

The Political Scene and the Politics of Representation: Periodizing Class Struggle and the State in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*

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The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte has a key place in debates over Marx's theory of the state and his account of political representation. For some critics, this text provides evidence for two Marxian theories of the state: whereas Marx normally saw the state as the executive committee or direct instrument of the ruling class, in other contexts he argued that it can become relatively autonomous from the various classes in society even if it continues to perform a class function (e.g., Miliband 1965). For others, however, this same text reveals devastating inconsistencies in Marx's class-based account of the state, since it allows for an executive (apparatus) that wins autonomy for itself *against* the dominant class(es). This inconsistency is said to be especially clear in Marx's later remarks on the tendential rise of a *praetorian state*, in which the army led by Bonaparte III, starts to represent itself against society rather than acting on behalf of one part of society against other parts.^[1] According to Mehlman, for example, 'the piquancy of Bonapartism lies entirely in the emergence of a State which has been emptied of its class contents' (cited by Stallybrass, 1990: 80; see also Hunt 1984: 47-56). Yet others suggest that Marx himself resolves these alleged inconsistencies 'by analysing the Bonapartist regime, if not as the organized rule of a class bloc, nevertheless as the determined product of the class struggle' (Fernbach 1983: 15; cf. Berberoglou 1986). For others again, the same text confirms the generic (rather than exceptional) tendency of the capitalist state to acquire relative autonomy in order the better to organize the interests of the dominant class(es) and to win the support of subordinate classes (e.g., Poulantzas 1973). The exceptional nature of state autonomy in the Bonapartist case merely serves to indicate the exceptional nature of the circumstances in which this role has to be played (see also Draper 1977).

The Eighteenth Brumaire poses similar problems for the nature and significance of representation in the wider political system. For the complexity of the ideological and organizational forms in which Marx claims to discern class interests at work seems to undermine any attempt to show a one-to-one correlation between economic classes and political forces. For some commentators this indicates the need to take political identities, political discourses, and political forms of representation seriously in theoretical analysis and to explore the practical problems this poses in advancing economic interests (LaCapra 1987; Lefort 1978; Katz 1992; McLennan 1981). For others this simply confirms the radical disjunction between the economic and the political with no unilateral translation or relay mechanism that might ensure that politics reflects economic class interests (e.g., Hindess 1980, Hirst 1977). This highlights the problem of economic class reductionism that allegedly plagues Marxism and leads to the twin conclusions that political representation has its own dynamic and that it is invalid to look behind the political stage in order to discover hidden economic forces. And for yet others, this text illustrates the great extent to which Marx anticipated subsequent discourse-theoretical insights into the performative nature of language, the discursive constitution of identities

and interests, and their role in shaping the forms and terms of political struggle. For Marx interpreted politics in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* as formative rather than superstructural, performative rather than reflective (Petrey 1988; Stallybrass 1990).

For these and other reasons we can see *The Eighteenth Brumaire* as a key text for the interpretation of Marx's state and political theory. Thus its implications for state theory and class analysis are typically contrasted with a 'standard' Marxian position derived variously (and with quite different results) from *The Communist Manifesto*, the 1859 *Preface to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, or the three volumes of *Capital*. This is a highly dubious procedure since the *Manifesto* is a programmatic text, the status of the 1859 *Preface* as a canonical text is highly questionable, and *Capital's* class analysis is incomplete even in economic, let alone political or ideological, terms. There can be no innocent reading of a text such as *The Eighteenth Brumaire* but it could well be useful to read it initially without adopting preconceived views about Marx's theory of the state and class politics that have been derived from other studies that were not concerned with specific political conjunctures. In this sense the first question to ask is what does Marx set out to achieve in his history of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*?

I. What does *The Eighteenth Brumaire* do?

First, as a substantive exercise in historiography, *The Eighteenth Brumaire* describes the background to Louis Bonaparte's *coup d'état* on 2nd December 1851 and suggests that this is the farcical repetition of the tragic *coup d'état* made by Napoleon Bonaparte on 9th November 1799 (or, as it was identified in the new revolutionary calendar, the 18th Brumaire VIII). It presents the run-up to this *coup d'état* in terms of a periodization of political developments that is presented and analysed in terms of four closely interwoven objects of inquiry. These comprise:

(a) the *political scene*, i.e., the visible but nonetheless 'imaginary' world of everyday politics as acted out before the general public through the open and declared action of more or less well organized social forces (Poulantzas 1973: 246-7). Marx employs a wide range of theoretical metaphors and allusions to describe and map the political stage and to critically assess how the resulting political theatre is played out by actors who assume different characters, masks, and roles according to changing material circumstances, strategies, and moods.

(b) the *social content* of the politics acted out on this stage. This involves a closer inspection of 'the rude external world' (18B: 90) based on looking 'behind the scenes' (18B: 57) of 'the situation and the parties, this superficial appearance, which veils the *class struggle*' (18B: 55). This class struggle is nonetheless related to the present situation and its various strategic and tactical possibilities rather than to abstract, eternal, and idealized interests that are attached to pre-given classes defined purely in terms of their position in the social relations of production. Thus Marx emphasizes the concrete-complex articulation of the economic and *extra-economic* conditions for the 'expanded

reproduction¹²¹ of specific class relations and what this implies for the reordering of what are always relative advantages in the class struggle. In this sense he also describes *avant la lettre* the stakes, strategies, and tactics involved in what Gramsci (1971) would later term 'wars of position' and 'wars of manoeuvre'.

(c) the transformation of the *institutional architecture of the state* and the wider political system insofar as this entails a structural framework that differentially constrains and facilitates the pursuit of particular strategies and tactics in wars of position and/or manoeuvre, provides a target of strategic action in its own right as diverse political forces struggle to maintain or transform it, and, indeed, itself derives from the results of past class (or, at least, class-relevant) struggles in the ideological, political, and economic realms; and

(d) the interconnected movements of the *local, national, and international economy* over different time scales insofar as these shape the political positions that could feasibly have been adopted in given conjunctures. Here too, although Marx strongly asserts his belief (and, indeed, even protests too much in this regard) that the ultimate victory of the proletarian social revolution is guaranteed, he also emphasizes the need to relate political action to the present situation.

Second, Marx also poses questions throughout *The Eighteenth Brumaire* about the language and other symbols in and through which the class content of politics comes to be represented or, more commonly, misrepresented. He explores the semiotic forms, genres, and tropes through which different political forces articulate their identities, interests, and beliefs and also reflects on the appropriate political language in which the proletariat might formulate its demands. In this context he argues that the social revolution of the nineteenth century must develop its own, novel political language rather than draw, as did earlier revolutions, on the 'poetry of the past' (18B: 34). In this sense, *The Eighteenth Brumaire* is more concerned with the discursive limitations on the representation of class interests ('tradition from all the dead generations', 'the superstition of the past', 'an entire superstructure of different and peculiarly formed sentiments, delusions, modes of thought and outlooks on life') (18B: 32, 34, 56) than it is with the organizational forms in and through which they might be advanced. This need to develop an appropriate political language holds particularly for the proletariat and its potential allies. Indeed, one could well interpret this text as a contribution to the critique of *semiotic economy*, i.e., to an account of the imaginary (*mis*)recognition and (*mis*)representation of class interests, rather than to the political economy of capital accumulation. The most extreme illustration of this is found in the floating signifier himself, Louis Bonaparte. For, as Marx argued in *The Class Struggles in France*, although Bonaparte was 'the most simple-minded [*einfältig*] man in France', he had "acquired the most multiplex [*vielfältig*] significance. Just because he was nothing, he could signify everything'. So different class forces could project their own hopes and fears onto Bonaparte; and he in turn skilfully manipulated and exploited this polyvalence to advance his own interests.

Third, as a serious and self-consciously literary work in its own right, *The Eighteenth Brumaire* adopts a highly distinctive and powerful set of literary techniques to narrate the historical background of the *coup d'état*. Above all it adopts the form of parody to unfold this narrative, to portray the ironies in French history, to express the problems of class representation, and to resolve the relative importance of external circumstances and willed action in shaping the course of history. In this regard Marx's use of language is itself performative at several levels. Indeed, as he himself puts it in his preface to the second edition, he intended to submit the cult of the first Napoleon to “the weapons of historical research, of criticism, of satire and of wit” (18B: 8). In this sense his withering descriptions of Louis Bonaparte also serve to belittle the stature of his uncle, Napoleon Bonaparte. As an intervention intended to influence the subsequent course of French politics, Marx's use of a specific literary genre and choice of language has a specific pedagogical and political purposes. Far from being arbitrary, then, his mode of emplotting the historical background to the 18th Brumaire is organically related to the intended political effects of this narrative.

On Periodization

Marx's text presents a complex periodization of contemporary history rather than a simple chronology. This makes it a model of political analysis that has inspired many subsequent Marxist analyses and also won the respect of many orthodox historians for its theoretical power and empirical insight. In the first instance Marx relates key turning points in the class struggle to the unfolding of actions and events on the political stage. He distinguishes three successive periods, the first of brief duration, and the second and third having three phases each, and the third phase of the third period having four steps (18B: 110-111).^[3] His periodization is based mainly on movements in parliamentary and party politics as these are influenced by actions and events occurring at a distance from the state (e.g., in the press, petitions, salons and saloon bars, the streets of Paris, the countryside, and so on, 18B: 70, 50, 59, 70, 71, 50). Marx identifies the three periods as follows: (a) the 'February' period from 24 February to 4 May 1848 in which, after the overthrow of Louis Philippe, the stage was prepared for the republic – the period of improvised or provisional government; (b) the period of constituting the republic or the constituent assembly for the nation; and (c) the constitutional republic or legislative national assembly (18B: 36-7). It is worth noting here that Marx offers three interpretations of each period. In distinguishing the periods, he refers first to their immediate conjunctural significance, then to the primary institutional site in and around which the political dramatic unfolds. In addition, each period (and its phases, where these are distinguished) is discussed in terms of its past, its present, and, as far as it was already on the public record or Marx deemed it knowable, its future significance.

Periodizations and chronologies differ in three ways. First, whereas a chronology orders actions, events, or periods on a single unilinear time scale, a periodization operates with several time scales. Thus *The Eighteenth Brumaire* is replete with references to intersecting and overlapping time horizons, to unintended as well as self-conscious

repetitions, to dramatic reversals and forced retreats as well as surprising turnarounds and forward advances, and to actions and events whose true significance would only emerge in the ensuing train of events. Second, while a chronology recounts simple temporal coincidence or succession, a periodization focuses on more complex conjunctures. It classifies actions, events, and periods into stages according to their conjunctural implications (as specific combinations of constraints and opportunities on the pursuit of different projects) for the actions of different social forces on different sites of action over different time horizons. For each period, Marx identifies the possibilities it offers for different actors, identities, interests, horizons of action, strategies, and tactics. He also interprets periods from diverse perspectives (e.g., from a long-term democratic viewpoint as opposed to the immediate stakes declared by protagonists); emphasises how the balance of forces comes to be transformed over time (e.g., the neutralization of democratic elements in the army through a series of deliberate manoeuvres); and identifies decisive turning points (e.g., the Party of Order's loss of the lever of executive power when it was excluded from the Cabinet) (18B: 55, 64, 67). Third, whereas a chronology typically provides a simple narrative explanation for what occurs by identifying a single temporal series of actions and events, a periodization rests on an explanatory framework oriented to the contingent, overdetermined interaction of more than one such series. In this regard there can be no doubt about the complex emplotment of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. For it presents a story marked by repetition and deferral, tragedy and farce, high politics and low cunning, political theatre and mob violence -- set against a background in which a modern French national capitalism is gradually being consolidated in city and countryside alike in the broader context of an increasingly integrated world market. This provides the basis for a complex narrative.

The Political Stage

Marx is especially concerned with the language and effectivity of political action on the political stage and explores this in terms of a wide range of theatrical metaphors. This could well reflect both real changes in the nature of politics following the French Revolution and Marx's own interest in literary forms, styles, and tropes along with his extensive knowledge of specific plays and novels. For, on the one hand, the French Revolution coincided with major changes in the actors' art in the literary theatre and in the official politics of representation. As Friedland has shown, based on detailed analyses of French theatre and politics from 1789 to 1794, the theatre and acting were politicized and French politics was theatricalized. Given our concern with *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, it is important to note that French revolutionary politics did, indeed, adopt old political languages, old character masks, and old roles as its protagonists sought to develop a new politics of representation in which the national assembly now claimed to actively 'represent' the nation rather than, as occurred in the Estates system of the Ancien Régime, serving as its corporate embodiment, (Fielding 1995, 1999). Marx, too, stresses the theatricality of politics not only as metaphor but also as a self-conscious political practice on the part of political actors as they sought to persuade and impress their audience by adopting character masks and roles from the historical past and/or from a dramatic

repertoire. And, on the other hand, Marx himself had a solid grounding in ancient and modern philosophies of literature and drama, their theory and history, and an immense range of what he and Engels described in the Communist Manifesto as 'world literature' (see, in general, Praver 1978; and, on *The Eighteenth Brumaire* in particular, Petrey 1988, Riquelme 1980, Rose 1978; Stallybrass 1998; and White 1973). This is reflected in his passionate use of parody as a mode of emplotment to ridicule the two Bonapartes.

Marx takes great pains to emphasize how the political stage has its own effectivity. Far from being a simple political reflection of economic interests, it has its own logic and its own influence on class relations. This is quite consistent, of course, with The Communist Manifesto's claim that every class struggle is a political struggle. This is almost painfully evident in Marx's initial attempts in the first instalment of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, written it should be recalled in separate parts over several months and intended for serial publication,^[4] to establish correspondences between different political parties and different classes or class fractions. But even here Marx recognizes that there is no one-to-one fit between party and economic class interests (see, for example, his analysis of the pure republican faction which, as Marx himself emphasizes, is little more than a political-intellectual *côterie* unified by shared political antipathies and nationalist sentiments) (18B: 41). Over the course of writing *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, however, Marx moves towards an account of the logic of political struggle in the modern (and capitalist type of) state and the manner in which specific conjunctures and distinctive institutional ensembles shape the forms and content of the political struggle. Thus he builds on the *institutional separation* and *potential antagonism* between state and civil society that he had already taken for granted in his critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (1975a); and he explores how the institutional terrain of the state apparatus and its articulation to the wider public sphere shapes the forms of politics. He therefore notes many distinctive features of the state's organization and articulation to the public sphere--electoral, parliamentary, presidential, bureaucratic, administrative, military, state--orchestrated mob violence, etc.--that directly condition not only the various struggles on the political stage *but also* struggles to modify the political balance of forces discursively, organizationally, and institutionally.

Among the many effects of the forms of politics on the course of political struggle we can note, first, the (inevitably constrained) choice of political genre and language in and through which the aspirations of different political forces can be expressed. For, implicitly conceding that there is no neutral language in and through which social identities, interests, and aspirations can be truly and unambiguously expressed, Marx emphasizes that every political movement needs to find appropriate discourses and symbolism as means of political expression to advance its interests. Second, Marx refers to the political space that this creates for the *literary representatives* of a class (18B: 59). Thus he notes the emergence of a parliamentary republican faction organized around political sentiments rather than common material interests or position in the relations of production. He describes this pure republican faction as no more than a 'coterie of republican-minded business, writers, lawyers, officers and officials whose influence rested on the personal antipathy of the country to Louis Philippe, on recollections of the old republic [of 1789-99], on the republican faith of a number of enthusiasts, above all on

French nationalism (18B: 41). Third, there is the phenomenon of '*parliamentary cretinism*, which confines its victims to an imaginary world and robs them of their senses, their recollection, all knowledge of the rude external world' (18B: 90). A fourth (but far from final example) is the emergence of a self-interested military and bureaucratic caste (see below).

The Social Content of Politics

Marx's account of the superficial (but nonetheless significant and causally effective) movements on the political stage is combined with an analysis of the 'social content of politics' (18B: 57). The economic 'base' figures in these analyses in two main ways. First, the necessary institutional separation and the potential antagonism between state and civil society (and hence the existence of a specific type of political scene and its possible disjunctions from the economy) depend on a particular form of economic organization. Second, and, for present purposes, more important, the economic 'base' is treated, rightly or wrongly, as the ultimate source of the *social* or *material* conditioning of political struggles. Here Marx refers both to the changing economic conjunctures and successive modes of growth in which political struggles occur and to the more general, underlying connection between these struggles and basic economic interests in a fundamentally capitalist social formation. Nonetheless the social content of politics is related mainly to the economic interests of the contending classes and class fractions in specific conjunctures and/or periods in a particular social formation rather than to abstract interests identified at the level of a mode of production. This approach is particularly important, of course, for intermediate classes (e.g., the *petite bourgeoisie*), classes with no immediate role in production (e.g., the *surplus population*), or *declassé* elements (e.g., the *lumpenproletariat*). But it also applies for other classes. For example, in writing about the central role of the peasantry in French politics, Marx noted how industrialization and the increasing power of financial capital had transformed its class position. Whereas it had been a major beneficiary of land redistribution under Napoleon I, parcellization and debt had undermined the viability of many smallholdings and prompted a growing division between a revolutionary and a conservative peasantry. It was the latter whose proprietorial identity and traditional aspirations Bonaparte claimed to represent (whilst doing little to help them in practice) and whom he also mobilized as a crucial *supporting class* in his political manoeuvres against other social forces. Likewise, over the course of his successive analyses of the relations between the financial aristocracy and the industrial bourgeoisie, Marx would later come to emphasize how their original antagonism was moderated through the development of a modern form of finance capital (for details, see Draper 1977, Bologna 1993a, 1993b).

In addition, Marx takes pains to emphasize the scope for disjunction between the surface (but nonetheless effective) movement and the deeper social content of political struggle. Thus he writes that '[j]ust as in private life, one distinguishes between what a man thinks and says, and what he really is and does, so one must all the more in historical conflicts distinguish between the fine words and aspirations of the parties and their real

organisation and their real interests, their image from their reality' (18B: 56). It is important, for example, to distinguish the "'so-called" people's party' from a real people's party (18B: 55). Likewise, writing about the Orléanist and Legitimist factions of the bourgeoisie, Marx argues that, 'on the public stage, in high politics and matters of state, as a grand parliamentary party, they pawned off their royal houses with token acts of reverence, and adjourned the restoration of the monarchy *ad infinitum*, and did their real business as the party of order, i.e., under a *social* rather than a *political* banner, as a representative of the bourgeois world order,...as the bourgeois class against other classes, not as royalists against republicans' (18B: 57). Interestingly and significantly, Marx also tends to suggest that, the more critical the economic situation, the less significant does the disjunction between the political and the social become. For divisions within the political field are then realigned, if possible, around more basic social conflicts. Divisions within the bourgeoisie are overcome, for example, when the bourgeoisie as a whole is threatened. Political crisis may also prompt a realignment of state and society when their separation risks becoming too antagonistic and conflictual. Thus, some years after the 18th Brumaire, when a more or less completely autonomized Bonapartist 'rule of the sword' over society is threatened by social unrest, Napoleon III recognizes the need to retreat and rebuild his links to bourgeois civil society (on the Bonapartist 'rule of the praetorians, its specificity, and its limitations, see especially Marx 1986a; and, for a conspectus and critical interpretation of Marx's writings on this issue, Draper 1977, 459-463).

The State Apparatus and Its Trajectory

A further dimension of Marx's analysis concerns the increasing centralization of state power in France and its implications for the development of the antagonism between state and society. For present purposes, and given the limited space for this chapter, I will make only two brief points in this regard. The first concerns how changes in the overall architecture of the state shape the terrain of political struggle and also condition the political balance of forces. For strategic and tactical possibilities altered as the articulation between parliament, Cabinet, and presidential authority was modified; or, again, as the state acquired increasing control over every aspect of social life throughout the land. This claim was taken further, of course, in Marx's later remarks on the praetorian state; and was even more carefully elaborated in *The Civil War in France* (Marx 1986a, 1986b). It reinforces the point that the very existence of an institutionally separate state (and wider political system) excludes any possibility that the political field can be a simple reflection of economic class interests. Instead the general form of the state and the particular form of political regimes modify the balance of forces and thereby become stakes in the class struggle itself. Marx develops this point most forcefully in exploring the implications of the transition from a monarchical regime to a parliamentary republic for the capacity of the two main fractions of the bourgeoisie to defend their common interests. Thus he writes that:

'The *parliamentary republic* was more than the neutral territory where the two factions of the French bourgeoisie, legitimists and orléanists, large-scale landed property and

industry, could take up residence with an equal right. It was the inescapable condition of their *joint* rule, the sole form of state in which the claims of their particular factions and those of all other classes of society were subjected to the general interest of the bourgeois class. As royalists, they lapsed into their old antagonism, a battle for supremacy between landed property and money, and the highest expression of this antagonism, the personification of it, were their kings, their dynasties' (18B 94).

Second, and as Marx takes pains to demonstrate, such state transformations are far from innocent. For they are partly the result of political actions consciously directed at securing modifications in the balance of forces. The clearest example of this in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* is, of course, Louis Bonaparte's conduct of a war of position to centralize power in the hands of the president and then, through a final war of manoeuvre, to venture the coup d'état that serves as the dénouement of this particular Bonapartist farce. But it does not follow that all such transformations are deliberate and their consequences intended (even if they are anticipated). For Marx also notes the double bind in which the French bourgeoisie found itself in the same conjuncture. Indeed, it 'was compelled by its class position both to negate the conditions of existence for any parliamentary power, including its own, and to make the power of the executive, its adversary, irresistible' (18B: 68).

Conclusions

One should not write long conclusions to a short paper. Instead I will simply make five remarks about the problematic dialectic of historical circumstances and social action from this far from innocent (re-)reading of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. First, rather than denying it, Marx clearly recognizes the so-called 'problem of representation'. From the outset he problematizes the semiotic resources available to political forces to express their identities, interests, and aspirations. If men do make their own history but not just as they please in circumstances they choose for themselves, then one key feature of the present circumstances, given and inherited, is the semiotic repertoire that they inherit from the past (18B: 32). Engels makes much the same point in his commentary on *The Peasant War in Germany* when he writes that all revolutionary social and political doctrines directed against German feudalism were necessarily theological heresies because of the dominance of religion in feudal legitimation (1978: 412-413, cf. 421, 451). This is why it is so important for the proletariat to seek a 'new poetry' to express its identities, interests, and aspirations.

Second, another key feature of these circumstances is the topography of the political stage on which leading political forces appeal for support from multiple audiences and the problems this produces for political choreography. Marx regards the political scene as the site of an experimental theatre as political actors adopt different character masks, roles, and styles of political action. A third key feature of these circumstances is the political conjuncture. This makes it imperative for different political forces to read the present situation correctly in order to identify the horizons of possibility (i.e., the scope of

possible actions in specific, but moving, fields of political action) and the appropriate strategies and tactics to maximise gains in an unfolding, open, and indeterminate field. Marx indicates the importance of reading the general line (ascending, descending, etc.) of political development and choosing one's actions accordingly. In the conditions facing them from June 1848 up to Louis Bonaparte's *coup d'état*, for example, it was quite right for the defeated revolutionary proletariat to remain passive before the advance of Bonapartism. Indeed, as a far from neutral observer who was nonetheless confined to the sidelines, Marx hoped this would serve to crystallize the gulf between state and society and thereby clarify what was at stake for the revolutionary movement.

A fourth dimension of the circumstances confronting political actors is the class-biased structure of the state and the need to overcome this bias through actions to transform the state. Bonaparte proved himself as a skillful practitioner of politics as 'the art of the possible' in this regard. In *The Civil War in France* Marx will eventually suggest that the commune is the most appropriate political form for a revolutionary political regime. And fifth, these other dimensions must be seen against the background of the nature of the economic base and the dynamic of class struggles that provide framework of possibilities. Two fine examples of this are Marx's account of the changing economic conditions of the peasantry (see above) and of the increasing fusion between financial and industrial capital associated with the rise of a modern fisco-financial system during the 1840s and 1850s and the novel Bonapartist institution of the *Crédit Mobilier* (on this, see Bologna 1993a, 1993b). Indeed this aspect will play an increasing role in Marx's analysis of Bonapartism and its role in the development of a modern capitalist economy--and hence in further modifying his analysis of its significance as a form of capitalist state.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Thus Marx writes that 'the rule of the naked sword is proclaimed in most unmistakable terms, and Bonaparte wants France to clearly understand that the imperial rule does rest not on her will but on 600,000 bayonets ... Under the second Empire the interest of the army itself is to predominate. The army is no longer to maintain the rule of one part of the people over another part of the people. The army is to maintain its own rule, personated by its own dynasty, over the French people in general. ... It is to represent the State in antagonism to the society. It must not be imagined that Bonaparte is not aware of the dangerous character of the experiment he tries. In proclaiming himself the chief of the Pretorians, he declares every Pretorian chief his competitor' (1986a: 465).

[2] The term 'expanded reproduction' (Poulantzas 1975) refers to the economic and extra-economic conditions involved in the reproduction of class relations qua economic, political, and ideological relations. This notion is well expressed by Marx when he writes of how the Orléanist faction of bourgeoisie, which was 'the most viable faction of the French bourgeoisie', was seriously weakened when 'a blow was struck at its parliament, its legal chambers, its commercial courts, its provincial representatives, its notaries, its universities, its spokesmen and their platforms, its press and its literature, its administrative income and its court fees, its army salaries and its state pensions, its mind and its body' (18B: 113).

[3] Carver's translation uses periods for both; here I follow Poulantzas's terminology in *Fascism and Dictatorship* in distinguishing periods, phases, and steps (1974).

[4] This also explains many of the repetitions in this text on repetition as well as changes in argument over different instalments.

7 The Political Scene and the Politics of Representation: Periodising Class Struggle and the State in the Eighteenth Brumaire. (pp. 179-194). Bob Jessop. The key to understanding Marx's critique of utopian socialism lies in the pages of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, and more specifically in one particular sentence drawn from those pages. The sentence in question is this: "There phrase transcended content, here content transcends phrase", and the key to understanding Marx's critique of utopian socialism lies, or so I shall argue in what follows, in comprehending why phrase had to transcend content in both the English and French Revolutions ("there") but why the content of the social revolution of the nineteenth century ("here") was so. The Eighteenth Brumaire poses similar problems for the nature and significance of representation in the wider political system. For the complexity of the ideological and organizational forms in which Marx claims to discern class interests at work seems to undermine any attempt to show a one-to-one correlation between economic classes and political forces. For some commentators this indicates the need to take political identities, political discourses, and political forms of representation seriously in theoretical analysis and to explore the practical problems this poses in advancing economic i... What is the state, and why does it exist? To what degree is the state independent of social classes? What does Engels mean when he says that in a democratic republic "wealth exercises its power indirectly, but all the more surely"? What position should Marxists take on universal suffrage? Lenin establishes on the basis of Marx' pre-revolutionary writings, as well as his seminal *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, that the concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is one which can be found consistently throughout Marx' work, as opposed to the "peaceful development of democracy" claimed by the opportunists.