," recalling the revisionist idea of the *Brumaire* as the potential source for more complex and less polarizing concepts of class.[10]

Lenin's *State and Revolution* was first published in German in late 1918, in the "Political Action Library" of *Die Aktion*.[11] It draws first on Engels to support a basic view

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[8] Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx, the Story of His Life.*, trans. Edward Fitzgerald (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), 215, 295.
[9] *Die Neue Zeit,* May 3, 1918. This was followed by a more focused and interesting article on Marx's changing ideas about the French Revolution. According to Herman Wendel, the German wartime ideology against "the ideas of 1789" made it necessary to recall Marx's lifelong ambivalence about the French revolution, even from his childhood, drawing on the letters from his father, through the revolutions of 1848/9 and the *Brumaire.*
[10] Franz Diederich, ed., *Geschichtliche Tat: Blätter und Sätze aus den Schriften und Briefen von Karl Marx* (Berlin: Buchhandlung Vorwärts, 1918), 65, 139.
[11] Lenin, *Staat und Revolution. Die Lehre des Marxismus vom Staat und die Aufgaben des Proletariats in der Revolution* (Berlin: Die Aktion, 1918) I think this is the first German edition. There are several German editions from other publishers the following year.

of the state as a means of class repression exemplified by police, then turns especially to Marx's writing on the revolution in 1848-1851 and the Paris Commune, when Marx "analyzed the lessons … of each particular revolution."[12] If this idea of Marx as an analyst of revolutionary experience seems intuitive today, it must be due to Lenin's influence. It was not common in discussions of the *Brumaire* in the nineteenth century. In the *Brumaire,* "as everywhere else, his theory is a *summing up of experience*."[13] This idea of a "summing up of experience" placed an unprecedented emphasis on the "old mole" passage. Experience permitted Marx to go this far, Lenin supposed, but no further: "all that could be established with the accuracy of scientific observation was that the proletarian revolution *had approached* the task of 'concentrating all its forces of destruction.'"[14]

Lenin also appealed to the passage in the preface by Engels that describes France as "the model country," to support his idea that the experience of 1848-1851 had a greater and even global relevance.[15] The mode of analysis that he took to be exemplified by the *Brumaire* was also supposedly rooted in a philosophy of dialectical materialism. His idea of a "summing up of experience" really implied the possibility of drawing lasting insights from events. The *Brumaire* prefigures the ongoing development of "parliamentary power" in republican countries; a struggle for power among bourgeois parties for

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[12] V. I Lenin, *State and Revolution.*, ed. Todd Chretien (New York: Haymarket Books, 2015), 58.
[13] ibid., 65
[14] ibid., 68
[15] ibid., 68 (Quoting Engels on France passage and adding, "The last remark is out of date insomuch as since 1871 there has been a lull in the revolutionary struggle of the French proletariat, although, long as this lull may be, it does not at all preclude the possibility ...")

"spoils"; the consolidation of the "executive power" or "bureaucratic and military apparatus." This is the sense of his idea that "France displayed in a swift, sharp, concentrated form the very same processes of development that are peculiar to the whole capitalist world." This is certainly opposed to Cunow's idea of a patient systematic reconstruction of a kind of political sociology from Marx's work as a whole, centered ultimately on *Capital,* through a great project of historical criticism in which no particular text has any strong relationship to present-day political activity.

Together with the discovery of the "old mole" and as a kind of response to it there is a new emphasis on the beginning of the text, on history as tragedy and farce and revolutionary imitation. These passages were sometimes quoted in the nineteenth century, but only the supposed repetition of the revolutionary experience and its failure made them as prominent as they are still today. In one early example, in *Die Neue Zeit* for November 22, 1918, Cunow invoked the *Brumaire* against German revolutionaries for "borrowing their speech, argumentation, and form of organization from the Russian revolution."[16] Along with this shift in emphasis to quotations that had not seen much action in the past, familiar quotations could be recontextualized by revolutionaries to dramatic effect. In an article on January 1, 1919, *Die Freiheit,* the Berlin organ of the USPD, invoked the passage on bourgeois and proletarian revolutions, placing the emphasis on the conclusion, the situation that finally "makes all retreat possible."

This was quite different than the common use of the "bourgeois and proletarian revolutions" passage in the past, to emphasize the self-critical character of proletarian

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[16] *Die Neue Zeit*, November 22, 1918.

revolutions or to legitimate criticism of the left. More remarkably, the quotation is sandwiched between quotations from Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra.* At the top of the article is the motto, "Nicht, woher ihr kommt, mache euch fürderhin eure Ehre, sondern wohin ihr geht!" (As translated by Adrian del Caro, "Not where you come from shall constitute your honor from now on, but instead where you are going!"[17]) Further down, after quoting the *Brumaire,* it quotes Nietzsche again: "Das Erdbeben macht neue Quellen offenbar. Im Erdbeben alter Völker brechen neue Quellen aus."[18] ("An earthquake reveals new wells. In an earthquake of ancient peoples new wells break out."[19])

Near the end of that year, clearly under the influence of Lenin, the "old mole" passage was quoted in the Malik Verlag publication *Der Gegner,* in an article by Julian Gumperz, with the unlikely title, "Before the Revolution."[20] Cunow's contrary appeal to the beginning of the text, in his claim that the German communists were merely wearing Bolshevik costumes, took on new forms, as an argument against both right-wing and left-wing revolutionaries. In March 1920, Cunow invoked "tragedy and farce" regarding the Kapp Putsch in *Die Neue Zeit,* as did another writer in *Vorwärts.*[21] This anticipates the trivializing use of the text even in relation to Hitler. On August 2, 1921, to similar effect,

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[17] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, trans. Adrian Del Caro, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 163.
[18] *Die Freiheit*: *Berliner Organ der unabhängigen Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands*, January 1, 1919.
[19] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 170.
[20] Julian Gumperz, "Vor der Revolution," *Der Gegner* (Nov-Dec 1919). Reproduction by Zentralantiquariat der DDR (Leipzig, 1979).
[21] Heinrich Cunow, "Der preußische Verfassungsentwurf," *Die Neue Zeit*, April 2, 1920; K.H.D., "Acht Tage Gegenrevolution," *Vorwärts*, March 25, 1920

Vorwärts ran a front-page story with the headline, "Tragedy and Farce: the Exposed KPD-Central."[22]

In 1921, Eduard Bernstein republished an old text on the Second Republic, discussed in chapter four, with new commentary, as *Wie eine Revolution zugrunde ging: Eine Schilderung und eine Nutzanwendung.* He recalls now that he himself had known very little about the French revolution of 1848 before editing the work by Louis Héritier, but that his studies had fundamentally led him to what was called revisionism.[23] Bernstein offers here a new criticism, that Marx in the *Brumaire* denigrates the French socialism of the February revolution without saying much about its concrete ideas and problems, partly because for him this critique was superfluous, but "partly for reasons of good tact, because his critique must have touched on people who sat in prison as victims of the victorious reaction or suffered in exile."[24] This impression of Marx's depiction of figures like Blanc and Ledru-Rollin as tactful is completely opposed to the common view today, that he mocked their failures harshly and without restraint. This tactful *absence* of a frank critique in the *Brumaire*, Bernstein proposes, has made it easy to misrepresent the differences between Marx and his opponents. Bernstein suspected that the *Brumaire* was written under complex moral restraints peculiar to the revolutionary situation, an issue that I have also found to be relevant to interpreting *Herr Vogt.* He returned to the *Brumaire* now with an overwhelming sense of historical repetition, "the same differences in temperament and passion within the parties call forth the same contradictions, the same

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[22] Vorwärts, August 2, 1921. The topic was the conflict over Paul Levi's *Unser Weg*.
[23] Eduard Bernstein, *Wie eine Revolution zugrunde ging* (Stuttgart: J.H.W. Dietz, 1921), 9-10
[24] ibid., 7

divisions," sometimes even the same individual personalities, certainly the same slogans and arguments.[25]

These examples illustrate a growing insistence on the contemporary relevance of the *Brumaire* by journalists across the political spectrum. A striking example from another setting is the use of the *Brumaire* in the trial of twenty-two members of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, in June and July 1922. This was the first major Soviet "show trial," combining high-profile defendants and a simultaneous campaign of propaganda. Critics on the left sometimes cited the *Brumaire* to associate the trial with counter-revolution.[26] Most remarkable, however, was the reported use of the *Brumaire* at what *Die Neue Zeit* called "perhaps the high point of the trial." One defendant, Hendelmann, is supposed to have addressed the judges as follows: "Adventurers with suspicious sources of income, degenerate offspring of the bourgeoisie, discharged soldiers, released criminals, writers [*Literaten*], gamblers [or actors, *Spieler*], in short, the whole undefined, disorderly mass that the French call *la bohème* ... the Society of 10 December, that is you!"[27] The quotation may be inauthentic, but it powerfully illustrates the moral authority that a quotation from the *Brumaire* was *supposed* to possess.[28]

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[25] ibid., 9

[26] For example, an anonymous article in *Die Freiheit* had a motto from the *Brumaire* that is not very familiar: "Was sie als revolutionärstes Ereignis sich vorgestellt haben, das trug sich in Wirklichkeit zu als das kontrerevolutionärste." Karl Radek responded in one of the special issues of the Comintern organ *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz* devoted to the trial, published on June 12. He began by invoking the treatment of communists elsewhere, including in Germany, and the silence of social democrats toward their mistreatment. He also attacked the USPD analysis of the situation, which he attributes to Paul Levi. Karl Radek, "Der historische Sinn des Prozesses der Sozialistenrevolutionäre," *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, "Sonder-Nummer zum S.R.-Prozeß." 12 June 1922.

[27] Dr. Elias Hurwicz, "Der Prozess der Sozialrevolutionäre und die 'Einheitsfront des Sozialismus,'" *Die Neue Zeit,* July 28, 1922, pp. 417 ff.

[28] In W. Woitinksi, *Kommunistische Blutjustiz: der Moskauer Prozess der Sozialrevolutionäre und seine Opfer* (Berlin: J.H.W. Dietz/Buchhandlung Vorwärts, 1922), this anecdote is attributed to a journalist,

The several editions of the Dietz Verlag *Kleine Bibliothek* edition of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* that were published during this period of postwar revolutionary crisis, in 1919, 1920, 1921, and 1922, were probably small by modern standards. In other Dietz publications that list the number of copies printed, each edition is still just a few thousand copies. The press republished other works by Marx at similar rates in these years, and some by Engels or Kautsky much more often. Still, the *Brumaire* clearly reached many more Germans in these four years than it ever had before, and there were probably more references to the *Brumaire* in print as well, even if there are still few examples of extended discussions of the text, or extended comparisons and contrasts between the text and contemporary politics.[29]

One exception that proves the rule is the lead article in *Die Internationale* on January 15, 1923, analyzing the political situation of the KPD in advance of its upcoming party meeting in Leipzig. The epigraph is the passage from the *Brumaire* that concludes, "Society appears now to have retreated back behind its starting-point; in truth, it had first to create the revolutionary starting-point … the conditions under which alone the modern revolution becomes serious." The author was probably the newspaper's editor, August Thalheimer, mainly remembered today for his later analysis of fascism.[30] He used the text

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Wauters, in the Brussels *Peuple*. Woitinski's pamphlet was translated into English as *The Twelve Who Are To Die* (Berlin, 1922).

[29] This is only a guess based on casual searches in digitized publications. A closer quantitative comparison of this kind might not be very meaningful, as the numbers of references involved are still modest, the number of left-wing publications was exploding, and only a small part of this political press is digitized.

[30] The article is ascribed to Thalheimer in Peter Ruben, "August Thalheimers Faschismusanalyse Nach Marx' 18. Brumaire," in *Klassen-Revolution-Demokratie: Zum 150. Jahrestag der Erstveröffentlichung von*

differently here than he would in his later theory, as his aims were completely different, but many of the ideas are the same. Taking the political situation to be defined by two phenomena above all, the appearance of National Socialism and the French occupation of the Ruhr, Thalheimer defines the program of the upcoming congress wholly in terms of opposition to the SPD: "The acceleration of the bankruptcy of social democracy, the revolutionary liquidation of this bankruptcy, the activation of the proletariat." His use of the *Brumaire* in his discussion of German fascism is ultimately meant to support this confrontational position toward the SPD.

Just as the *Brumaire* emphasizes the distinctly French origins of Bonapartism, Thalheimer emphasizes the distinctly German origins of National Socialism. National Socialism emerges from the failure of the November revolution, above all from Social-Democratic illusions and weakness. Like February 1848, November 1918 was a "surprise attack," but it was rooted in opposition to war and military dictatorship, not an electoral reform campaign. The "council republic" was an illusion, like the "social republic" in France, but an illusion of a different kind. The French socialists in 1848 lacked the material basis for the transition to socialism, but this was now created by the state-capitalist war economy in Germany. Given this difference in historical circumstances, the main obstacle now had to be subjective, the belief in social democracy ("social patriotism") as a means of transition to socialism. This illusion explains why the "most advanced big-city strata of proletarians," who strove for proletarian dictatorship, met with

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Marx' Der 18. Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte, ed. Rolf Hecker, Beiträge Zur Marx-Engels-Forschung (Argument, 2003).

passive and active resistance from other proletarians and the petty-bourgeoisie. The avant-garde was defeated, just like the June insurgents in the *Brumaire*, "with the honor of great world-historical struggles." Just as the bourgeois parties in the *Brumaire* are really supposed to have created the conditions of their own defeat by Bonaparte, the Socialist participation in the counter-revolutionary repression of January and March, 1919, is supposed to anticipate the assassinations of Matthias Erzberger and Walther Rathenau.

For Thalheimer, German fascism is a search for a new "rescue" after all social-democratic attempts have led nowhere. But it is a phenomenon bound to collapse under its own contradictions, just like Bonapartism in the *Brumaire*. The ideals of this rescue are as contradictory as the "Napoleonic ideas" of 1851 or Proudhon as analyzed by Marx. Fascism seeks to preserve the "good" in capitalism, "Christian" industry, while expelling the "bad," the unproductive "parasite," the Jew, the internationalist. It finds its "December Gang" in those declassed by war and economic catastrophe. If fascism should ever succeed in Germany—a prospect still remote at this time—this victory would dissolve democratic illusions and in fact contain the kernel of the triumph of the proletarian revolution. This analysis anticipates the last attempt at Communist revolution in Germany, in October 1923. Thalheimer was clearly inspired by Lenin's example of materialist dialectic. This "method," as he explained elsewhere at this time, could be learned from Marx or Lenin by studying their works in context, but ultimately, it had to be practiced: "method is not only something known [*ein Wissen*] but also an ability [*ein Können*], an art [*Kunst*] …"

The experience of revolutionary defeat in 1923 finally may have made it possible to present the *Brumaire* as a literary work, complete in itself and able to speak to the present ostensibly without mediation. This was the premise of Taifun Verlag, a press that was active for only a few months in 1924, just long enough to publish about a dozen paperback books.[31] Among these, the *Brumaire* was the only one by Marx or Engels. This was also, covertly, the first Communist edition. The founders, Arthur Seehof, Stefan Klein, and Josef Lang, were all probably members of the KPD. They signed the first contracts relating to founding a press on March 10, 1924, immediately after the March 1 expiration of the ban on the party.[32] The animating figure was Seehof, a journalist with some experience as a Communist publisher.

Four days after this first contract, Seehof announced the press to the writer Lu Märten, inviting her to join. Their goal, he wrote, was "to clear the path for our left-oriented [*linksgerichtete*] literature and to bring out old and new things from the great wealth of works of the international revolution and socialism." He does not say so, but it was a common practice of political presses to obscure their political profile by publishing revolutionary literature together with relatively unpolitical work.[33] Seehof had heard that Märten was working on a "history of literature from the standpoint of historical

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[31] I have found very little research on this press. It is mentioned in passing in Siegfried Lokatis, "Weltanschauungsverlage," in *Geschichte Des Deutschen Buchhandels Im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert. Bd. 2., Die Weimarer Republik 1918-1933*, ed. Ernst Fischer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 115. Some of the controversy that it caused in the Comintern at this time is discussed in Alexander Watlin, *Die Komintern, 1919-1929* (Mainz: Decaton Verlag, 1993), 36.
[32] The founding documents are included in materials related to the transfer of Taifun Verlag to the Comintern. Bundesarchiv Berlin [BA] RY 1/1187
[33] Lokatis, "Weltanschauungsverlage," 116.

materialism"—he mistakenly typed "socialism" before striking it out for "historical materialism"—and hoped to publish it with the press.[34] They were also interested in her own literary works.

Seehof was not well informed about Märten's work-in-progress. It was about "all so-called arts-forms [*Künste-Formen*]," she explained in her response, not just literature. By *Künste-Formen,* she did not mean "artforms" but a broader category of artistic forms with roots in purposive labor. Her work presented ethnographic evidence against the "legend" that art has its origins in religious practices. It discussed in turn "dance-gesture-music"; architecture and sculpture; painting and drawing; speech and poetry or fiction [*Dichtung*]; and Suprematism as the dissolution of art back into form. As she puts it here, although what we call "art" is not classless, form can be. "Now that Trotsky and others are finally moving away (if not entirely) from the concept of art as fetish and partly using some of my results from the first brochure," her 1920 *Historisch-Materialistisches über Wesen und Veränderung der Künste,* Märten wanted to publish quickly, in part because she thought her work was more accessible than Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution.* She had only one manuscript, reworked many times already but still in need of correction, and was in dialogue with two other publishers, but she preferred to work with Seehof.[35]

On May 5, 1924, Seehof leased an office in Frankfurt. The firm was registered on May 13, with 5000 Goldmark in capital.[36] Just one month later, however, control was

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11/22/21 12:16:00 PM[34] Arthur Seehof to Lu Märten, March 14, 1924. Lu Märten Papers, Akademie der Künste, Berlin. Seehof had written "socialism" before striking it out and writing "historical materialism."
[35] LM to AS, March 18, 1924. Märten Papers, AdK Berlin
[36] Bundesarchiv Berlin [BA] RY 1/1187

transferred to the West European Secretariat of the Comintern, through the mediation of Ruth "Österreich" (Jensen), and arrangements were made to reimburse the founders. It seems more likely that this exchange was planned in advance as a part of some covert operation than that the firm was founded independently and just happened immediately to be sold. Despite the lifting of the complete ban, the Communist Party and its presses continued to face many kinds of police persecution, and the limits of permissible activity were unclear. Advertisements for the forthcoming *Signale* series began to appear in various Communist publications and art magazines only after the sale, in June.[37]

The political orientation of the press was left implicit in the advertisements. The various texts are just called "documents of contemporary history," *zeitgeschichtliche Dokumente*, that "rejuvenate, excite, or entertain," *beleben, anregen, unterhalten*. The basic idea can be compared to a more successful series launched the same year by Wieland Herzfelde and Julian Gumperz, the founders of Malik Verlag. Their "Malik-Bücherei" also published literature and political-historical documents from the past and present together, in an inexpensive but artistic form. The Signale books are more simple in concept and physical design, and also distinctly oriented toward the Soviet Union.

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[37] AS to LM, November 17, 1924, mentions advertisements in publications including *Der Zwiebelfisch, Neue Merkur,* and *Der Querschnitt*. Märten Papers, AdK Berlin. On the magazine *Der Querschnitt,* see Erika Esau, "'The Magazine of Enduring Value': Der Querschnitt (1921-36) and the World of Illustrated Magazines," in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines, Volume III: Europe 1880-1940, Part II*, ed. Peter Brooker et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

DIE SIGNALE

Eine neue billige Bücherreihe

In Kürze erscheint:

I. MÁCZA, Moskau. Das Evangelium der auferstandenen Stadt.
I. BALAT, Lepopo. der Narr. Eine Erzählung.
C. AVELINE, Molène. Eine Erzählung.
B. ILLES, Nikolai Suhaj. Historische Begebenheit.
J. R. BECHER, Vorwärts; du rote Front. Prosastücke.
K. MARX, Der 18. Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte.
K. KERSTEN, Moskau-Leningrad. 1924. (Wirtschaft u. Kultur.)
W. MORRIS, Die Gesellschaft. Gestern und heute.
S. FRIEDLÄNDER, Wie durch ein Prisma. (Kritik im Zeichen Kants.)
J. R. BECHER, Arbeiter, Bauern und Soldaten.

Arbeiten von Lafargue, Lassalle, Lenin, Marx, Bakunin, Hess, Lu Märten, E. Mühsam, Shelley, Byron usw. in Vorbereitung.

Die Schriften der Sammlung sind zeitgeschichtliche Dokumente, oder derart aus der Geschichte aller Zeiten ausgewählt, daß sie auch den heutigen Menschen noch beleben, anregen oder unterhalten. Wirtschaft, Politik, Literatur, sowie Essays und Bühne wechseln in bunter Reihenfolge. Jedermann kann diese Sammlung erwerben.

Al e Bände sind in edlen Schriften gedruckt, stark geheftet, beschnitten, vielfarbige Umschläge. — — Sonderprospekte sind zu verlangen.
PREISE: Der Band je nach Umfang cirka Mark 0,25—1,50.

Der Taifun-Verlag, G.m.b.H., Frankfurt a. M.

Figure 3: Advertisement for Taifun Verlag series Die Signale, *from* Arbeiter-Literatur 5/6 (June 1924)

Besides the *Brumaire,* the only other text from the nineteenth century is the one by William Morris, a translation of an essay based on speeches from 1886.[38] The essay certainly supports E.P. Thompson's description of Morris as a "diagnostician of alienation."[39] denouncing the moral and cultural decadence of capitalist society: the violence of war, including European "attacks on barbarian or savage peoples," the waste of modern competition with its "army of clerks," adulteration and advertisement ("puffery"), "sham wealth and sham service," and "gloomy cowardice—a stolid but timorous incapacity of enjoyment." The rich like the poor are supposed to suffer from the "futility of their amusements and the degradation of their art and literature." The

[38] See the introduction to the version titled "The Labour Question from the Socialist Standpoint," in R.C.K. Ensor, ed., *Modern Socialism: As Set Forth by Socialists in their Speeches, Writings, and Programmes* (New York: Scribner's, 1907), 65-89

[39] E.P. Thompson, "William Morris," in *Persons and Polemics, Historical Essays by E.P. Thompson* (London: Merlin Press, 1994), 66-76. Cited after https://www.marxists.org/archive/thompson-ep/1959/william-morris.htm

surprising inclusion of Shelley and Byron at the end of a list of forthcoming works that begins with "Lafargue, Lassalle, Lenin, Marx, Bakunin, Hess" offers further evidence of the aesthetic lineage of the press.[40]

The series was mostly recent writings, including some by leading Communist writers of the time. János Mácza and Béla Illés were figures of the Hungarian avant-garde, both living in the Soviet Union at this time.[41] Their works were translated by one of Taifun's three co-founders, Stefan J. Klein, a prolific translator of Hungarian modernist literature into German.[42] Klein's partner, the writer and translator Hermynia zur Mühlen, translated the two French authors here, Jean Balat and Claude Aveline, whose more simple stories, *Erzählungen*, may have had some affinity with her own short stories and writing for children.

Kurt Kersten was a well-known Communist journalist and travel writer. The name of the city in his title—Petrograd was only renamed after Lenin's death in January—

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[40] The records from the sale of Taifun clarify some of the references to works by other authors in the advertisement. They mention a text by Paul Lafargue called *Kapital und Religion,* probably his well-known satire of 1887, "The Religion of Capital"; Ferdinand Lassalle on Fichte; Bakunin on worker's education; a text by Moses Hess called "Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution"; and a text by Erich Mühsam called *Seenot,* perhaps a collection of poems. They include unidentified "speeches" by Byron and a collection by Shelley, including his poem, "War." They do not include any other works by Marx or anything by Lenin. Bundesarchiv Berlin [BA] RY 1/1187

[41] Mácza is sometimes mentioned today as an art critic. He was associated with the avant-garde in Budapest before the First World War, including the journal *Ma.* In an issue of *Ma* from 1922, a "derisive Dadaistic short 'drama'" by Mácza appeared in an issue featuring Moholy-Nagy, alongside work by Hans Arp, Mayakovsky, and Borges. Éva Forgács and Tyrus Miller, "The Avant-Garde in Budapest and in Exile in Vienna," in Peter Brooker et al., eds., *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, 1st ed, vol. 3: Europe, 1880–1940, Part I (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[42] Christine Schlosser, "Stefan I. Klein, 1889–1960," in *Germersheimer Übersetzerlexicon,* http://uelex.de, mentions Mihály Babits, Dezső Kosztolányi und Ernő Szép. The third co-founder of Taifun Verlag was the KPD party functionary Josef Lang, identified in documents as *Prokurist,* which means something like "general manager." Sabine Hock, "Lang, Joseph," in *Frankfurter Biographie* 1 (1994), https://frankfurter-personenlexikon.de/node/3023

suggests that he is reporting on a recent journey in the Soviet Union.[43] The poet and novelist J.R. Becher had recently rejoined the KPD after a crisis following the defeat of the revolution of 1918-1919. His *Arbeiter, Bauern und Soldaten* was written to be performed by a worker's chorus and self-consciously tried to combine poetry with revolutionary actuality and appropriate the everyday political language of the party.[44] The critical writings in Salomo Friedlaender's *Wie durch ein Prisma* focus on small forms. Under the pseudonym Mynona, Friedlaender also wrote a form of short fiction that he called "grotesques," which have been interpreted as illustrations of his dialectical philosophy of "creative indifference." In such company, the journalistic aspect of the *Brumaire* is no handicap, but rather, consistent with a modernist aesthetics of the "small form" and a kind of challenge to prevailing concepts of literature, complementing Märten's opposition to Trotsky's art theory or Friedlaender's own ideas about art.

The Taifun edition of the *Brumaire* lacks the *Namenregister* and timeline that had been provided by Riazanov, but it begins with an editorial note that is nearly identical to the one by Dietz in the editions of 1914 and 1920. (It simply omits a first sentence referring to the *Kleine Bibliothek* series and adds a short quote from Franz Mehring calling the *Brumaire* a "masterpiece of materialist historiography.") It quotes the same passage from the Engels preface as the Dietz edition does, with one minute change. The first part of the sentence that begins, "France is the land where historical class struggles

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[43] "Kersten, Kurt (Ps. Georg Forster)," in Simone Barck et al., eds., *Lexikon Sozialistischer Literatur: Ihre Geschichte in Deutschland Bis 1945* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1994).
[44] On the *Sprechchor* as a performance of community, see Sabine Hake, *The Proletarian Dream: Socialism, Culture, and Emotion in Germany, 1863–1933* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), Chs. 4 and 12.

were fought out, more than elsewhere, to a decision…," is printed with extra spacing (*gesperrt*) for emphasis. This recalls Lenin's use of the passage to elevate the *Brumaire* to a paradigmatic status. Italics are also added at several points in the first section, apparently to encourage comparisons to recent political events.

The first example is to a paragraph that contrasts the French revolutionary "heroes" who, although they may have imitated the past in costume, achieved the task of their time. Their names (Desmoulins, Danton, Robespierre, Saint-Just, and Napoleon) are italicized, as is the word "heroes."[45] In the sentence about the poetry of social revolution, the phrase "only out of the future" is italicized. In the sentence about society appearing to regress but in fact still having to create the conditions in which modern revolution can be "serious," the word "serious" [*ernsthaft*] is italicized.[46] In the passage about bourgeois and proletarian revolutions, italics are added to the description of the period supposedly following bourgeois revolutions as a "hangover" or discordant time [*Katzenjammer*], before society learns to appropriate the results of its *Sturm und Drang* period.[47] This part of the passage was not typically an important part of the meaning that was expressed when the "bourgeois and proletarian revolutions" passage was quoted in the past. The emphasis must have been meant to suggest a similarity to the post-revolutionary period of the 1920s. The italics on the sentence, "A nation and a woman will not be forgiven the careless hour, in which the first adventurer who comes along can rape her," also seems to

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[45] Karl Marx, *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte* (Frankfurt: Taifun Verlag, 1924), p. 9
[46] ibid., 11, 12
[47] ibid., 13

express a specific mood of the time.[48] Other passages that are italicized include the description of the February government as provisional ("Niemand und Nichts wagte das Recht des Bestehens …"); a description of the attempted revolt of 15 May as ineffective ("Der 15. Mai hatte …"); and a description of the process by which, as leaders are arrested, they are replaced by more dubious figures.[49]

A copy of this edition in the digitized collection of the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin includes heavy underlining in pencil with occasional words in the margins.[50] The first example, next to the underlined phrase "the Lumpenproletariat organized as the Mobile Guard," is "Hitler!"[51] In theory, this note might belong to any time, but many of the other notes strongly suggest that the text was annotated in the 1920s. Next to the passage on the formation of the Party of Order during the June Days, for example, the note reads, "1919 ff."[52] The same date appears with a large exclamation mark on the following page and a few pages later, next to the section on the constitution and the laws on public safety.[53] The reader repeatedly identifies the party of Ledru-Rollin, the democratic-socialist Mountain, with the SPD. For example, next to the underlined sentence, "The Mountain for its part appears in opposition to this royalist conspiracy as the representative of the 'republic,'" the note in the margin reads "SPD!"[54] Another note relates the royalists in the *Brumaire* to

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[48] ibid., 14
[49] ibid., 15, 17, 18
[50] Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, X 9249-15/18: http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0002072C00000000
[51] ibid., 18
[52] ibid., 19
[53] ibid., 24
[54] ibid., 41. Other examples are on pp. 44, 45, and 62

the German National People's Party, the DNV.[55] Next to the underlined phrases, "the republic" and "so-called human rights," the reader has "ideology."[56] Often the topic is merely noted: petty-bourgeoisie, bureaucracy, democracy, *Lumpenproletariat*, *Privatarmee.* Next to a passage on the peasants, a note reads, "S.R.!" This stands for "Socialist Revolutionary," the anti-Bolshevik agrarian party whose members had been put on trial in 1922.

The *Brumaire* in Stability and Crisis, 1927-1932

David Riazanov joined the Bolsheviks in August, 1917, and became a prominent orator and trade-union activist. After the October Revolution, which he initially opposed, he was a member of the Commissariat of Education and helped to found the Socialist Academy, an early center of Marxist scholarship, in the summer of 1918. He also oversaw the new centralized archival administration (*Tsentrarkhiv*), from the spring of 1918 to the summer of 1920.[57] After opposing Bolshevik leaders over electoral procedures in unions, in May 1921, Riazanov withdrew from his main political activity but continued to express critical opinions through the decade.[58]

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[55] ibid., 43 ("Deutsch Nat")
[56] ibid., 46
[57] Kelly A. Kolar, "Bourgeois Specialists and Red Professionals in 1920s Soviet Archival Development," *Information & Culture* 53, no. 3/4 (November 2018): 243–70.
[58] Jonathan Beecher and Valerii N. Fomichev, "French Socialism in Lenin's and Stalin's Moscow: David Riazanov and the French Archive of the Marx-Engels Institute," *The Journal of Modern History* 78, no. 1 (March 2006): 119–43. In the early 1920s, even former members of opposition parties, which Riazanov was not, could still hold significant institutional positions as long as they abstained from oppositional

The Marx-Engels Institute was founded initially as a branch of the Socialist Academy around January, 1921 and formally opened in 1922. As director, Riazanov was able to realize his prewar vision of a form of "Marx research" that went far beyond the lives and texts of Marx and Engels, in principle to study anything "from which they drew their impressions, impulses and stimuli," including the national histories of France, Germany, and Great Britain; the history of socialism and the labor movement; and the histories of philosophy, law, and political economy. In years of extreme hardship and war, Riazanov was able to purchase private collections on these subjects amounting to tens of thousands of volumes.

Riazanov's double biography of Marx and Engels, probably based on lectures from this time, ostensibly applies "Marx's own method" to the study of Marx himself. Riazanov's idea of "Marx's own method" is somewhat vague. "Marx and Engels were after all men of a definite historic moment" and a specific region, the Rhineland; but in order to explain individuality, "environment itself must be a complex of contradictions," and people also transform their environments.[59] In his broader understanding of history, Riazanov does begin with the industrial revolution, but he also emphasizes the politicization of the British working class, for example, under the influence of the French revolution, and phenomena such as the rise of Blanquism in France.

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activities: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution: 1917 - 1932* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 89.

[59] David Riazanov, *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels* (New York: International Publishers, 1927), pp. 13-27. p. 57

The Eighteenth Brumaire is mentioned only briefly, as Marx's "most inspired piece of historical writing," and it is described as "a brilliant study of the February revolution," an event that is the subject of about one paragraph in the *Brumaire* itself. In this perspective, the *Brumaire* is about "the fate of the revolution." This previously unusual point of view came powerfully to the fore in Germany at about the same time and remains influential today. Riazanov gives a very simplistic view of that fate as entirely due to bourgeois treachery, as "some knowingly and maliciously, and others unwillingly and with tears in their eyes" were "betraying and selling the proletariat, casting it forth as prey for generals and executioners."[60]

In one speech at the Socialist Academy, from November, 1923, Riazanov dramatizes his struggle to obtain photographic copies of the "German Ideology" manuscripts from Eduard Bernstein. He paraphrased a passage from the section on Feuerbach for his audience: "The starting-point, the fundamental thesis is nothing abstract, rather it is actual individuals and their action, their deeds, the conditions that they encountered as finished, and the conditions as they are altered through human activity." He also noted the manuscripts' extensive criticism of "True Socialism," which was only briefly criticized in the *Communist Manifesto*.[61] Other exciting manuscripts that Riazanov "discovered" in Socialist hands at this time included the 1843 critique of

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[60] David Riazanov, *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels* (New York: International Publishers, 1927), pp. 103-4.
[61] David Riazanov, "Neueste Mitteilungen über den literarischen Nachlaß von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels," in *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und die Arbeiterbewegung*, XI (1925), 391-2. On the conflict over the manuscripts, see Carver and Blank, *A Political History of the Editions of Marx and Engels's "German Ideology" Manuscripts*, 15–16.

Hegel's *Philosophy of Right,* certain manuscripts of *Capital,* and Engels's *Dialectics of Nature.*[62]

Riazanov is often described at this time as a critic of Bolshevik leaders, but his own political ideas are not so easy to discern in the scholarship. One important source here is a lecture to the students of the Socialist Academy in early March, 1924, on the topic, "Lenin as a Theoretician of the Proletarian State."[63] Here Riazanov posed two questions, "what in Lenin's doctrine is new and whether, in fact, everything that is contained in the doctrine of Marx and Engels on the state was revealed and highlighted by Lenin." He began by criticizing the prior speakers, Bukharin and Radek, for slightly overstating Lenin's originality. Other thinkers of the Second International had dealt with aspects of the question before Lenin. Surprisingly, Riazanov discusses Daniel de Leon at length. But the second question, regarding what Lenin might have overlooked in Marx, was in some ways more provocative.

Riazanov asks here if, in some circumstances, the revolutionary transformation of the state might risk losing some of its potential social value by weakening its ability to unify or organize society. This was a question that, Riazanov claims, Lenin hardly asked in *State and Revolution*. He then gives a fresh and fairly subtle account of Marx's early thinking about the power of the state, in his early journalism, "On the Jewish Question," still-unpublished parts of the "German Ideology" manuscripts, and up to the *Brumaire,* which Riazanov pointedly quotes from the first edition, noting one revision by Marx to

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[62] On the philosophical context, see Leckey, "David Riazanov and Russian Marxism."
[63] "Lenin als Theoretiker des proletarischen Staates (1924)," in Külow and Jaroslawski, *David Rjasanow*, 100–133.

the second edition of 1869, in the passage concerning the destruction of the state machine. According to Riazanov, the revision to the "state machine" passage did not show any change in Marx's basic view, which Riazanov summarized: "There is no reason to shrink back from the destruction of this machinery. He shows that one can retain the centralized power of social organization even without the bureaucratic military machine."

I will not try here to locate this remark precisely in a Soviet political context, but it does seem to express an anti-statist, anti-bureaucratic sentiment. In this perspective, Riazanov's scholarly work on Marx could be interpreted as an attempt to preserve and promote a revolutionary vision against the Soviet political tendencies of the time, without losing the political support that he needed for that end, which necessarily included support from the SPD. At the Fifth World Congress of the Communist International, in July 1924, Riazanov was officially tasked with editing a Marx-Engels *Gesamtausgabe* for international use.[64] He began to work directly with the SPD to photostat manuscripts of Marx and Engels in their archives. The Marx-Engels Institute, the SPD, and the Institute for Social Research, in Frankfurt, reached an agreement to publish a complete works in about 40 volumes. The first volume of this *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe*, retrospectively called MEGA[1], was published in 1927, at about the same time as Riazanov's edition of the *Brumaire.*

Riazanov's edition can be contrasted with another one published in English, with his help, by Eden and Cedar Paul, in early 1926. The editors called this "the first

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[64] This date comes from Rainer Nicolaysen, *Siegfried Landshut: die Wiederentdeckung der Politik : eine Biographie* (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 1997), 138. For Riazanov's own account from 1927, see Külow and Jaroslawski, *David Rjasanow*, 148.

complete presentation of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* since 1852" in any language. It includes as an appendix six of the deleted passages that were translated from text provided by Riazanov.[65] This appeared at about the same time as Riazanov's own Russian translation of the *Brumaire*, which also documents the revisions by Marx.[66] But the Pauls edition has a far more confrontational character than the editions for which Riazanov is known. The main aim of the preface, dated January 1, is to prove the contemporary political relevance of the *Brumaire* with a series of quotations. These include the old commonplaces on "doctrinaire experiments" and the petit-bourgeoisie as well as newer comparisons to Soviet history and Italian fascism. The book is a "crushing answer to those who say that there is nothing in Marxism but a crude contrasting of 'bourgeois' and 'proletariat.'" On the contrary! For these editors, there are precisely "three types of mentality, three political complexes" in modern capitalism, the bourgeois, the petty-bourgeois, and the proletarian, and the dangers of a petty-bourgeois mentality are emphasized. This edition includes a glossary of terms and names for "working-class students whose only book of reference, in many cases, is a medium-sized English dictionary," with phonetic spellings and a guide to pronouncing French, features that may be meant for use in a classroom or for orators.[67]

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[65] The Pauls claim that the 1852 *Brumaire* at the Marx-Engels Institue is "the only copy known to exist." It may have been the only one known to them, although several survive today. In June 1926, the Sozialwissenschaftliche Studienbibliothek der Wiener Arbeiterkammer exhibited a first edition, reported in *Vorwärts,* June 4, 1926. The copy used by Riazanov belonged to an original member of the Communist League, Friedrich Lessner. Riazanov does not mention that it is the only surviving copy.
[66] According to Kudrjaschowa, "Zur Geschichte der zweiten deutschen Ausgabe von Karl Marx' Schrift 'Der Achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte' von 1869," 262, fn 23.
[67] *The eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,* trans. Eden & Cedar Paul (New York: International Publishers, 1926)

In April, 1926, the SPD acquired the literary estate of Joseph Weydemeyer, including the letters concerning the publication of the *Brumaire.* Paul Kampffmeyer, who was in charge of the archive, wrote an internal memorandum arguing that many of the letters should be classified as archival material rather than material for publication.[68] The material from the exile period continued to be treated with a special discretion, limiting access to the biographical context of the *Brumaire.* Kampffmeyer did publish an interesting manuscript by Engels that is exactly contemporary with the *Brumaire* and conveys the extreme uncertainty of the moment. Originally written for Weydemeyer's newspaper, *Die Revolution*, in January, 1852, but abandoned when the newspaper was postponed, it is a detailed assessment of the risk that France will invade England.

In November, Kampffmeyer also published a short article in the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* that discussed the 1869 revisions to the *Brumaire.*[69] Here Kampffmeyer describes the text of 1852 as still belonging to a time of revolutionary expectation, when Marx still foresaw "a rapid collapse of bourgeois society and a massive participation of the peasants in the proletarian revolution." This is a very different perspective than those that are often found in scholarship today, which tend to draw a contrast with the far more explicit revolutionary expectations of the texts written shortly before the *Brumaire,* in 1850. It is more consistent, however, with Weydemeyer's view of the *Brumaire* as a reaffirmation that, coup d'état or no, France "is and remains" the land of revolution.

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[68] "Brief von Paul Kampffmeyer an den Vorstand der SPD," April 24, 1926, in Joseph Weydemeyer Papers, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, Inv. nr. 597

[69] Paul Kampffmeyer, "Zur Geschichte des Marxismus," *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, Heft 11 (November 8, 1926).

This difference in perspective on the *Brumaire* certainly reflects the polemical situation, the new emphasis on the "old mole" passage and the passage on the destruction of the state machine, especially in its seemingly more radical formulation of 1852, as well as established socialist arguments about the course of Marx's life. Contrary to Riazanov, as I understand him, Kampffmeyer saw the revisions as evidence of significant changes in Marx's views about revolution. For example, with the change in wording from *revolutionäre Zerstörungsform* to *politische Umwälzungsform* in the passage on European and American republicanism, Marx "moderates, very substantially, the expression for the role that he ascribes to the republic in a dissolving bourgeois society." The passage mocking universal suffrage and mocking democracy is supposedly "very characteristic of Marx's position toward the problem of the state in the first post-revolutionary period." In the second edition, it is removed, because universal and direct suffrage had become a battle-cry of German social democrats. The removal of references to the supposed subordination of society to the state are supposed to "throw an illuminating light on the theoretical and tactical development [*Werdegang*] of Marxism."

My own analysis does not agree with Kampffmeyer that these changes express *changes* in Marx's views, the imposition of a new and more moderate political standpoint (or a longer time horizon for revolution) on an earlier error in judgment. In chapter two, I argued that they attempt to preserve and communicate an original critical position more clearly, against the potential influence of historical hindsight, which could make the coup d'état appear to be a more decisive event than Marx thought it was at the time. Contrary to Weydemeyer, again, I do not see the changes as evidence of Marx's own development

but as an attempt to clarify his prior views, against a tendency toward anachronistic and simplistic misinterpretation.

The *Marxistische Bibliothek* series that includes Riazanov's translation of the *Brumaire* was published by the Comintern's German publisher, the Verlag für Literatur und Politik.[70] The first title in the series was a new edition of Lenin's *Imperialism as the Most Recent Level* [*jüngste Etappe*] *of Capitalism,* better known today by its later title, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism.*[71] The next five were the work by Bukharin that is translated as *The Economic Theory of the Leisure Class* (1917); an edition of Engels's *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of German Classical Philosophy,* edited by Hermann Duncker; an anthology edited by Riazanov, *Karl Marx as Thinker, Man, and Revolutionary*; and two volumes by Stalin, *Problems of Leninism* and *On the Path to October*. Riazanov's edition of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* was number seven and, again, the only book by Marx included in the *Marxistische Bibliothek.*

Riazanov's foreword, dated February, 1927, was the first new foreword in German since the one by Engels for the third edition of 1885. It says many similar things, but a close comparison shows a noticeable shift in perspective. For Engels, the work simply concerns an event, but Riazanov claims that "every new work on the history of the Second Empire confirms anew the correctness of the analysis," categorizing the *Brumaire* together with works about a regime that had not yet existed when it was written. The

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[70] It was translated into French by Marcel Ollivier for a series with the same name, *Bibliotheque Marxiste,* but different books in the series, beginning with Riaznov's double biography. The French series does not include the titles by Lenin and Stalin

[71] I have not looked into this change of title closely.

"genius" of the work for Engels was that it comprehended its own time, while for Riazanov, presumably following Lenin, Marx was able "to draw a balance of this period and to foretell [*voraussagen*] the further course of events."

Riazanov's foreword is purely historical. Part I draws on correspondence to add details to what Marx himself says about the circumstances of composition: the failure of Weydemeyer's weekly, *Die Revolution,* the extremely hard personal circumstances of Marx at the time, and the role of an anonymous worker from Frankfurt, newly arrived in the United States, whose savings are supposed to have "rescued" Weydemeyer and the *Brumaire*. Part II emphasizes the role of Engels in developing certain ideas in the *Brumaire*. Riazanov portrays the work as deeply collaborative, nearly jointly authored. While it remains well known today that the opening sentence on tragedy and farce resembles remarks in a letter from Engels, Riazanov adds that this debt is even more clear in the first edition of the *Brumaire.* He goes on to discuss other areas of influence that are less often noted today, concerning the reasons for the passivity of the Paris proletariat and role of the republic in fomenting the urban-rural divide. Riazanov observes the similar argument that Marx made in his letters against Mazzini. He also notes the distinction that Marx had drawn between the revolutionary and the counter-revolutionary parts of the peasantry.

Part III concerns the revisions. Riazanov believes that the work was timely again in 1869 because of unrest in France: in keeping with his interpretation, events seemed to be vindicating its prediction. He does not attempt to locate the new edition in German politics, as I have done in chapter two. He is also unable to explain why Marx made the

changes that he did, especially to the last chapter. Mostly working from the text of the second edition, Riazanov re-inserts a number of important passages from the first edition and also makes a number of smaller corrections. This was interpreted by Hecker as a concession to social democracy, which favored the second and supposedly more moderate edition. Riazanov also gives the impression that he does not see the differences as significant. Their significance may not have been profound for others.

The edition includes expanded notes and a timeline, as well as a new glossary for the "proletarian reader." While earlier editions had merely added footnotes with translations of French phrases, this glossary includes many uncommon borrowed terms: *abominabel, Antizipation, Apologie*, *Autonomie, Dilemma, exploitieren, Halluzinationen, Heteronomie, Insult, koalisieren, Kohäsion,* and so on. It is hard for me to say how challenging such terms really were for German readers of the time, but it is at least worth considering that the German vocabulary used in the text did limit its popular accessibility. Two other words were carefully historicized to avoid potential confusion: "worker's association," *Arbeiterassoziation*, is used "here in the sense of 'worker's cooperatives,'" *Arbeitergenossenschaften,* while "imperialism" is "here, the following of the Bonaparte dynasty (Caesarism)." Marx's hope of abolishing the word "Caesarism" had evidently failed.

Riazanov's edition of the *Brumaire* certainly expresses a distinctly Soviet perspective on Marx. One German reviewer commented that the reinstated passages

"must appear valuable especially from a Russian standpoint."[72] The stereotypical idea of Marx-Engels as a kind of joint author, the assumption that the work is the basis for a theory of Bonapartism, and the greater provision for a real or imagined proletarian reader may also be explained from this point of view, not to mention the contextualization of the *Brumaire* in a "Marxist library," alongside works by Lenin, Bukharin, and Stalin. But the tone and content of the editorial apparatus hardly resemble those of materials intended for "agitation," and anti-socialist agitation in particular.

By the Sixth World Congress in the summer of 1928, there was talk of a "third period" with a new revolutionary potential. Over the course of 1928, the slogan "class against class" was reintroduced in the Comintern. Historians of the Soviet Union refer to a so-called Great Turn or Great Break in economic policy, in 1928 to 1929, and a related "cultural revolution," as state-sponsored cultural resources, including the press, were subordinated to the aims of mass education and mobilization. The idea of the decline of capitalism was reasserted, and the KPD moved sharply to the left as social democracy was branded "social fascism." The "right wing" was expelled from the KPD and organized as the KPO. In light of the new and more aggressive stance of the Comintern, the SPD withdrew from its agreement to let the Marx-Engels Institute copy materials from the archive.[73]

This was also roughly the context of August Thalheimer's best-known analysis of fascism, written as a part of a longer internal document of the Comintern in the summer

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[72] Maximilian Lange, "Marx, Karl. Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte," in *Die Bücherwarte: Zeitschrift für sozialistische Buchkritik* (1928), 270
[73] Nicolaysen, *Siegfried Landshut*, 139.

of 1928 and first published in the KPO organ *Gegen den Strom* in January 1930.[74] Unlike the short commentary from 1923, mentioned earlier, which concerned German fascism in particular, this document for international discussion in 1928 hardly concerns Germany at all. It focuses on Italy, most of all, and mentions Poland, Bulgaria, and Spain, what Thalheimer calls "backward" countries. The analysis has four parts. In the first, Thalheimer discusses the social foundations of Bonapartism as he sees them. These include a bourgeoisie that is divided and incapable of unity, that sacrifices its own political power to preserve its social existence; a conservative part of small landowning peasants that operates with a similar logic; and a proletariat that has provoked violent fear without being able to take power. A "June Days" style encounter is an essential precondition for the emergence of Bonapartism. The second part of the analysis focuses on the mechanisms of rule of Bonapartism, primarily the "December Gang," made up of declassed people from all backgrounds who seek their living in the Bonapartist state apparatus and army. From a military standpoint, this is necessarily a weak organization, useful at home as corrupt police but not reliable enough for war and hardly inclined to heroic self-sacrifice. Thalheimer gives less weight to the Napoleonic legend and concludes by emphasizing again the ultimately fatal inner contradictions of its social basis.

The third part concerns the idea of Bonapartism or "imperialism" in a more general sense, still not the modern sense of the word, as the so-called "ultimate form" of

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[74] August Thalheimer "On Fascism," *Telos* 40 (Summer 1979); the original is online at https://www.marxists.org/deutsch/archiv/thalheimer/1928/xx/fasch.htm

state power in capitalism. This concept, which comes from *Civil War in France* more than the *Brumaire,* has a paradoxical character, because Bonapartism was clearly not the last form of that power in any chronological sense and in fact belonged to an earlier period in the history of capitalism. Conversely, fascism in his own time was not found in the most advanced capitalist economies but precisely the "backwards" ones.Rather than imagining fascism as situated at the end of a line of capitalist development, Thalheimer emphasizes that it results from a specific situation in the class struggle, as *one* possible form of "bourgeois state power in a situation of defense." Here Thalheimer is (again, writing in 1928) specifically concerned to *contrast* Germany and Italy.

The other possible outcome, as after the Commune and in Germany after 1923, is a bourgeois-parliamentary republic. The fourth part of the analysis draws more detailed comparisons and contrasts between the model, the Italian case, and the other examples. The analysis is finally oriented toward prognosis. What political form will come after fascism in Italy and elsewhere? For Thalheimer, it is impossible to say in advance. Communists can only prepare for the struggle. Only a few paragraphs at the end concern antiparliamentarian tendencies in England, Germany, and France, "in the direction of fascism," and here Thalheimer refers again to the process in the *Brumaire*, as he understands it. The bourgeoisie itself undermines the parliamentary regime, but the impulse to "open dictatorship" comes from elsewhere, "a leap, a putsch or a *coup d'*état in which the bourgeoisie is the passive element."

The last edition of the *Brumaire* in the Weimar Republic was published by Dietz Verlag in 1932, with a preface by the sociologist J.P. Mayer. Mayer was born in 1903 to a middle-class Jewish family.[75] He developed an early interest in philosophy, which he studied at several universities in the early 1920s, including at Freiburg, where he took classes with both Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl, and at Hamburg, with Ernst Cassirer. He published a collection of essays on philosophy and literature in 1928. By the spring of 1929, he was working in the SPD party archive. In April of that year he wrote to Albert Salomon, the editor of the SPD journal *Die Gesellschaft,* about the possibility of publishing a "very important *unpublished* manuscript" by Marx that he had found, probably one of the "German Ideology" manuscripts. Salomon was apparently interested but unsure about the legal situation with the Marx-Engels Institute, which objected strongly to the publication.

Mayer seems to have ended up giving the manuscript to Riazanov, for which he was also strongly criticized by William Dittmann, the head of the SPD archive. The working relationship between the archive and the Marx-Engels Institute was now beyond repair.[76] In 1929, Mayer was also teaching at the SPD's *Arbeiterbildungsschule* in Berlin, giving introductory lectures on "socialism and the state" and "the sociological and political bases of contemporary culture."[77] In early 1930, he began publishing and interpreting early manuscripts by Marx. In April, 1930, in *Der Kampf,* Mayer published a

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[75] For background on Mayer, now see Peter Madill, "Journeys to England: The Early Life and Works of J.P. Mayer," *History of European Ideas*, March 19, 2021, 1–30. I am grateful to Peter Madill for pointing me to recent scholarship and sources relating to Mayer and his Marx edition.
[76] Nicolaysen, *Siegfried Landshut*, 141–42.
[77] *Vorwärts*, October 6, 1929.

new excerpt from the "Saint Max" section of the "German Ideology" manuscripts, a critique of Max Stirner.[78] Here he refers to Riazanov's publication of the first part of the "German Ideology" manuscripts (in 1926, in his *Marx-Engels Archiv*) as "groundbreaking," as opening "completely new horizons" in Marx-research. In June, in *Vorwärts*, Mayer presented a series of "characterizing passages" by and about "young Marx" from the first volumes of Riazanov's Marx-Engels *Gesamtausgabe*, tracing Marx's intellectual development from 1837 to 1845.

Mayer's summary of this development focuses on the idea that what Marx took from Hegel was a dialectical method. Mayer illustrates the idea of dialectic with an example from Hegel's *Philosophy of Right.* Civil or bourgeois society, as a wealth-accumulating society, creates its antithesis, the proletariat, but this contradiction necessarily demands its abolition [*Aufhebung*] and synthesis*,* its solution: for Hegel, this solution is to be found in world trade and colonization.[79] Marx is supposed to have exposed this as a false synthesis and posited his own, "the socialist society of the free and equal." Mayer describes the previously unpublished "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" in Riazanov's *Gesamtausgabe* as tracking the "inner process of Marx's breaking away from Hegel." He would later draw a contrast to Communist accounts of this development that portrayed saw break as rooted in religious criticism, but at this point his main aim seems mainly to have been to make accessible in a popular form the idea of

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[78] J.P. Mayer, "Der humane Liberalismus," *Der Kampf* (April 1930)
[79] The example is now well known and much discussed by specialists, but perhaps not so often as an example of dialectic taken over from Hegel by Marx. A recent example is Lucia Pradella, "Hegel, Imperialism, and Universal History," *Science & Society* 78, no. 4 (October 1, 2014): 426–53.

Marx as a dynamic thinker, as working through material, even as a reader, as in this description of Marx's early notebooks of excerpts: "We see right into the inner process of Marx's way of working, we follow how he studied Spinoza, Leibniz, Hume, Machiavelli, Rousseau, Montesquieu, English, French, and German history."

By the fall of 1930, working together with another employee in the party archive, Friedrich Salomon, Mayer had decoded what we call the Paris manuscripts of 1844 and was hoping to publish them as a volume with Dietz. They had the support of Paul Kampffmeyer, but Heinrich Cunow advised against publication, and Mayer wrote to Friedrich Adler to ask him to intervene, arguing that Cunow had perhaps not followed the most recent developments in Marx research, "although through them his own works have become deeply in need of revision."[80] Mayer was convinced of the importance of the manuscript as filling a hole in Marx's development, especially his "break" with Hegel—apparently challenging the view of that break that he had only recently presented. He also saw it as a rare opportunity to beat Riazanov, to have "*our* 'discovery,'" comparable in significance to the "German Ideology" manuscripts.[81]

Mayer did not mention any more specific political significance or suggest that the Paris manuscripts were in philosophical tension with the later "German Ideology" manuscripts. It is unclear how his interest in young Marx might relate to the worsening

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[80] J.P. Mayer to Friedrich Adler, September 12, 1930. Labour and Socialist International Archives, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam, Inv. Nr. 1195

[81] J.P. Mayer to Friedrich Adler, September 12, 1930. (In fact, Riazanov had copies of the manuscripts and had even published one already, in Russian translation, in 1927. This had been translated into French in 1929 and republished in Russian in 1930: Madill, "Journeys to England.")

political crisis of this time. The government of Heinrich Brüning, formed in late March, 1930, was no longer a coalition government and effectively ruled by emergency decree. Two days after Mayer's letter to Adler, dated September 12, 1930, the Reichstag election marked a sudden triumph for National Socialism, as the NSDAP increased its number of seats nearly ten-fold, from 12 to 107. During the terminal crisis of the last years of the Weimar Republic, Mayer's work on Marx seems to have taken on a more urgent character, associated with the idea of a "renewal" of Marx's thinking in his own party.

In December, Mayer published an article in *Vorwärts* on the Paris manuscripts. Quoting from Marx's draft of a preface, he proposed the cumbersome title, "On the Connection of Political Economy [*Nationalökonomie*] with State, Law, Morals and Civil Life, together with a Dispute with Hegel's Dialectic and Philosophy in General." Mayer describes Marx here as "wrestling against the traditional terminology that had been handed down to him [and] setting free his own worldview," as "testing the knife of dialectical method on the material of political economy," and as breaking with Hegel's method *through* the critical study of political economy. The manuscripts showed the *carrying out* [Vollzug] of this confrontation. Now Mayer describes this confrontation and dialectic as such in completely different terms than he had in the article just eight months earlier.

Mayer quotes Marx's idea that Hegel's *Phenomenology* and its "end result," the dialectic, negativity as a moving and creative principle, grasps the essence of *work* and "objective man, true, because actual man, as the result of *his own work*." Marx leads Hegel to a *true totality* (Mayer's emphasis) when he writes that, for the socialist, world

history is nothing but the creation of man through human labor. What is more distinctive in Mayer's idea of Marx as struggle to break free of a traditional "conceptual apparatus" to the "totality of things." Mayer inserts in parentheses, "Modern phenomenology, in its best representatives like Heidegger and Scheler, goes the same way." Mayer's prior exposure to phenomenology may have influenced his interpretation of the manuscripts here, inspiring the phenomenological-sounding idea of Marx as breaking with a "conceptual apparatus" to grasp a "totality of things."

Mayer also emphasizes that this work does *not* belong to an early philosophical phase, distinct from a later materialist one. As he sees it, and he prints this in letterspacing, Marx had formulated the principle of his conception of history already in 1844. Mayer concludes with the decisive question of how man can be "aufgehoben" from the alienation of bourgeois society and a seemingly radical quotation from Marx: "Um das wirkliche Privateigentum aufzuheben, dazu gehört eine *wirkliche* kommunistische Aktion. Die Geschichte wird sie bringen und jene Bewegung, die wir in *Gedanken* schon als eine sich selbst aufhebende wissen, wird in der Wirklichkeit eine sehr rauhen und weitläfigen Prozeß durchmachen ..." As I understand his use of this quotation, for Mayer, the *actual* communist action, prefigured in thought but occurring through history rather than as an act of revolutionary will, is opposed to a more simplistic idea of communist action. Mayer adds his own prophetic-sounding thought, also ending in ellipses, "We stand today in the middle of this wide-ranging process …"[82]

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[82] J.P. Mayer, "Nationalökonomie / Philosophie / Recht / Staat,*" Beilage des Vorwärts,* 21 December 1930. It was republished in the journal of the Swiss Social Democratic Party. "Ueber eine unveröffentlichte Schrift von Karl Marx," in *Rote Revue: sozialistische Monatsschrift,* Bd. 10, Heft 5 (January 1931).

Some traces of Mayer's other activities and ideas at this time may be noted as context for his work on Marx. In March, 1931, *Vorwärts* reported on a debate between Mayer and Mark Abromowitsch over the latter's *Hauptprobleme der Soziologie*, which turned on a question that greatly concerned Mayer in this period, the question of the boundaries of the disciplines and their internal divisions. Here Mayer rejected the idea of social actuality as divided into "floors" [*Stockwerke*] that could be investigated by different specialists, with Marx belonging for example to the area of research in economic and technological development. Marxist social research had to investigate society as a whole and "cannot simply sum up the results of research in particular 'floors.'"[83] In another short but interesting article from this time, Mayer harshly criticizes a "popular" anthology of Nietzsche, *Volks-Nietzsche,* edited by Theodor Kappstein. Apart from seemingly arbitrary abridgements, Mayer objected that the text had been "Germanized" by removing foreign words: for example, *décadent* becomes *Niedergehender,* perhaps obscuring a literary allusion and making a "European writer" appear provincial.

More important for understanding his work as an editor of Marx is a review that he published in the SPD journal *Die Gesellschaft,* the successor to *Die Neue Zeit,* of a two-volume Communist anthology, *On Historical Materialism,* edited by Hermann Duncker. Although the later Mayer-Landeshut edition of the early writings is usually compared to the Moscow *Gesamtausgabe* edition published at the same time, it is perhaps more appropriate to compare it to Communist propaganda of this kind. Mayer

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[83] *Vorwärts,* March 21, 1931.

explicitly expresses both admiration and criticism. What he admires is the idea of trying to document the *formation* of historical materialism with a selection of citations. Mayer was quite enthusiastic about the idea of doing this in a cheap, popular volume, as the early texts could only be found in libraries, in Riazanov's *Marx-Engels Archiv.* He criticized only the tendentious preface, inadequate editorial apparatus, and certain points in the interpretation.

Mayer objected to Duncker's claim that materialism was conceived initially in opposition to the religious worldview, arguing that it had developed instead through the critique of Hegel's philosophy of the state. He emphasizes also the incompleteness of the "German Ideology" manuscripts, sometimes explicit in the manuscripts themselves, and he alludes again here to phenomenology: Certain problems that the *Communist Manifesto* smooths over, the 'German Ideology' works out immediately from 'the things.' We recall here intentionally the research device of modern phenomenology, to which Marx and Engels are here very close. It was a matter indeed of getting to the unadulterated realm of *Dasein* ("of the actual life-process"). Mayer adds explicitly, "in light of Duncker's work, it may be urgently wished that our party press might be less reserved with similar source-publications in the future." This remark may have had its effect, as within a few months the plan for the new anthology edited by Mayer and Landshut was definitely underway. The immediate origins of the Mayer-Landshut edition are not completely documented, but this overlooked article provides some useful evidence.

Siegfried Landshut was six years older than Mayer—quite a significant difference, as this had made Landshut old enough to serve in the war. He had also studied

phenomenology, with Heidegger among others, as well as sociology and political economy. He published a *Critique of Sociology* that engaged critically with Marx in the fall of 1929.[84] . He had become interested in the young Marx at about the same time as Mayer or a little earlier. In the winter semester of 1929/1930 Landshut announced a working group at the *Hamburger Volkshochschule,* "Interpretation and Understanding of the Fundamental Ideas of Karl Marx," which he described as relying on "the partly newly discovered *Jugendschriften*."[85] Unlike Mayer and Salomon, Landshut was only briefly a member of the SPD, from May to October 1930, but he worked as an assistant to the socialist economist Eduard Heimann, who edited the journal *Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus* with the Christian socialist Paul Tillich, among others.

As far as we know, Mayer and Landshut did not choose to work together. Their collaboration seems to have been arranged by the SPD, perhaps with some resistance from Landshut.[86] On June 29, 1931, Mayer wrote to Adler that their collection was coming out in September. He hoped to come to Vienna to present to a small group his views about the Paris manuscripts. Now he was convinced that "this text was the most important that Marx had written, besides *Capital,* and completely revolutionizes the prior Marx-interpretation, still more than the 'German Ideology.'" Because only he and Landshut had this opinion, he added, what he had written about it himself, in the article in December, was intentionally restrained. But he and Landshut shared one essential idea,

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[84] Landshut's *Kritik der Soziologie* was reviewed critically by Herbert Marcuse, among others. Nicolaysen, *Siegfried Landshut*, 114–15.
[85] Nicolaysen, 143.
[86] This is my own interpretation of the evidence in Nicolaysen, 145–47.

that the 1844 manuscripts overturned the standard narrative of Marx's development from Hegelian, to left-Hegelian, and finally to "the Marx of 'Capital.'" As Mayer saw it, Marx was "from the beginning Marx, i.e., the author of *Capital*." He would call his talk something like, "*Zur Grundlegung eines neuen Marx-Verständnisses*."

By this point, Riazanov's fate was clear in Germany. *Die Aktion* translated a feuilleton in *Pravda* on May 31, 1931 denouncing him, under the headline, "From Nonpartisan Scholarship to Anti-Party Practice." As the headline suggests, the example was supposed to confirm that scholarship cannot be "objective." Riazanov was accused of lingering on personal anecdotes about Marx and Engels in a belittling way and failing, in an analysis of the Paris Commune, to observe the difference between Trotskyism and Marxism-Leninism. He had written, "The power of the proletariat must extend over the *entire* country, in order to have a chance of defense, and over a series of capitalist countries, in order to win the final victory." This contradiction of Stalin was supposedly rooted in a lack of "Marxist dialectic." As *Die Aktion* recalled, as recently as the previous year Riazanov had been celebrated in the same publication.

Although Mayer and Landshut probably did not entirely agree in their understanding of Marx or their political viewpoints, Mayer was also associated with *Die Neue Blätter,* in which he expressed some of his most advanced ideas at this time. One article from 1931, "Zur Problematik des deutschen Soziologie der Gegenwart," is a critical discussion of Hans Freyer's *Soziologie als Wirklichkeitswissenschaft* and Landshut's own *Kritik der Soziologie,* in which Mayer also asserts some of his own views. He repeats the example of Hegel's discussion of class contradictions as resolved in

colonization, as evidence that Hegel had dynamic and even realistic social theories that deeply influenced Marx, even if Marx criticized them. At the same time, Mayer strongly rejects any association of Marx with a "causal mechanism" at work in history, emphasizing that (quoting from the theses on Feuerbach) "circumstances are changed by men and the educator must himself be educated." Here Mayer calls for a sharp distinction between Marx and his successors, the "Marxists" (Mayer's quotes), while acknowledging that drawing this distinction clearly would imply writing an "intellectual and social history of Marxism, an undertaking for which today still hardly any preparatory work [*Vorarbeit*] has been achieved."[87]

Mayer summarizes Landshut's "critique of sociology" as an attempt to rescue sociology from an empty formalism by recovering its original problems and defining its historicity more clearly. Objecting that Landshut is not fully free of a "causalist-mechanistic conception of Marx's works," Mayer adds that the "the newly discovered early writings of Marx, discovered by Marx-research after the composition of Landshut's book, offer now the possibility to uncover Marx for a genuine understanding." Against both books, he concludes that a sociology as "knowledge of the present" [*Gegenwartswissenschaft*] already exists, but in a scattered form that needs to be synthesized to provide a concrete understanding of the present. He gives the example of Emil Lederer's work on the problem of white-collar workers or *Angestellte,* a problem that he would mention again in his preface of the *Brumaire.*

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[87] J.P. Mayer, "Zur Problematik des deutschen Soziologie der Gegenwart," *Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus* 2 (1931), p. 458.

Mayer also continued to write regularly for *Vorwärts*. In a short review of Paul Tillich's *Protestantisches Prinzip und proletarische Situation,* he noted the point at which Tillich's socialism diverges from Marxism: "The prehistory of humanity is never concluded," Tillich writes, directly against the idea of an *Aufhebung* of bourgeois society that would inaugurate an epoch of *human* history. Still the two positions were in practice allied in their struggle for human emancipation. In November, Mayer reviewed a monograph on Feuerbach's philosophy with admiration, but concluded that, when it came to the influence of Feuerbach on Marx, "the previously published sources are not sufficient," as Marx had discussed the significance of Feuerbach for his own work in a newly discovered text that would be published soon; the author would have to complete his interpretation once this had appeared.[88]

Mayer lectured on the "contemporaneity of the early work of Marx" to a socialist student group in the same month. According to a summary, he argued that the recent focus of Marx research on the early work was not accidental, but that a specific situation of European scholarship made it possible to comprehend these writings. By this he apparently meant the situation in sociology and philosophy. He opposed his view of Marx to those in Austro-Marxism, describing the return to the work of young Marx as "an attempt to join the unity of theory and practice in a kind of universal science that one could call sociology or philosophy," supporting his argument with the still unpublished "Political Economy and Philosophy" manuscript of 1844. The audience is supposed to

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[88] J.P. Mayer, "Protestantismus und Sozialismus," *Vorwärts,* September 7, 1931; "Ludwig Feuerbachs Philosophie," November 9.

have followed the difficult discussion attentively, and a fruitful discussion followed.[89] Mayer and Paul Kampffmeyer also published two introductory pamphlets on Marx, Engels, and the capitalist state.[90]

The foreword to Mayer and Landshut's collection, *Der historische Materialismus: die Frühschriften,* is dated "late 1931." The volumes were published in early 1932, in two large but cheap paperback volumes that were favored by students in particular.[91] They cover the whole period 1837 to 1847, from Marx's student years to the *Manifesto,* including both published and previously unpublished material. The introduction presents the 1844 manuscripts as "the most central work by Marx ... the nodal point [*Knotenpunkt*] of the whole unfolding of his thoughts [*Gedankenentfaltung*]." In contrast, the volume of the Moscow *Gesamtausgabe* published at about the same time identified them as "partly fragmentary essays" still in the garb of a "philosophical, Feuerbachian terminology."[92]

The preface to Mayer's edition of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* is dated February, 1932. The book was out by early June.[93] Like the *Kleine Bibliothek* editions of 1914-1922, it was published by Dietz, but it did not belong to a series. It is a "new edition" [*Neuausgabe*] with a modern cover on which the number "18" is printed peculiarly large. This design is both attractive and urgent, emphasizing a day of decision rather than the

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[89] "Marxismus in der Gegenwart," *Vorwärts*, Nov 6, 1931.
[90] A reviewer in *Vorwärts* (November 12) complemented them for not tearing citations out of context.
[91] Nicolaysen, *Siegfried Landshut*, 133–34.
[92] Nicolaysen, 134–35. Nicolaysen describes the different editing of the Paris manuscripts in the two volumes on pp. 135-6. For a more recent detailed account and bibliography, see "The Dialectic of Dissent : Marx's 1844 Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," in Filipe Carreira da Silva and Mónica Brito Vieira, *The Politics of the Book: A Study on the Materiality of Ideas*, Penn State Series in the History of the Book (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019).
[93] Dr. S. Weinberg, "Der 18 Brumaire und Wir," *Vorwärts,* June 10, 1932, effectively summarizes Mayer's preface.

more obscure historical references. The preface is the first in German to emphasize the timeliness of the text, but in the form of a question: "Worin besteht die Aktualität dieser Marxschen Schrift?" In fact, this *Aktualität* was not so easily explained. Now as then there are powerful forces striving to overthrow the democratic republic. The modern "Bonaparte" knows how to put himself into the limelight [*sich in Szene zu setzen*] when severe social shocks awake the desire for a strong man. For Mayer, however, this was not the sense in which the work had true *Aktualität*.

One can learn from the past, Mayer argued, but historical knowledge is never a sufficient guide to *action* (his emphasis), and the *Brumaire* is no historical text. Marx investigates the course of events, not with the antiquarian intentions of a document-historian, but to work out its *structure* (Mayer's emphasis) and sociological elements. These elements are in constant motion. Every historical situation has a unique structure of forces and relations of production, classes and ideologies. What can be learned, therefore, are only methods for analyzing one's own time. The work is timely, ultimately, only because the task of the present is also to analyze a social-revolutionary situation. Mayer's discussion of the analysis itself is traditional, synthesizing ideas that are familiar from the SPD press. The *Brumaire* challenges the common idea of a binary class struggle and any reduction of groups to simple material interests, neglecting ideological formation. He alludes to the recent discussion of office workers (*Angestellte),* who may be exploited but are far from "proletarians," culturally speaking.[94]

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[94] One of the important books on the topic was Siegfried Kracauer's *Die Angestellten*.

Like Riazanov, Mayer underscores that the peasantry for Marx includes a revolutionary element, naturally allied with the urban proletariat, but he goes on to criticize this idea. His text follows the second edition, not including the more "revolutionary" passages from 1852. Mayer discusses the revisions, citing Kampffmeyer's arguments about the shift to an *evolutionary* standpoint, but he adds that even this more evolutionary formulation was too optimistic, that the rural economy of France had remained far more stable than Marx imagined.[95] A bit more strongly than Kampffmeyer, he takes the changes, such as the removal of the passage mocking universal suffrage, to illustrate the undogmatic character of Marx's thinking. He concludes by quoting the "bourgeois and proletarian revolutions" passage.

Many aspects of Mayer's interpretation of the *Brumaire* can be found in earlier Social Democratic discussions of the text, but it would be a mistake to take his view as an "official" one of his party. Mayer does not ascribe any clear practical-political significance to the text at all, and more important, differs somewhat from explicitly political uses of the text in his own party. An important example is the prominent use of a quotation from the *Brumaire* on the front page of *Vorwärts* on the election day, March 13, 1932, the first round of voting for Reich president. To defeat Hitler, the SPD was frantically encouraging its voters to vote for Paul von Hindenburg over the Communist candidate, Ernst Thälmann, with the slogan, "Beat Hitler, vote Hindenburg!"

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[95]As of 1921, more than 40 percent of the French labor force remained in agriculture, according to the source cited by Mayer, Curtius and Bergsträßer, *Frankreich,* Bd. 2: Staat und Wirtschaft, S. 78 ff. (1930).

Morgenausgabe

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Vorwärts

Berliner Volksblatt

Zentralorgan der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands

Sonntag 13. März 1932

Groß-Berlin 15 Pf. Auswärts 20 Pf.

Redaktion und Verlag: Berlin SW 68, Lindenstr. 3 — Vorwärts-Verlag G. m. b. H.

Schlagt Hitler, wählt Hindenburg!

Heute gilt es, den Faschismus zu schlagen. Hitler darf nicht Nachfolger Friedrich Eberts und Hindenburgs werden!

Der Faschismus setzt seine Hoffnungen auf die Spaltung der Arbeiterschaft. Macht diese Hoffnungen zunichte! Keine Lauheit, keine Zersplitterung!

Heute von 9 Uhr bis 6 Uhr wird gewählt. Geht frühzeitig zur Wahl! Das Kreuz ins zweite Feld — für Hindenburg.

Keiner darf heute fehlen, kein Mann, keine Frau. Wir schlagen den Faschismus!

Alle Kraft gegen Hitler, wählt Hindenburg!

Figure 4: Front Page of Vorwärts, March 13, 1932

The front page was filled with a final case for the party's position, which concluded by invoking the *Eighteenth Brumaire:*

> "Hegel remarks somewhere," writes Marx in his *18th Brumaire*, "that all great world-historical events occur, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce." Napoleon III was no Napoleon I, and Adolf Hitler is no Mussolini. The farce may not be distinguished from the tragedy, however, by being less bloody and less gruesome. Perhaps the distinction only consists in that it lacks any appearance of loftiness, so that with the horror that it prepares and spreads it mixes in a tremendous laughter. "A nation and a woman are not forgiven the unguarded hour in which *the first best adventurer* can do violence to her," it says, in the same famous text. It is the task of the German working class to spare the German nation this shame. And therefore today **Hitler will be beaten and Hindenburg elected**!

The fact that the party places this quotation at the end of its final appeal to voters at such a decisive moment in history certainly shows that it had come to be invested with extraordinary moral authority, although the specific historical relationship that it tries to draw is a little tortuous. The tension between scorn and fear is epitomized in the idea of a "farce" that may not be any "less bloody and less gruesome." It is not necessary here to analyze this use of the text in more detail.

The Mayer-Landshut edition of the early writings was celebrated in *Vorwärts* by August Rathmann, the editor of *Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus,* on March 18, 1932. The article has the headline, "Erneurung des Marxismus!"[96] In the past, Marx's influence had rested on his scholarly achievement, and this would certainly continue to unfold, but it was now necessary to rediscover an original *impulse,* the "heart" that drove Marx into struggle with the proletariat. The source of this original commitment was essentially not a matter of intellectual understanding but an "irrational kernel" in Marx. "Every fundamental decision is a matter of the heart," Rathmann claimed. "The head can do no more than exercise a controlling and guiding function." A rediscovery of this impulse was the "unavoidable presupposition of a new socialist ascent, which not only gives us the strength to seize political power but also liberates the creative elements in us, without which a meaningful and enduring new order is not possible."

The early writings would be particularly important to recruit the young, Rathmann imagined, and were more accessible than *Capital* for those without an academic training. He was wholly convinced by the editors' argument that the early manuscripts were not

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[96] August Rathmann, "Erneurung des Marxismus!", *Vorwärts,* March 18, 1932

superseded by the later work but rather justified it, providing for the first time its "inner justification." In this perspective, the prefiguration of *Capital* in the so-called work on "Political Economy and Philosophy" is "in a certain sense the most central work of Marx." The sheer belief in the value of humanity and the meaningfulness of history made an "overwhelming" impression on Rathmann. "If enthusiasm for a truly great goal is still possible in this world," he concluded, "it can ignite itself here." These hopes for an enthusiastic and even irrationalist turn to "young Marx" at a moment of political crisis, clearly influenced by ideas of conversion, are not much discussed in the history of the rediscovery and publication of the Paris manuscripts.[97]

Vorwärts for January 3, 1933, includes a list of courses to be offered at the *Arbeiterbildungschule,* according to which Mayer was supposed to teach a course on the *Brumaire* in Köpenick. The question of how the text was relevant to the present political situation seems to have been becoming somewhat desperate. The front page of the newspaper for January 7, 1933, included a lengthy discussion of the *Brumaire,* in an article by Georg Decker announcing the "Marx Year" 1933. Here the same idea of the contemporaneity of the *Brumaire* that was evident during the election nine months earlier takes a more exaggerated form of a kind of "counter-prophecy," mirroring Nazi propaganda. According to Nazi prophecy, Decker begins, 1932 was supposed to be the "year of decision," and 1933, the fiftieth anniversary of Marx's death, was supposed to symbolize the "final extermination" [*endgültige Ausrottung*] of Marxism. On the

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[97] For recent examples, see Nicolaysen, *Siegfried Landshut*, and "The Dialectic of Dissent: Marx's *1844 Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts,*" in Carreira da Silva and Brito Vieira, *The Politics of the Book*.

contrary, it would be a "Marx Year," the year of great victory for Marx's teaching! Marxism would be precisely vindicated by the fate of Nazism, "as if National Socialism was invented by a Marxist, so as to provide, through such an experiment, the incontrovertible proof for the correctness of Marxism."[98]

Historical parallels could only be made with qualifications, within extremely limited bounds, Decker conceded, but the *Brumaire* depicted the political orientations of different social strata in ways that sometimes admit of strong "general validity," especially those of the "in-between strata," on the one hand— these *Zwischenschichten* include the *Mittelstand, Kleinbürgertum,* in some sense also *Lumpenproletariat*—and the peasantry, on the other. In Decker's view, the peasantry and urban petty-bourgeoisie had once played heroic roles, in the French revolution, but now the political function of these classes had completely changed. In his interpretation of the *Brumaire,* the text shows that the peasants and the urban petit-bourgeoisie cannot take independent political initiative, that what Marx says about the former applies to the latter as well, that they "cannot represent themselves, they must be represented." But Hitler is no Louis *Bonaparte*. His name is not suited to capture the imagination of the military. In Decker's analysis, what Marxist doctrine showed was that the Nazi movement would begin to dissolve if it was not able somehow to capture the power of the executive. This was perhaps an insight that did not require Marxist doctrine, but the point was to show that Marx was in fact vindicated by the situation, despite appearances. "And if we want to bring the whole significance of Marx's scholarly achievement to mind [*die ganze Bedeutung der*

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[98] Georg Decker, "Marx-Jahr 1933," *Vorwärts*, January 7, 1933.

Marxschen wissenschaftlichen Leistung vergegenwärtigen] and make it politically fruitful in this Marx year, this involves investigating our political actuality in a *marxist* way."

The political history of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* in the Weimar Republic, as seen from the standpoint of a history of editions, conspicuously differs from earlier periods in a general concern for the contemporaneity of the text and its pragmatic-political value. But what it meant for the text to be "contemporary" or politically significant could clearly mean many different things. The Taifun edition of 1924 implies a supposedly immediate or intuitive relationship between past and present experience, deeply influenced by the partisan perspectives that emerged from the revolutionary confrontations in 1918-1923. With that example in view, the fact that the Riazanov edition does not refer explicitly to contemporary politics is not exactly evidence of "objectivity," nor can its historical remarks really be called effectively historicizing in any intellectually fruitful sense. The 1932 edition finally poses the question of the "actuality" of the text, but in terms that are no longer familiar today.

I have not tried to quantify the popularity of the *Brumaire* in these years, estimating the size of print runs or counting references to the work in print. I have not traced its influence on the more sophisticated political thought of this period or looked for evidence of its influence on political action. I have not even offered any particularly robust analysis of its "reception." Some investigations of these kinds might contribute something to our understanding of the work, but I think it is much more useful to focus

closely on the logic of its publication and the dynamics of its use in politics, as well as its relationships to the uses of other works by Marx.

Conclusion: *The Eighteenth Brumaire* in Light of its History

In writing a political history of the *Eighteenth Brumaire,* I have promised to contribute to our understanding of the text itself. Now it is time to assess that contribution. I first reconsider the text as a whole in light of what I have called its original meaning, as a picture of the land of revolution, noting points of tension between the preface by Joseph Weydemeyer and the text that it presents, but essentially defending his point of view and working out its implications. I then review the political history of the *Brumaire,* in the places and periods that I have studied, noting what I see as limits in my own research. Lastly, I consider the implications of this history for our working knowledge and biographical understanding of Marx.

Re-reading the *Brumaire*

I began from the position that the "original meaning" of the *Brumaire* was forgotten and had to be rediscovered by returning to sources from its original sphere of circulation. In this approach to original meaning, the author plays no significant role. There is also little new focus on the form and content of the text. The priority is to rediscover the political value that it was supposed to have for potential readers in its sphere of circulation. I took the main evidence for this to be the preface by Joseph Weydemeyer, dated May 1, 1852, with its view of the *Brumaire* as a "picture" of the

current situation, its claim that France "is and remains" the land of revolution, and its reference to competing depictions of France in political use.

Starting from here, I reconstructed a new context of political competition among German revolutionaries and others trying to raise funds and public support for the "next" revolution in Europe. This context of arguments deserves to be considered in future attempts to interpret the *Brumaire* as political action, as intervention or performance, for example, or in more complex biographical terms, in relation to Marx's earlier writings and political positions. It may be that the details are only of interest to specialists, but almost any historical interpretation of the *Brumaire* could be improved by consideration of this relevant context of arguments about what was happening in France.

The metaphor of the work as picture can be opposed to the metaphor of the work as drama, not absolutely, but in interpretative practice. It is not used to deny that the *Brumaire* has a narrative form or that it depicts events in the recent past, but it takes the present situation, the outcome of these events, to be a primary object of investigation, rather than assuming that the present situation is known and only its origins have to be explained. For Weydemeyer, the question at stake is what France "is," in the present, in relation to its historical identity or role as the land of revolution. He draws a drastic contrast to "embarrassed" democrats who expected the coup d'état to fail and have concluded from its success that France must be entirely different than it had seemed to be. For Weydemeyer, the *Brumaire* shows how and how far it is still possible to sustain a prior view of France, despite appearances.

This shift in emphasis to the outcome and present situation has surprising consequences. For example, in the famous opening paragraph on history as tragedy and farce, it draws attention to the neglected final sentence, in the revised text: "Und dieselbe Karrikatur in den Umständen, unter denen die zweite Auflage des achtzehten Brumaire herausgegeben wird!" With this remark about a "caricature in the circumstances," Marx turns from the metaphor of history as theater to a metaphor from graphic art. When the idea was elaborated at length in the first edition, as discussed in chapter two, Marx did not compare two events in full, two revolutions, as in the common interpretation of the first sentence, but two situations and the potential for action in them, "what was" and "was to be" with "what is" and might still be. Although the elaboration was removed, the sentence about a "caricature in the circumstances" remains in the revised text and still forms a logical transition from the opening remark about facts and people who "occur," so to speak, in world history, to the sentence about men who make their own history but not in circumstances of their choosing.

Just as the dramatic metaphor of world history as "tragedy" and "farce" has been severed from the pictorial metaphor of a "caricature in the circumstances," the whole series of thoughts that follows, the discussion of the ways that those who "conjure up the spirits of the past" may exalt or parody the dead, has become separated from an ultimate contrast between the outcome of the prior French revolution and the present situation. The French revolution of 1789-1815, for Marx, created a sober French bourgeois society, while the present situation is characterized in terms that are precisely the opposite, with the allegory of the "mad Englishman in Bedlam, who thought that he was living in the

time of the pharaohs."[99] In what seems to be a variation on Plato's cave, Marx pays close attention to details of this fantasy, such as the lamp on the Englishman's head, the distant overseer "with a long whip," and exits guarded by "barbarian mercenaries, who had no common language and therefore understood neither the forced laborers in the mines nor each other."

The significance of these details is obscure, but the nation is clearly supposed to feel unjustly subjugated to a past that is foreign to its "true" post-revolutionary identity. Marx treats this idea as a fantastical misrepresentation, far more removed from reality than those revolutionaries who exalt or parody the past. The complex allegory of the French nation as the "Englishman in Bedlam" is a useful foil for his own interpretation of the present situation, in the absence of any more explicit polemical opponent. In part one, I mean, it is not very clear what point of view Marx is arguing against, but we might take the "Englishman in Bedlam" fantasy as the main view that he opposes to his own. In this interpretation, the *Brumaire* is a criticism of something fairly abstract, an alienated understanding of the current situation that is ascribed to the French nation as a whole.

This would be a different kind of contextualization than the one that Weydemeyer suggests. Marx opposes a supposedly French self-conception, while Weydemeyer draws a contrast especially to German misrepresentations of France. Still, it strongly supports the view of the work as an argument about what France "is and remains." Continuing this line of interpretation, the thesis of the *Brumaire* may be the claim that "French society,"

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[99] This passage is not much discussed in scholarship on the *Brumaire,* but see the partial quotation at the end of Jerrold Seigel, "Politics, Memory, Illusion: Marx and the French Revolution," in Furet and Ozouf, eds., *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture* (1989), vol. 3.

in the course of events, "caught up on the studies and experiences ... that would have to have preceded the February revolution, if it was supposed to be more than a shaking of the surface." In order to defend Marx against the charge of "apocalyptic optimism," construing a decisive defeat in some contrarian terms as progress, I notice that the knowledge gained through experience may come too late. On this reading, the different parties and classes that participated in the revolution or opposed it have learned only in retrospect what they would have to have known already in 1848, if the February revolution was to have achieved its socially-revolutionary task.

This remarkable sentence about "studies and experience" certainly recalls the role that knowledge is supposed to play in some accounts of tragedy, but it does not follow that the *Brumaire* as a whole has a "tragic" form. Instead of applying any critical category from literature, I will simply follow this claim about what should have been known in advance through the text. In Marx's view, the February revolution was not consciously planned in advance. It was a surprise. A movement for modest electoral reform to counter the dominant influence of the "aristocracy of finance" led unexpectedly to calls for a republic and conflicts over its character. Marx describes the decisive events that followed in deterministic terms. The "provisional" character of the Provisional Government "could not have been otherwise." The bourgeois monarchy "can only be followed by a *bourgeois republic.*" If this history and what follows is supposed to be a learning process, however, the element of necessity in these formulations may be construed as a lack of foresight.

The “bourgeois republic” was affirmed by the results of the elections for the Constituent Assembly, tasked with writing a constitution, and reaffirmed by the violent repression of the June insurrection in Paris. This is the occasion for a first major claim about learning, in the passage about the meaning of “republic” in Europe and the United States. The June Days showed that a “republic” without qualifications, in a European context, was a socially-revolutionary demand, not a political form for conserving and developing bourgeois society, as in the United States. In forming this “bourgeois republic” with a “Party of Order” against the Paris proletariat, according to Marx, each of the parties also lost the means to realize its own ends. “From that moment, as soon as one of the numerous parties that had gathered under this sign against the June insurgents tried to assert its own class interests on the revolutionary battlefield,” it was met with the slogan, “Property, Family, Religion, Order,” and “society was rescued just as often as the circle of its rulers shrank,” until the “refuse of bourgeois society finally forms the *holy phalanx of order*.”

This is a drastic and seemingly simplistic description of a series of events and the way that those involved are supposed to learn the conditions for realizing their own original aspirations. It is not clear to me how much more than this Marx planned to say. I proposed that he may even have gotten to the end of what is now just part one without knowing for sure how and how far he would go on. Even when he finished part two, on the history of the Constituent Assembly, the so-called dictatorship of the “pure republicans,” the writing of the constitution and the state of siege in Paris, he planned to write only one more part. A central question for a composition history would be why he

decided to draw finer and finer distinctions, to analyze in much more detail the struggle between the parliament and the executive, the bourgeois parties and Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte.

At first, Marx had seemed to be more concerned just to characterize each of the three different constitutional phases in broad terms, the brief "February period," the period of the Constituent Assembly (May 1848-May 1849), and the period of the Legislative National Assembly. Part two, for example, is mainly an analysis of the Constitution and its circumstances, the dominance of the "pure republicans" and the state of siege in Paris, both of which are supposed to anticipate and enable the ultimate coup d'état. In the first edition, however, part III begins with a more detailed periodization of the third phase, the period of the Legislative National Assembly, and a first contrast to a competing view of events. Here Marx gives the work a real polemical context that was lacking in part one. He makes his interlocutors explicit, when he refers to "common illusions about the whole character of the epoch," about politics in the Second Republic as such, that he now feels compelled to criticize. "Seen in the democratic manner," the struggles during this period were the same as in the period of constitution, a "simple conflict between royalists and republicans." This common view of the history of the Second Republic, Marx complains, permits democrats to present themselves as defending the "republic" against "reaction."

This is the context of a classic passage about political identity and class, about the "superstructure" of sentiments and beliefs created by whole classes from their "material foundations" and the corresponding "social relation." Here again I think my research into

the original meaning of the *Brumaire* is useful, for rediscovering the political stakes of this theoretical argument, even if the text itself is moving away from the view of the work as "picture," as Marx is drawn more and more into arguments about events. The view of the history of the Second Republic as a struggle against "reaction," in which the democrats are defending the "republic," I would argue, is what leads German democrats like Arnold Ruge ultimately to imagine the French people, who essentially go along with the course of events, as "backwards" in their own fundamental beliefs and convictions, or according to his philosophical theory at this time, in need of a cultural revolution, to guarantee the rule of reason. The problem with the theory of events as "reaction" is that it ends up ascribing an extreme kind of political incapacity to the French people, as in Ruge's theory that they are dominated by powerful priests and militaristic sentiments. This absurd idea of cultural determination is the alternative I see, in the political context, to the theory of history as class struggle.

After this point, the text really began to expand. In the new periodization at the beginning of part III, in the first edition, the period from May 28, 1849, when the Legislative Assembly began to meet, to the coup d'état of December 2, 1851, is divided into three parts. The first period is defined by the "struggle of democracy with the bourgeoisie," culminating in the defeat of the "petty-bourgeois or democratic party," in the street protest of June 13, 1849. The second is a "parliamentary dictatorship of the bourgeoisie," that is, the two dynastic parties that form the "party of Order," culminating in the law to restrict suffrage, on March 31, 1850. These two periods together correspond to parts III and IV of the finished text. The account of the defeat of the petty-bourgeois

democrats, over the protest over the Rome expedition, is the point at which Marx comes the closest to attacking the "leaders of petty-bourgeois democracy" mentioned by Weydemeyer in his preface.

Part IV, on the so-called dictatorship of the "party of Order," includes a crucial moment of transition in keeping with the thesis of history as learning process. The political leaders of the bourgeoisie now grasp that "all the so-called civil liberties and organs of progress were attacking and threatening its *class rule* ... and had therefore become '*socialist*.'" They had not grasped *yet,* Marx adds, that their own parliamentary regime and political rule would finally be met with the same charge of disrupting the economic "order." Phrases like these develop the idea of French society as learning what it would have to have known in advance in order to realize its own original task.

The third period, from the spring of 1850 to December 1851, the final struggle between the bourgeoisie and Bonaparte, now began to expand. It spans two long parts in the final version, five and six. By this point in the composition, the plan for a newspaper had definitely failed and Marx was probably conceiving of his work as a book. Parts five and six may be more tedious than the rest and have rarely attracted general interest from anyone, apart from the paragraph about the *Lumpenproletariat* in part V. One feature of part VI is important for my historical interpretation, a forceful reference to a new polemical context that is distinct from the democratic one mentioned earlier.

This is the moment in part VI where Marx condemns the "extra-parliamentary mass of the bourgeoisie" for its political abdication, "its own servility toward the

President, its vilification of the parliament, and its brutal mistreatment of its own press." He writes:

> And this bourgeoisie ... now dares to indict the proletariat retrospectively for failing to rise in a bloody life-and-death struggle on its behalf! This bourgeoisie ... now bewails the fact that the proletariat has sacrificed the bourgeoisie's ideal political interests to its own material interests. It poses as a pure soul, misunderstood and deserted at the decisive hour by a proletariat led astray by socialists.

In chapter one, I gave examples of such views occasionally on the left, in the German-American revolutionary newspaper *Janus,* for example, and in Giuseppe Mazzini's heated denunciations of socialists. After the passage quoted above, however, Marx slyly denies that he is alluding to "obscure German politicians," going on to quote a December 27 analysis in the *Economist* that refers to "ignorant, untrained, and stupid *proletaires,*"[100] This article differs notably from the context of arguments among revolutionaries, in that it is already less concerned to explain the past than to clarify the present situation. The question is what Bonaparte should do to make his government "safe and permanent." He cannot rely on the army, the priesthood, or the masses, the *Economist* argues, who are unreliable, treacherous, and passive, respectably. "He must," the article concludes, "conciliate and deserve the adherence of the middle classes."

The historical context that I have constructed for the *Brumaire* in chapter one, following the preface by Weydemeyer that caters especially to Germans in the United States, can now be contrasted to the internal evidence of several different contexts. In part

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[100] The source is "Louis Napoleon's Policy," *The Economist,* December 27, 1851, pp. 1427 ff.

one, I suggest, there is not really any explicit discursive context, only the fantastic self-conception ascribed to France as a whole in the "Englishman in Bedlam" passage. By part three, when Marx begins to articulate his interpretation of events in terms of class struggle, he is explicit about the alternate interpretation that he means to discredit, the writing of history in the "democratic manner," as a history of "reaction." This closely aligns with the context that Weydemeyer proposes for the finished text. In the course of composition, however, as the revolutionary efforts of the democrats themselves wound down, and Marx began to think of his work as a book rather than just some newspaper articles, he was finally concerned with much more mainstream, dominant "bourgeois" views, epitomized by the *Economist.*

My own approach to the first edition, focused narrowly on publication history and an original sphere of circulation, does not consider this broader "bourgeois" discursive context that Marx created for himself in the end. It would be useful, if it has not already been done, to draw a more detailed comparison between the ways that the *Economist* and the *Brumaire* analyze the present situation in France, including the roles of the army, the church, and especially the peasants, the subject of an *Economist* article that Marx uses as a source for his last chapter. This contextualization would still involve the view of the work as a "picture" of a situation in France that remained highly uncertain, and it would overlap in some ways with the more radical context provided by Weydemeyer. Still, for defining the original meaning of the *Brumaire* and especially trying to conceive it as a kind of "symbolic action," I think it is worth preserving the distinction of a "sphere of

circulation," in which Marx could have influenced arguments, and his criticism of "bourgeois" views that were beyond his power to change.

The *Brumaire* and Its History

In my view, the value of studying original meaning is mainly critical. It poses an initial challenge to common assumptions and some learned views about the text, compelling us to return to it with "fresh eyes." This is essential but very far from sufficient for determining the meaning of the text in scholarship today. The view of the work as a "picture" of a situation, as an act of apprehension at a particular moment, must be considered closely in certain forms of biographical and historical interpretation, but it provides little basis for explaining or assessing its meaning in any more extended sense. It is not obvious what original meaning has to do or should have to do with the wider range of later meanings or uses of the text.

Consider the potential readers even in its own time, who had lost all hope for France and thus any interest in the situation, or the German publisher who just didn't see what good the *Brumaire* would do in the situation. In such cases, the "original meaning" was already lost or not "meaningful." This presents the possibility for new and more emphatic attempts to explain the value of the work, such as the review by Georg Eccarius, also discussed in chapter one. Unlike Weydemeyer, Eccarius tried explain what made the *Brumaire* good history, comparing it critically to other accounts and proposing a seemingly dubious theory about how Marx was able to represent reality more truthfully

than those who took part in events. Marx represents the viewpoint of the revolutionary proletariat, he proposed, a subject that stands outside of events like a spectator and judges them from the standpoint of posterity.

This is a big step from original meaning towards our own ways of thinking of the text, but I doubt that it is an *accurate* interpretation. Marx himself expressed his own philosophy of history quite differently in the *People's Paper* speech of 1856 and discussed the *Brumaire* in different terms later on, as in his quotation of the text in *Herr Vogt,* simply as evidence of his own views from the revolutionary period. This self-quotation may have been influential, as it drew attention especially to the *Lumpenproletariat* passage in part V, taking it out of context of the affirmative argument that France "is and remains" the land of revolution. I take *Herr Vogt* to show a hyper-modern relationship to the recent past as already an object of quasi-antiquarian research. Arguments from the past are preserved as parts of a complex record of "character" and political judgment. The example shows how difficult it was to construct any kind of record of the revolutionary period that was adequate for that purpose. The form in which Marx attempted this kind of self-historicization, as a critical "compendium" rather than a linear narrative, was very different than those that biographers attempt today.

This mostly forgotten attempt at historicization may be contrasted to another mode of self-interpretation that is far more familiar. In the preface to the second edition of 1869, although he recalls in some detail the historical origins of the work in the plan for a "political weekly," Marx studiously avoids any reference to its original political meaning, whether as a picture of a land of revolution or as anything else. Instead, he

focuses on what the work "shows," in the present tense, that *class struggle*, his italics, enabled a "grotesque mediocrity" to play the hero's part. I interpreted this comment in relation to another comment about something that the work is supposed to *do,* the hope to destroy the word "Caesarism." Both comments are well known, but they are rarely considered together. I see the description of the work in terms of class struggle as supporting the attempt to influence contemporary political language. This is a modest and credible example of how theory and history can work together to have a contemporary political significance. I argued that this use also remains faithful to its original meaning as a picture of the land of revolution, and that the revisions to the text are an attempt to preserve its meaning and prevent misunderstanding, not attempts to "correct" the supposed errors of the past.

I am not sure that this attempt to relate the preface and revisions in detail to the context has been wholly successful, but I think it is at least an improvement on other attempts to contextualize the second edition in political terms, for example, as a kind of veiled attack on Bismarck or Lassalle. The wish to destroy the word "Caesarism" can be interpreted instead as conciliatory, insofar as the word played a divisive role in German socialist politics. I also obviously oppose my interpretation to those that study the preface closely but without any political or discursive context. The new edition was mostly due to the interest and efforts of others, but the preface and revisions do show a concerted and I think coherent effort by Marx to control its meaning. They are important in hindsight, for understanding Marx, but I see little evidence that his own understanding of his work was influential.

The several reviews of the edition, in German and English, sometimes quoted from the preface but understood the *Brumaire* in many different ways. While Marx claimed only to show the role of class struggle in a singular political phenomenon, German socialist newspapers praised its deep philosophy of history, imagined it as only a fragment of a greater world history that Marx should write, or took it as proof that the economic insights developed in *Capital* provided the basis for political knowledge. Other reviews of this edition in German and English focused on its historical explanation and political standpoint. They saw that class was somehow important to Marx but, beyond that, hardly explained his argument very clearly. This earliest notable reception of the text in print already shows deep differences in perspective, even if there was no reason yet for them to rise to explicit disagreements or closer readings. It would be a long time before different claims about its meaning and value were juxtaposed and evaluated in print, although I noted the limited evidence of oral discussions of the work in Germany going back to the early 1870s and even the early 1860s. Exegesis of Marx in general only begins in the period of the Second International, after the rise of socialist parties in the 1890s, with academic critics and more "intellectuals" entering the parties themselves.

This is not a history of Marxism in general, but the political history of the *Brumaire* may offer a perspective on some broader dynamics in the reception of Marx. My approach to this history generally privileges the history of editions over the history of reception, especially trying to understand the choices of those involved in republishing the *Brumaire* in relation to their political situations. This approach is fairly intuitive, but I found that it was often hard to follow through to completion, to wholly satisfying

explanations of why the *Brumaire* was republished at a particular time, to explain all of the various features of an edition in terms of its context in this narrow sense, and what is most important to me, to do these things in ways that contribute to our own understanding of the text.

The *Brumaire* had several different histories before the First World War, in the three countries that I studied in chapters three, four, and five. In each case, there were at least two prewar editions, and each of these belonged to a distinct political context, even when the language was the same. The relationships between editions across languages were certainly loose and not at all easy to predict. I studied the two French translations of 1891 and 1900, the three German editions of 1885, 1907, and 1913, and the several versions of Daniel De Leon's translation between 1897 and 1913. What do these histories contribute to our understanding of the *Brumaire* today, beyond the critical insights that can be gained by studying those early editions in which Marx himself was involved?

One way to approach this question would be in terms of what recent scholars are inclined to call the "invention of Marxism." The aim of this period in the history of the *Brumaire* could be to define its relationship to the development of a broader "worldview" that drew inspiration from both Marx and Engels. This was not my approach. Remaining true to my concept of a political history of editions, as well as my aim, to understand the text and Marx himself better, it did not seem immediately useful to engage directly with broader arguments about Marxism in general. It may be that my research has some value for such arguments, but I am happy to leave it to others to say.

The history of the first French translation had been considered in the past only briefly, to assess the role that Friedrich Engels played in the translation. I reconstructed the process of its creation in much more detail, including the role that Engels played in the conflict between the two translators. The translation itself apparently began almost by chance, two years before the publication of the third German edition, as a collaboration between two men who had, I propose, very different temperaments and destinies. The result was a contentious process that involved competition for roles in an emerging political party and its press. The finished work involved at least four people—Fortin, Lavigne, Engels, and Laura Lafargue—and the contributions of each are probably not possible to distinguish clearly. I have not studied Engels closely enough to say for sure that he would not, for example, consciously reformulate Marx or some of his own ideas for French readers, but I have assumed instead that such discrepancies as we find were mainly due to Fortin.

The political relevance of the *Brumaire* to the politics of the Third Republic was not as obvious as it might seem. German socialists sometimes found it useful for their discussions of French politics, especially in relation to the short-lived Boulangist movement, but this cannot explain the translation, which was done over many years and published without much urgency. French socialists, besides having their own traditions, also had their own histories of the revolution of 1848 and the Second Republic. The *Brumaire* must have provided some access to aspects of Marx for some French readers, and it is notable that it was one of his very first works to be translated, but it does not

seem to have been very important to Marxism in France. The translation may still be useful for understanding the *Brumaire.*

In studying the translation, I focused first on the complex ideas about Marx in the preface by Engels. Most of the basic ideas here seemed to be challenging to translate or willfully changed by the translator, including the idea of France as a "classical" example (which becomes a particularly violent one), the idea that Marx explains synchronic relationships rather than simply a "chain of events" or a "march of history," and related to this, the concept of motion or force at stake in the work, whether it is to be compared to mechanics or thermodynamics, for example. Thinking back to the original meaning of the work as a picture of a land of revolution and the later description of it in terms of class struggle, we can see here a definite loss in translation. This example would benefit from a broader study of Engels that I did not attempt.

I also discussed a few terms in the work that are known to pose problems for translators and could also be studied more closely than I was able to do. The concept of *Weltgeschichte* in Marx has been discussed a bit lately, for example, but the recent scholarship on Marx could be more clear about what it means. The role of the term in the *Brumaire* is inconspicuous but may be important, at least today. Could it be only in *world* history that facts and people "occur," so to speak, as "tragedy" and "farce," for example? Can we simply drop the "world" in this and other similar pithy formulations, as the translator was inclined to do, or is there something important lost? I can only raise the question. To answer it might require researching the meaning of the word for German historians at the time, for Hegel, and elsewhere in Marx.

Here is one limitation, not in principle, but in practice, of my focus on the political history of editions. It comes at some cost of studying broader fields of discourse, language and concepts that change over time. This could be managed perhaps in a special case like "Caesarism," but translations pose a potentially huge range of historical questions about the choices of words. I noticed the sensitivity to the different meanings or connotations of *bürgerlich,* as "bourgeois" or "civil" in different contexts. The earlier English translator had chosen "bourgeois" less often; the later French translator chooses it always. An important tendency like this one can only be noticed in my history, not really explained. Similarly, the many different words that Fortin used for *Lumpenproletariat* seemed simply random to me, but they may also follow some logic that would be apparent to others or could be discovered by consulting a dictionary or other sources from the time.

The second French translation, by Léon Rémy, mainly belongs to the definition and popularization of sociology as a discipline and a general competition to publish Marx, in which commercial and scholarly aims are not easy to distinguish from political ones. In keeping with my general conception of a political history of editions, I focused on trying to discover the political backgrounds of the translator and editor, their personal motives and the immediate circumstances of their collaboration, rather than trying to locate their work in the history of a discipline or a broader "scientization of society." In this case as some others, the biographical analysis has its limits. I was not entirely sure how to interpret the evidence of disagreements about anti-Semitism, for example, or how

exactly to define the relationship between this edition and major political events in France.

Still, it was useful to understand the sense in which this edition has a political background in student politics, syndicalism, and the debate about anarchism in the Second International, in which the editor and translator were opposed to the role played by the SPD. It may be understood broadly as belonging to the German debate over "revisionism." The edition combined the *Brumaire* with the earlier *Class Struggles in France,* using some excerpts of the important preface by Engels to the 1895 edition of the latter work as the preface to both. Engels presented both works as a part of a research process. This provided an important new way of thinking about Marx himself as revising his views through experience, even if the specific idea of the *Brumaire* as a "test" of a theory of history remained fairly obscure. I noticed the tendency in Rémy toward a somewhat mechanical, one-to-one translation of some terms, like *bürgerlich* as "bourgeois" and *Lumpenproletariat* as "canaille" (with a footnote), and his possible failure to appreciate philosophical terms like *Inhalt.*

Again, my approach mostly just notes such discrepancies but does not attempt the broader studies of common or technical use that would be needed to distinguish, for example, a personal choice from a convention or genuine cultural difference. Still, I see this as a practical limitation rather than a limitation in principle. It is already a significant contribution to our understanding of the *Brumaire* to see that there are choices here, to think about the stakes for the meaning of the text and some of the reasons that translators in the past might have made the choices that they did. Translations are not easy to

interpret, but they provide some of the only approximations that we have to detailed evidence of how Marx was "read" in the past, and how this may have changed in the course of his essentially concurrent appropriation by political parties and professional scholars.

I have not been primarily concerned with reception history. Although the new resource of high-quality digitalized newspapers, journals, and books makes it far easier than ever to discover references to the *Brumaire* in print, there are still not so many of them, even in German, before the 1890s. The edition history of the *Brumaire* in Germany, however, must take some evidence of its reception there into account. I noticed the tendency in the important obituary for Marx in *Die Neue Zeit,* probably by Karl Kautsky, to emphasize the general conscientiousness of Marx and his political judgement. His political opposition to Bonapartism is one of his only political positions that is discussed. The anti-Bonapartist interpretation of the work could be contrasted to the prior view of it as criticism of representations of Bonaparte, but Kautsky also preserves something important of the original view of the work as a "picture" in his good suggestion that it is an "occasional text," somewhat comparable to Goethe's occasional poetry.

The posthumous third German edition of 1885, with its new preface by Engels, belongs to a context of the independent interest in the text by German socialists in exile, as well as some of the first crude attempts at the academic criticism of Marx. In studying this edition, I did not reconsider the old question of whether Engels promotes a "popular" or "scientific" conception of Marx more generally. I have only tried to provide some

evidence for comparing what Engels says about Marx in his preface to the *Brumaire* to political and scholarly uses of the text at about the same time. There have been some important attempts to compare this preface by Engels to the one by Marx to the second edition of 1869, but they do not take into account the completely different political and intellectual contexts of the two editions.[101]

I also draw out a simple point of contrast that others have overlooked. While Marx had expressed the hope that a new edition of his work would have an influence on current political language, Engels celebrates the work instead as a brilliant act of apprehension at a moment in the past, leaving its present political significance undefined. In fact, although it was occasionally a source of analogies to contemporary politics or inspiring quotations, the text as a whole was rarely seen as very relevant to any particular political situation in Germany before the First World War. In the German socialist press, references to the *Brumaire* remained brief and not very common, but they sometimes strikingly anticipate our own dilemmas of interpretation.

As early as 1887, for example, the *Brumaire* was used to oppose the simplistic view that Marx saw history as a "dull mechanism," without a role for ideas and initiative in politics. This use of the text would discernibly resurface in scholarship a century later. The idea of the *Brumaire* as evidence that Marx was not only a great critic of political economy but also a political thinker, who might provide insights into democratic politics

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[101] The two classic examples, mentioned earlier, are Dominick LaCapra, "Reading Marx: The Case of The Eighteenth Brumaire," in *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), and Peter Stallybrass, "`Well Grubbed, Old Mole': Marx, Hamlet, and the (Un) Fixing of Representation," *Cultural Studies* 12, no. 1 (1998): 3–14.

in particular, was also challenged by an early form of biographical criticism, which focused not only on the *Brumaire* and *Class Struggles* but (in one case, at least) even dug up his earlier articles on France from 1848-9. Even today, there are scholars still trying to solve essentially the same problem of biographical interpretation. Other kinds of criticism of the *Brumaire,* of its representations of other socialists, peasants, and the *Lumpenproletariat,* are also already evident before the First World War, as is the view that the *Brumaire* contains the elements of a more nuanced theory of class than those at work in mainstream politics.

There is little evidence in nineteenth-century France or Germany, however, of the kinds of intense identification with the text that would become evident in the Weimar Republic and occasionally later on. The American translation by Daniel De Leon stands out strongly here and seems to be moving in that direction. De Leon's attempt to relate the *Brumaire* to a "critical" situation, centered on the mayoral race in New York City, is qualitatively different than the kinds of casual citation that are common in Europe. I may be biased by my own language, but I also found his translation particularly subtle and creative, sometimes more faithful to Marx than a recent scholarly one, and well worth a close reading, even where it was wrong.

Another difference that I see between prewar views of the text and those that would emerge later on concerns the opening sentence on history as tragedy and farce or the passages on revolutionary imitation that follow. These came to the fore in references to the text only during and after the First World War, I claim, as a part of a greater shift in perspective. New experiences of revolutionary expectation and defeat, as in Germany

from 1918-1923, made it possible to propose a distinctly modernist understanding of the *Brumaire* as an expression of revolutionary experience. Through the example of Lenin, especially, the *Brumaire* became a model of revolutionary self-criticism, a reflection on defeated revolution that justifies a new political course. This shift influenced leading Communist thinkers, especially theorists of fascism, such as August Thalheimer and Leon Trotsky, but also, by the early 1930s, some uses of the text by the German Social Democrats. It was evident in the preface to the sixth German edition, published in 1932, as well as in their desperate quotations from the text during the last election in the Weimar Republic. I think that this moment in the history of the *Brumaire,* while never before studied directly, to my knowledge, still has a strong influence on the expectations of readers today. How such influence is possible would be a question for a second volume.

The *Brumaire* in Scholarship Today

The 150th anniversary of the first publication of the *Brumaire,* in 2002, was an obscure event, recorded only in brief columns in Marxist journals and the proceedings of a few conferences. Those who commemorated the occasion seemed to face profound challenges of interpretation. An editor of *Science & Society,* David Laibman, for example, tried to explain how the *Brumaire* related to the principles of historical materialism, as presented in the preface to the 1859 *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.* Was the *Brumaire*, as some suggested, a "vindication of the

contingent, political and subjective over the necessary, economic and objective"? Laibman recalled a student in the early eighties who had interrupted his lecture with the exclamation: "You can *have* your 1859 Preface; just let *me* have my *Eighteenth Brumaire!*" He proposed that this supposed tension in Marx could be overcome by "filling in the layers of abstraction between the high theory of successive modes of production, on the one hand, and the concrete analysis of political events, on the other." The *Brumaire* was thus read as an attempt by Marx to develop "the analytic tools to grasp periods of reversal and retrenchment, within an overall historical materialist framework," even if it remained unclear how far he had succeeded, and the task of "filling in" remained incomplete. The aim was apparently to inspire new efforts to a materialist analysis of the late twentieth century, as an extended period of historical "reversal" and prolonged capitalist "retrenchment."[102]

Reviving historical materialism in this melancholy form was not a goal that others who celebrated the same occasion seemed to share. One group of political theorists promised instead to use the *Brumaire* to "uncover a Marx that is truly our own, one who speaks to our specific theoretical and political discourses today."[103] The wording recalled the anonymous German socialist journalist mentioned in chapter four, who turned to the *Brumaire* shortly after the death of its author to show what Marx "still *is* in his works for us today, what a wealth of teachings we can draw from his writings, not only about past

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[102] David Laibman, "Editorial Perspectives: The Legacy of The Eighteenth Brumaire," *Science & Society* 66, no. 4 (2002).
[103] Bradley J. Macdonald, "Revisiting Marx's Eighteenth Brumaire After 150 Years: Introduction," *Strategies: Journal of Theory, Culture & Politics* 16, no. 1 (May 2003): 3–3.

times, but rather also for the present." In this context, Terrell Carver proposed that the *Brumaire* had to be understood as action, as intervention and performance. Denying the value of treating the *Brumaire* as "history," even "contemporary history," he took it instead as a challenge "to examine what sort of genre theory is, and what sort of language it is written in."[104]

The same anniversary, finally, was the occasion of one of the only extended discussions of the history of the text, a two-day conference in Berlin, co-sponsored by the Berliner Verein zur Förderung der MEGA-Edition and published in *Beiträge zur Marx-Engels-Forschung. Neue Folge.* The group and the journal were founded shortly after German reunification by leading scholars from the former Institute for Marxism-Leninism in Berlin, mainly to support the continued publication of the complete works of Marx and Engels, the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe,* now from a perspective independent of any political *or* intellectual party, "as a part of a European, humanistic cultural inheritance," and to participate in research on their "historical effect," including the history of editions and their political contexts.

In a convening speech, Rolf Hecker introduced the *Brumaire* as "one of the most-cited writings by Marx," "at the center of debates about class interests, revolutionary transformations, and chances of a democracy," and a "model example of materialist historiography."[105] These seem like sensible claims for the cultural value of the *Brumaire,*

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[104] Terrell Carver, "Marx's Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte–Eliding 150 Years," *Strategies: Journal of Theory, Culture & Politics* 16, no. 1 (2003): 5–11.
[105] Rolf Hecker, "Zur Eröffnung der Konferenz 'Klassen-Revolution-Demokratie,'" in *Klassen-Revolution-Demokratie: Zum 150. Jahrestag der Erstveröffentlichung von Marx' Der 18. Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, ed. Rolf Hecker, Beiträge Zur Marx-Engels-Forschung (Argument, 2003).

its use as a source of quotations, its role in certain political debates, and its use as a "model" of historiography. Yet Hecker also recalled parts of the history of the text as a kind of warning for contemporary interpreters. He compared the prefaces to four editions of the *Brumaire*, published in German from 1927 to 1936, and the afterward to a fifth, published in 1965. This was a very rare example of explicit reflection on the history of the text as a part of its contemporary interpretation, one that has some clear affinities to my own.

I have discussed two of these editions in my last chapter. As Hecker notes, the preface to the 1927 edition edited by David Riazanov at the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow has a seemingly scholarly, almost apolitical character, mostly focusing on the original circumstances of composition and publication, without references to any contemporary political or theoretical relevance. In sharp contrast, the 1932 edition, published by the German socialist party's Dietz Verlag, with an introduction by J.P. Mayer, emphasizes immanent threats to the Weimar Republic, promising that the *Brumaire* can teach "how one must analyze a social-revolutionary situation with the Marxist method." The third edition mentioned by Hecker was published by the Moscow institute in 1935, after Riazanov was purged. It proposes a "Marxist-Leninist" interpretation of the *Brumaire* as "an important concretization and development of the theory of proletarian revolution, especially of the doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat." The preface to the 1936 edition, by Otto Bauer, published in Czechoslovakia by Austrian socialists in exile, was a kind of response to that Stalinist edition. It proposes

that the text reveals "the driving class forces, the class struggles, that have led fascism to power in Central Europe."[106]

Hecker makes an important observation, that these four prefaces have little to say about democracy as such. In this respect, they obscured some of what was most relevant to contemporary politics. Those passages in the *Brumaire* that concern the constitution of the Second Republic, its conflicts between rights and public security, and the limits of democracy, Hecker declared, provoked "always further comparison to developments that play out almost daily and worldwide before our eyes." This brought him finally to the afterword to the fifth edition from 1965, by Herbert Marcuse, which emphasizes the importance of extra-parliamentary class struggles for the defense of democracy.

The 1965 edition was published by Insel Verlag in Frankfurt, a division of Suhrkamp, as number nine in their Sammlung Insel series. This edition had no conspicuous relationship to a political party or program. The rest of the series that year included works by Galileo and Brecht, Diderot and Swift, an anthology of essays on Hamlet, a satirical novel by the *Aufklärer* Adolph Knigge, some popular fables (*Kalendergeschichten*) by Johann Peter Hebel, and *Deutsche Menschen,* the selection of German letters from the nineteenth century, edited by Walter Benjamin and originally published in 1936. This edition returned to the 1852 version of the text, unlike earlier German editions and translations that used the second or third editions.

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[106] On the publishers of this edition, see Christian Bartsch and Heiko Schmidt, "Die Brüder Emmerich Und Eugen Prager und ihre Verlage," in *Böhmische Verlagsgeschichte 1919-1945,* http://www.boehmischeverlagsgeschichte.at/boehmische-verlage-1919-1945/e-prager-verlag.

Marcuse's postface spoke to its time. It was translated into English by Arthur Mitzman and published in the July/August 1969 issue of *Radical America: An SDS Journal of American Radicalism.* Marcuse interprets the *Brumaire* in the context of a "society of abundance," as a kind of allegory for a political and cultural crisis of liberalism. The text "anticipates the dynamic of late bourgeois society," which Marcuse describes as "the liquidation of this society's liberal phase on the basis of its own structure." This involves the political abdication of the bourgeoisie as well as the defeat of a socialist alternative. "All this is the stuff of the twentieth century—but the twentieth from the perspective of the nineteenth, in which the horror of the fascist and postfascist periods is still unknown." In hindsight, the opening sentence requires "correction," as "the farce is more fearful than the tragedy it follows."

Marcuse concludes with a question that is hardly evident in any earlier edition, the question of whom exactly the book is for. "Even in the society of abundance they are there," he declares, "the young—those who have not yet forgotten how to see and hear and think, who have not yet abdicated; and those who are still being sacrificed to abundance and who are painfully learning how to see, hear and think." The English translation of the last sentence awkwardly preserves a trace of the German word order: "For them is the *Eighteenth Brumaire* written, for them it is not obsolete." The decision to put the commentary at the end, rather than in a preface, may express this faith in the "young" as rebellious, independent, already predisposed to a better or even a more immediate understanding of the text.

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Photos on pp.33-35 by Judy Brooks, on p.36 by Anson Rabinbbach. Cover-photo by Steve Lewis

RADICAL AMERICA, an American New Left journal published 9-10 times per year, at 1237 Spaight St., Madison, Wis. 53703. New Subscription Rates: Sub without pamphlets, $3 per year for SDS National Members, $5 for all others; Sub with pamphlets, $5 for SDS National Members, $10 per year for all others. Supporting subs: $10 and up. Current issue: 50¢. Back numbers (Vol. I, #3, Vol. II, #1-6, Vol. III, #1-3 all available) 75¢ each. RADICAL AMERICA is being microfilmed by University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, and will shortly be available from them on film.

Figure 5: Table of Contents, Radical America *(July/August 1969)*

I stopped my history long before this point or even the editions of the later 1930s mentioned by Hecker. It may appear anti-climactic not even to consider the fate of the *Brumaire* under Stalin or its role in antifascist literature, not to mention its possible influence on such groundbreaking works as *The Black Jacobins,* by C.L.R. James, or Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, or even its more mundane scholarly reception, in the comparative sociology and historiography of revolutions, for example. It might have been exciting to continue, but it was not necessary for my own purpose. My priority was to understand the earlier origins of more basic ways of approaching the text, as a basis for criticism of our working knowledge.

When I began my research, many of the familiar ways of using the *Brumaire* in the past had come to seem problematic and even mysterious. In a remarkable survey of its reception from the 1920s to the 1990s, Donald Reid treats the act of citing the *Brumaire* with almost anthropological curiosity, as a "site of pilgrimage for those seeking to come to terms with the Marxist legacy, from within and from without." He considers examples from three groups. The first are political theorists, in analyses of fascism, Stalinism, and the "capitalist state." The second are historians, including specialists in the Second Republic (Richard Price, Maurice Agulhon) and others inspired by its treatment of the roles of illusions in politics (François Furet looms large).[107] The third group are those

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[107] A further group of historians, perhaps even more directly influenced by the *Brumaire* as a model of contemporary history, could include historians of twentieth-century revolutionary struggles and defeats inspired by Trotsky's example. Alex Callinicos, "The Drama of Revolution and Reaction: Marxist Historiography and the Twentieth Century," in *Marxist History-Writing for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Chris Wickham, British Academy Occasional Paper 9 (Oxford: Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 2007), 160–61.

concerned with greater problems of interpretation, such as Hayden White, Dominick LaCapra, Jacques Derrida, and certain interpreters of Walter Benjamin. The *Brumaire* appears finally as "the site of the repeated deaths of false Marxisms and resurrection of the true."[108]

Various invocations of the *Brumaire* throughout its earlier history could be described in these terms, as involving a heroic view of the text, laden with ideas of death and resurrection.[109] These moments of faith in its mythical power are rare, however, and may only take on a substantive form in political reality under extreme circumstances, such as during the early "outlaw years" of German social democracy or in the final years of the Weimar Republic. Even in such cases, the idea of a "renewal" of Marx often involves much more than just rereading the *Brumaire.* I discussed the complementary roles that the "young Marx" and existential philosophy played for J.P. Mayer, for example, although I did not investigate his philosophical ideas in detail. Moreover, I proposed that his view of the *Brumaire* as a model of how to analyze the structure of a revolutionary situation was drastically opposed to more "mythical" invocations in his time. I might have done much more to locate this edition of the *Brumaire* and the earlier one that I discuss in this chapter, published by Taifun Verlag in 1924, within the political culture of the Weimar Republic, but I think have provided some useful evidence for broader cultural-historical or intellectual-historical studies of that kind. The massive topic

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[108] Donald Reid, "Inciting Readings and Reading Cites: Visits to Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*," *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 3 (November 2007): 545–70.
[109] Harold Rosenberg, "The Resurrected Romans," *Kenyon Review* 10, no. 4 (Autumn 1948). "The hero is he who is able to come to life again after he has perished."

of the reception of Marx in the Weimar Republic could be a great topic for another dissertation in its own right.

For the most part, throughout its history, the *Brumaire* plays more mundane roles in attempts to define the authority of Marx or his dynamic "figure," in arguments about the main ideas or basic tendencies and affinities that should be ascribed to him.[110] I see significant continuities between such uses of the *Brumaire* in its political history and many of its more casual uses in scholarship today. It is very difficult is to synthesize the more elaborate arguments found in some interpretations of the text, which present it at times as unfathomably obscure, with this fact of its continued practical use, uniting, for example, the literary interpretation of the text and the insights of postmodernist interpretation with a critical appropriation of its political-theoretical content.

An impressive attempt in this direction, one of the most important and fascinating works on the *Brumaire* in recent decades, is Hauke Brunkhorst's two-hundred-page *Kommentar*, for Suhrkamp's *Studienbibliothek* edition, first published in 2007 and now in its third edition. Brunkhorst draws on much of the same scholarship surveyed by Reid, but for a very different purpose, as sources in a textbook for students of social and political theory. He surveys a wide range of problems of interpretation, in other words, but in order to reach some positive conclusions about the meaning of the work and its use in theory, critically synthesizing different approaches to the work into a multi-layered interpretation.

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[110] On the promising concept of "figure" in the history of philosophy, using the example of Descartes, see Delphine Antoine-Mahut, "Why Do We Need a Concept of Historiographical Figures to do History of Philosophy?" *Academia Letters,* July 2021.

The influence of postmodern scholarship is evident especially in a deep suspicion of teleology. With the "victory of counter-revolution," Brunkhorst proposes, the "historical-philosophical certainty of the young Marx," expressed just a few years earlier before in the *Communist Manifesto,* "shattered with one blow."[111] Brunkhorst also makes dazzling use of earlier discussions of the dramatic form of the *Brumaire.* For example, in a critique of Hayden White, he distinguishes the idea of historical "comedy," as Marx found it in Hegel, as the *Aufhebung* of tragedy and its fundamental conflicts, ultimately through forgetting and social reconciliation—a historical possibility that Brunkhorst invites us to see as epitomized in Abraham Lincoln—from a notion of "farce" as post-historical, "postmodern *post-histoire avant la lettre.*" This concept of history as "farce" is the point at which Marx parts ways with Hegel and with his own earlier philosophy of history. Actions appear as "pseudoactivity"; identities appear as "character-masks"; the symbolic repertoire of traditions appear empty, mere "phrases." Bonaparte himself appears to be the man of this moment, the perfect *Ersatzmann.*

Brunkhorst still insists on the possibility and need for a social-theoretical interpretation of the *Brumaire* as an explanation of events. Taking as his motto a sentence from Marx's early critique of Hegel, "democracy is the solved riddle of all constitutions," he wants to find a new role for the *Brumaire* in the theory of democratic government and constitutional theory, *Verfassungstheorie*, alongside its traditional roles in the sociological-historical theories of revolution and counter-revolution. These different roles of the *Brumaire* in theory correspond closely to parts of the text, understood as moving

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[111] Brunkhorst, 137.

from revolution, through constitution, to the emergence of a new form of authoritarian government. In explaining this process, Brunkhorst distinguishes a symbolic interpretation that might explain the distinctive character of "Bonaparte" to a functional interpretation that explains the necessary and sufficient historical conditions for a coup d'état by someone *like* him. As the most important of the necessary conditions, he highlights especially the so-called autonomy of the state machine. This is an unintended result of a long historical process. The sufficient conditions are political and contingent, the result of individual and especially collective decisions. Here the role of the constitution is absolutely key. For Brunkhorst, the narrative of the *Brumaire* pivots on the moment of revolutionary-democratic constitution as a "dialectical unity of realistic *insight* and utopian *project.*"

This reading places a particular emphasis on the second chapter of the *Brumaire,* which includes the drafting of a constitution, as a contingent moment of freedom and responsibility that has definite consequences for later events. From this standpoint, Brunkhorst goes on to criticize the tendencies in Marxist political theory that are either openly hostile to parliamentary democracy or reduce it to a means to an end. In this context he especially criticizes the theory of Bonapartism, as developed by Engels, and after him, by Leon Trotsky, August Thalheimer, and many other Marxists beginning in the 1920s. This was generally characterized by the belief that a temporary "balance" of class forces, between a bourgeoisie in decline and a rising proletariat, enabled the so-called "autonomy" of the state. In a great practitioner like Trotsky, the Bonapartist schema was not used abstractly, as if "Bonapartism" was everywhere always the same. It

was supposedly adapted to specific circumstances and unrepeatable situations for action.[112] In the later scholarship of the 1970s, this "balance" theory was commonly contrasted to the view of the state as the instrument of a certain class or class fraction. Brunkhorst's commentary offers many more insights than my own ten-page "reading" of the text could possibly attempt. I have been mostly unconcerned with political theories of Bonapartism, because they are only vaguely related to the interpretation of the *Brumaire* and have only a very specialized influence on the scholarly understanding of Marx.

Historically speaking and today, I think there are many other fruitful uses of the *Brumaire,* other than its use in the construction of formal political theories. More important, perhaps, I also think its history can give us some reasons for skepticism about some ways of using the text in theory, while suggesting others that may be more promising and remain unexplored. It may also suggest other ways of thinking about the place of the *Brumaire* in Marx's work than the drastic one that Brunkhorst proposes, in which the work involves a supposedly total collapse of a prior teleology. I still favor Weydemeyer's view of the text as showing how to sustain a prior concept of France, and the later interpretation of Marx himself, in which the theory of history as class struggle is emphasized in the interpretation of an event, in the hope of influencing political language.

In recent scholarship, however, the *Brumaire* is rarely the object of the great struggles over its meaning and political relevance that structure Brunkhorst's study. It tends to be mentioned only casually, briefly, in support of broader arguments about Marx

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[112] Brunkhorst, 271–73.

or his views on particular subjects. As was often the case in the past, remarkably different perspectives simply coexist, not generally becoming detailed arguments about meaning. The 2015 collection *Scripting Revolution,* edited by Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein, based on a conference from 2011, includes several good examples of this kind of pragmatic use. The contributors explore the idea that revolutionaries borrow "scripts" from earlier revolutions, as "outlines on which revolutionary actors can improvise," whether as models or counterexamples. Their general idea is that the meaning of revolution is determined by "competing narratives," especially "scripts" that have some normative force in arguments about what actions are to be taken in what order or avoided altogether, for example. They contrast this to the traditional comparative study of revolutions by sociologists and sociologically-minded historians, to a focus on the synchronic "connectedness" of revolutions in global history, and to a conceptual history of "revolution," epitomized by Reinhart Koselleck, in which the meanings of keywords are understood as stemming from "different structural arrangements of other concepts."

Marx and the *Eighteenth Brumaire* in particular play a number of different roles in explaining this new idea of "scripting revolution." First, Marx is an example of the kind of scripting they have in mind. "Marx rewrote the script of the French revolution," as Lenin is supposed to revise Marx, "and so on and so forth." Second, however, Marx failed to appreciate the significance of the phenomenon. "Marx famously mocked this tendency in his *18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*," the editors write; "we consider it more seriously." They portray Marx instead as the real founder of a whole series of sociological approaches to the comparative study of revolution, as represented in a series

of works from Crane Brinton (1939) and Barrington Moore (1966) to more recent works in which, even if Marxist concepts are mostly abandoned, "the true causes of revolutions are to be found in socioeconomic conflicts." There is a little tension between this dominant role of Marx as counter-example and his role as the prime example of the scripting that the authors want to explain. This tension is benign and productive, however, and it does not need to be resolved through more detailed arguments about Marx.

Here and in several contributions to the volume, the *Brumaire* only functions as an example, to clarify the contributors' own views about this problem of scripting. In arguing that the modern revolutionary repertoire drew from classical ideas of civil war, for example, David Armitage quotes one of the passages in the *Brumaire* about borrowing costumes from the past to suggest how these borrowings may constrain or justify revolutionaries' actions, ultimately accumulating as political experience. At the conclusion of an argument about the Jacobin innovation in revolutionary authority and the advent of the concept of permanent revolution, Dan Edelstein refers again to the *Brumaire*: "'Real' revolution could not be accomplished at the ballot box, Marx asserted in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte:* the peasants would always vote for a Napoleon." Gareth Stedman Jones does not mention the *Brumaire* in "Scripting the German Revolution: Marx and 1848," simply dismissing the "London writings of the 1850s" as "an expression of the pathology of exile." Dominica Chang quotes the *Brumaire* as an example in her study of the post-1848 "discourse of revolutionary mimicry."

The history of the *Brumaire* may be irrelevant to some of these uses of the text. It might be pedantic to challenge a casual use of a quotation to illustrate an idea, as in the essay by Armitage, by arguing that the quotation actually had a different meaning in its textual context or historical context. Other uses here, however, might benefit from my history of the *Brumaire.* The claim that Marx "rewrote the script" of the French revolution is shorthand for a complex process of historical appropriation that we may still not really understand, despite the many books and essays on Marx and the French revolution. I think my first chapter provides the elements of a new way of thinking about this venerable question, not least with a vivid example of what political arguments about the French revolution and its meaning for contemporary political decisions were really like, among a group of Germans in the United States that certainly included some likely readers of the *Brumaire.* In this context, I also question the notion that Marx simply "mocked" those that he depicts as making use of the past. In fact, I find much value in reading the *Brumaire* as a whole as a critical affirmation of a prior concept of France as the land of revolution.

My intention is not to complain, as a specialist, that the editors of *Scripting Revolution* are misreading Marx, but to suggest that a closer study of the *Brumaire* in context provides potential resources for the kinds of problems that they are trying to solve. It also poses a challenge to the several historical claims about the *Brumaire,* that Marx thought the "peasants would always vote for a Napoleon" or that the work expresses a "pathology of exile." It may also help us to distinguish Marx from a more general discourse of "revolutionary mimicry." These are historical assumptions that

structure broader research questions. Here, the importance of the early history of the text in particular may be greater than in the case where it is merely quoted to illustrate or motivate a certain idea.

I think the history of the text is less relevant for discussions of contemporary political phenomena as forms of "neo-Bonapartism." Political sociologist Dylan Riley provides a recent example.[113] What Riley has in mind is "a form of rule that substitutes a charismatic leader for a coherent hegemonic project," in this case for the project of neoliberalism after the economic crisis of 2008. It also involves a form of "state-dependent capitalism," in which "profits will owe more to political connections and interventions than to productivity." This causes the degeneration of earlier intermediaries for the interests of "capital," in this case, the Republican and Democratic parties, which resort to "quasi-religious charismatic figures (Obama, Trump) in an attempt to sustain popular support. As in more conventional Marxist political theory, the *Brumaire* provides only a very general (and largely implicit) model here. It facilitates discussion of these ideas with others who know (or are learning) Marx's work, including students or the host of a podcast sponsored by a socialist journal, with whom Riley discussed the *Eighteenth Brumaire* for two hours.[114]

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[113] Dylan Riley, "American Brumaire?," *New Left Review*, no. 103 (January 2017): 21. See also "Marxist State Theory Today: A Symposium," *Science & Society* 85, no. 3 (July 2021); Jeremiah Morelock, ed., *Critical Theory and Authoritarian Populism* (University of Westminster Press, 2018); and Martin Beck and Ingo Stützle, eds. *Die neuen Bonapartisten: Mit Marx den Aufstieg von Trump & Co. verstehen* (Berlin: Dietz, 2018)

[114] https://thedig.blubrry.net/podcast/marxs-eighteenth-brumaire-with-dylan-riley/

I am not sure that a history of the *Brumaire* has much guidance to offer such classical uses of the text as an example that facilitates discussions of contemporary political phenomena. This use has been surprisingly muted lately, however, rarely proceeding very far beyond the occasional allusion to an "Eighteenth Brumaire of Donald Trump." The *Brumaire* is mentioned only occasionally in the handbook published last year, *The Marx Revival: Key Concepts and New Interpretations*.[115] The volume covers a wide range of topics: capitalism, communism, democracy, proletariat, class struggle, political organization, revolution, work, capital and temporality, ecology, gender equality, nationalism and ethnicity, migration, colonialism, state, globalization, war and international relations, religion, education, art, technology and science, and Marxisms.

There is a clever use of the "old mole" at the end of "Ecology" and a discussion of the *Lumpenproletariat* in "Proletariat," but the *Brumaire* is simply absent from "Class Struggle" and "Revolution." It is discussed only briefly in "Democracy," by Ellen Meiksins Wood, who finds the political structure at stake in the text to be too remote from those of modern capitalism to have much value as a basis for political theory today. The one entry that discusses the *Brumaire* at length, several times, is "State," by Bob Jessop, who uses the text to illustrate the "autonomy" theory of the state, contradiction and crisis in a liberal democracy, and in a discussion of political imaginaries.

These are examples of what I call the "working knowledge" of the *Brumaire* in the most recent scholarship. I have discussed already the value of the history of the

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[115] Marcello Musto, ed., *The Marx Revival: Concepts and New Critical Interpretations* (Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

Brumaire for a case like the concept of *Lumpenproletariat.* It is a matter of distinguishing our own impression of Marx as fostering a crude prejudice of the poor from his own original intentions and understanding how his views came to seem crude and prejudiced, partly through the uses that later socialists made of the concept. I think much the same could be said for the larger and more important concepts of "class struggle" and "revolution," "democracy" and "state." A history of the *Brumaire* provides some historical understanding of how such concepts originally functioned in Marx's own work and how this function was lost and transformed over time. This may help us to refine our understanding of the process, goals, and pitfalls of conceptualization as such.

Biographies play an important role in supporting this aspect of the "Marx revival," that is, the aspect that involves some critical understanding of how and why Marx thought what he did. In my introduction, I briefly contrasted my own approach to the determination of original meaning with the uses of the *Brumaire* in recent biographies by Jonathan Sperber and Gareth Stedman Jones, as a document of revolutionary experience and as purported representation of reality, respectively. The different uses that the biographers find for the *Brumaire* correspond to different goals of their biographies as a whole. In comparing my views of the *Brumaire* to theirs, I hope finally to clarify its relationship to these broader goals.

I share the greater concern of Sperber's biography, to oppose the most recent form of the recurring tendency to imagine Marx as our contemporary, a forward-looking "globalized" figure. Against this form of anachronism, he argues that Marx may be more usefully understood as "a backward-looking figure" than as an "interpreter of historical

trends." My own view of the original meaning of the *Brumaire* partly agrees with this, but Sperber's view of the way that Marx looks back is very far from mine. His description of the work as "veiled self-criticism" obscures its affirmative and explicit relationship to the prior belief in France as the land of revolution. This leads us to deeper divergences. Sperber considers the "veiled self-criticism" as "a form of externalization and objectification not unlike the processes of alienation explained in Hegelian philosophy." This helped Marx "to maintain his position as the person articulating the direction of human history."[116] My view of the work as making it possible to sustain a prior belief that has become doubtful suggests more direct relationships to Hegel, alienation, and the question of how Marx came to seem to articulate the direction of history.

Stedman Jones opposes more squarely a "Marxism" (his quotation marks) and a dominant view of Marx created in the late nineteenth century, by Engels among others, deeply influenced by certain concepts of science. I share this goal up to a point. I would strongly contrast my historical interpretation of the first and second editions to his, which does not consider the work as an "intervention" in my sense, participating in any particular arguments about reality. I am also hardly a critic of Marxism. Still, I see his line of criticism as an important part of a greater problem of the "modernization" of Marx. This includes the appropriation of his work as "science," not only or even primarily by Marxists, but it also includes many other kinds of transformation in the

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[116] Sperber, 172. The quotation refers to an earlier example of "veiled self-criticism," the attack on the "True Socialists" in the *German Ideology* manuscripts and elsewhere, but "Marx would repeat this process in future works, particularly *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.*"

conception of Marx. I have not worked out this thought in detail, but the history of the *Brumaire* may serve as an example and a point of entry to this general problem of cultural-historical "modernization."

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