



**The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon, by  
Karl Marx and Daniel De Leon: translated by  
Daniel De Leon (December 14, 1852 - May 11,  
1914)**

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The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon was written between December 1851 and March 1852, and originally published in 1852 in *Die Revolution*, a German-language monthly magazine. The pamphlet shows Marx in his form as a social and political historian, treating actual historical events—those leading up to Louis Bonaparte's coup d'état of 2 December 1851—from the viewpoint of his materialist conception of history. The "Eighteenth Brumaire" refers to November 9, 1799 in the French Revolutionary Calendar—the day Louis Bonaparte's uncle Napoleon Bonaparte had made himself dictator by a coup d'état. The work is the source of one of Marx's most quoted statements, that history repeats itself, "the first as tragedy, then as farce". Karl Marx (5 May 1818 – 14 March 1883) was a philosopher, economist, sociologist, journalist, and revolutionary socialist. Born in Prussia to a middle-class family, he later studied political economy and Hegelian philosophy. As an adult, Marx became stateless and spent much of his life in London, England, where he continued to develop his thought in collaboration with German thinker Friedrich Engels and published various works, the most well-known being the 1848 pamphlet *The Communist Manifesto*. His work has since influenced subsequent intellectual, economic, and political history. Marx's theories about society, economics and politics—collectively understood as Marxism—hold that human societies progress through class struggle: a conflict between ruling classes (known as the bourgeoisie) that control the means of production and working classes (known as the proletariat) that work on these means by selling their labour for wages. Employing a critical approach known as historical materialism, Marx propounded the theory of base and superstructure, asserting that the cultural and political conditions of society, as well as its notions of human nature, are largely determined by obscured economic foundations. Through his theories of alienation, value, commodity fetishism, and surplus value, Marx argued that capitalism facilitated social relations and ideology through commodification, inequality, and the exploitation of labour. These economic critiques would result in influential works such as *Capital, Volume I* (1867). According to Marx, states are run in the interests of the ruling class but are nonetheless represented as being in favor of the common interest of all.[6] He predicted that, like previous socioeconomic systems, capitalism produced internal tensions which would lead to its self-destruction and replacement by a new system: socialism. For Marx, class antagonisms under capitalism, owing in part to its instability and crisis-prone nature, would eventuate the working class' development of class consciousness, leading to their conquest of political power and eventually the establishment of a classless, communist society governed by a free association of producers. Marx actively fought for its implementation, arguing that the working class should carry out organised revolutionary action to topple capitalism and bring about socio-economic emancipation. Marx has been described as one of the most influential figures in human history, and his work has been both lauded and criticised. His work in economics laid the basis for much of the current understanding of labour and its relation to capital, and subsequent economic thought.

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