

CORRECTING THE PAST THROUGH GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

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Although it is more than obvious that the past as such cannot be corrected or changed, it is also painfully clear that the past we have in our mind is too often distorted by “history” whose sole purpose is to serve some political ideology. The deformation in the post-communist countries was, of course, intentionally developed and abused by Marxist propaganda. In our article we want to discuss just three, probably the most important, topics that affect our understanding of the past: (1) the role of *conflict* in history, (2) the place of *economics* in historical political theory, (3) the attributes of *truth* in the interpretation(s) of history.

Key words: history, conflict, Marxism, theology, truth, love, gospel, theology

INTRODUCTION

The title of this article is intentionally provocative. It should remind us that to work effectively for a transformation of the present we need to constantly check out our understanding of the past. History is not the past detached from the present it is the past that continues to influence the present. Collingwood stressed that “the historian can genuinely see into the past only so far as he stands firmly rooted in the present.”¹ Among other things, it means we can ask history the “right questions” only as we really know the ideas influential in our present. With poetic licence we could say that “history is the present looking at its youth.” On the other hand, without being well acquainted with our past we cannot make sense of the present and we cannot even understand our own identity. Elsewhere, Collingwood says that history “...is the knowledge of the past in the present.”² So the present and the past so to say “determine” each other.

¹ COLLINGWOOD, Robin George (1945): *The Idea of History*. Oxford, Clarendon Press (reprint: Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1969), 60.

² COLLINGWOOD (1945), 175.

Applying this approach to Eastern Europe more than thirty years after the collapse of the communist experiment means to closely examine the political and cultural forces working in post-communist societies. The Marxist economic theory that promised a communist paradise on Earth has been seemingly thoroughly discredited by its results in all the countries where it has been applied. After 1989, it looked like there were no obstacles to the winning democracy. A philosophical “end of history” was thought to be imminent.³ Free elections and democratic institutions would make everything right.

But Marxism is much more than an economic theory. It is one of the last all-encompassing systematic philosophies attempting to answer all the questions of human existence. The point is that some of the Marxist self-proclaimed “scientific theories” have never been questioned and continue to torpedo the efforts at transformation of the societies that were forced to blindly follow the one leading (communist) party and often the one “perfect” dictator.

It is far from easy to define what it means to be a Marxist. There is no consensus among those who call themselves “Marxists” what the essential beliefs of their worldview are. Nevertheless, we think it is safe to name (1) class conflict, (2) economic theory and (3) relativity of truth as some of the most insidious residues of the Marxist propaganda and political practice of the past that are still at work in people’s minds and, in some ways, even reinforced by the ruling liberal democracy.

THE CLASS CONFLICT

To understand the Marxist way of thinking we need to turn to Hegel. The Russian revolutionary thinker Alexander Herzen (1812-1870) said “The philosophy of Hegel is the algebra of revolution.”⁴ By “algebra” he meant the dialectical method that is at the core of Hegel’s philosophy.⁵ Hegelian dialectic is cleverly defined as containing both negative and positive because in Hegel’s words “...the negative is equally positive, precisely as a result, for it contains within itself that from which it results, containing the latter as something it has sublated [*aufgehoben*], and is not without what it has sublated.”⁶ And because Hegel is an

³ FUKUYAMA, Francis (1992): *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York, The Free Press.

⁴ HERZEN, Alexander (1855): *My Past and Thoughts*. (Thoughts on the Past: Былое и думы). Transl by: Constance Garnett. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1982, 237.

⁵ Some authors quote Herzen as saying “Dialectic is the algebra of revolution.” (ROSEN, Michael (1982): *Hegel’s Dialectic and its Criticism*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 8).

⁶ HEGEL, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1817): *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline*. (Encyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften. Teil I, Wissenschaft der Logik). Transl. by: Klaus Brinkmann and Daniel O. Dahlstrom. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, 131.

absolute idealist this principle is applied to natural science as well. An illustration given by Karl Popper should suffice to show what sort of results it can produce:

Sound is the change in the specific condition of segregation of the material parts, and in the negation of this condition; merely an abstract or an ideal ideality, as it were, of that specification. But this change, accordingly, is itself immediately the negation of the material specific subsistence; which is, therefore, real ideality of specific gravity and cohesion, i.e. heat. The heating up of sounding bodies, just as of beaten or rubbed ones, is the appearance of heat, originating conceptually together with sound.⁷

The dialectical method is considered the main achievement of Hegelianism and in Marxism it is a method applied to everything like a magical key to open the treasure of the eternal truth.⁸ In *Capital* Marx says that with Hegel dialectic "...is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell."⁹ But even when it was turned the way Marx wanted dialectics did not produce expected results.

The dialectical method is, fortunately and for the obvious reasons, not applied in natural sciences. But it is still widely believed to be a valid interpretation tool in the humanities – e.g. sociology, psychoanalysis and literary theory. It is used to explain human subjectivity as it "...reveals that the human self is born in social interaction, through a process - a struggle - for recognition."¹⁰ The fight for recognition is a fight to the death. Here we come across the famous master-slave dialectic that can be viewed as the basis of a fundamental social relation. Alexandre Kojève in his introduction to Hegel says:

...to speak of the "origin" of Self-Consciousness is necessarily to speak of a fight to the death for "recognition." Without this fight to the death for pure prestige, there would never have been human beings on earth. Indeed, the human being is formed only in

⁷ POPPER, Karl (1945): *The Open Society and its Enemies*. London, George Routledge & Sons, 26. (The quotation is from Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*, §302).

⁸ Despite these facts Engels produced a book with the title *Dialectics of Nature*.

⁹ MARX, Karl (1890): *Capital I*. (Das Kapital). Transl. by: Edward Aveling and Samuel Moore. Delhi, The Macmillan Co. 1945, 29.

¹⁰ HABIB, M. A. Rafey (2017): *Hegel and Empire*. Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 20.

terms of a Desire directed toward another Desire, that is – finally – in terms of a desire for recognition.¹¹

Human existence is preserved because finally both fighting desires grant each other recognition. Nevertheless, the basic human relationship is that of master and slave despite the fact that it ends in *dialectical overcoming* (*Aufheben*) of both of them. That *Aufhebung*, in Hegel's view, came with the Napoleonic wars (the "end of history") but in Marx's view it would happen only after the victory of the proletariat and the abolition of private property. And a contemporary social analyst tells the uneasy truth: "People are now master and slave in one. Even class struggle has transformed into an *inner struggle against oneself*."¹²

So, whether it is dialectics, class struggle or auto-exploitation it is always the same idea of *conflict* that explains the human self and social progress. If we are to correct this allegedly creative conflict through the gospel we cannot simply dismiss dialectics, class struggle (or Darwinism) as if there were no empirical truth in those theories. Partially, they are results of experiments and observation. The problem is that they are misapplied and misinterpreted as the general and final elucidation of the forces that move reality. Dialectics surely is a very useful tool in dialogue and debate and to ignore social conflict is to deny history, politics and culture.

But the gospel speaks of a more powerful force than conflict – it is the force of *agape* love that resolves conflicts by the power that is opposite to the desire for self-recognition and the recognition of the desire of the other. It is a unique power of spiritual identification with the other. the greatest example of which is the Incarnation of God. The Christian idea of love "...involves a revolution in ethical outlook without parallel in the history of ethics..."¹³ In Hegel "The master looks upon his slave not as a person, but as a selfless thing. The slave is not himself reckoned an 'I' his 'I' is his master."¹⁴ On the contrary, a Christian relationship is expressed with the words: "It is no longer WEwho live, but Christ who lives in me (Galatians 2:20)." Essentially, this *agape* love is not a desire for self-recognition i.e. not "the love of desire or *acquisitive* love."¹⁵ Such is Platonic *eros* or love of friendship: "Love (EROS) ...

¹¹ KOJÈVE, Alexandre (1947): *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*. (Introduction à la lecture de Hegel). Transl. by: James H. Nichols, Jr. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1996, 7-8.

¹² HAN, Byung-Chul (2014): *Psychopolitics*. (Psychopolitik). Transl. by: Erik Butler. London, Verso, 2017, 5.

¹³ NYGREN, Anders (1936): *Agape and Eros*. (The Christian idea of love through the ages: Den kristna kärlekstanken genom tiderna). Philadelphia, Transl. by: Philip S. Watson. The Westminster Press, 1953, 28.

¹⁴ HEGEL, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1830): *Hegel's Logic*. (Encyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften. Teil I, Wissenschaft der Logik). Transl. by: William Wallace. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975, 228.

¹⁵ NYGREN (1936) 157.

wields the mightiest power of all and provides us with a perfect bliss; so that we are able to consort with one another and have friendship also with the gods who are above us.”¹⁶ Christ-like love (AGAPE) is fundamentally based on the *perichoretic* relationship¹⁷ in the Trinity. In theological anthropology it means that Christian agape-love creates relationships in which Christians are enabled to count others more significant than themselves (Phil 2:3).

If we are to “correct the past” we have to show how the power of this agape-love is able to overcome the omnipresent conflict of fighting for self-recognition. It is the message of the cross of Christ through which God was reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor 5:19). The reconciliation of God is victorious over the divisions created by the inward and outward conflicts in human society.

An example of overcoming the desire for self-recognition can be found in the Christian spiritual care provided in palliative settings. The better medical care these patients receive to alleviate the negative consequences of their illnesses (such as pain management, nausea, respiratory issues, etc.), the more space they have to contemplate what lies ahead and to evaluate their lived experiences. In this context, the hospital chaplain or spiritual caregiver from the local church community enters the scene. If their motivation were only to assert their significance and “fight for recognition,” meaning if they lacked sufficient capacity in their metaphorical backpack for what is truly important to the patient, for their self-understanding and evaluation of their life experiences, they would become a burden rather than a source of support for such clients. Successfully fulfilling the role of a hospital chaplain requires one to be “free from oneself” and open to reflecting on the patient’s successes and positive experiences - while also providing support in coping with life’s failures and the need for human or divine forgiveness when necessary.

THE OMNIPOTENT ECONOMY

In Marx’s view “[i]t is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence (*Sein*), but, on the contrary, their social existence (*gesellschaftliches Sein*) determines their

¹⁶ PLATO (4th ct. B.C.): *Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias*. (Λυσις, Συμποσιον, Γοργιας). Transl. by: W. R. M. Lamb. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1961, 131.

¹⁷ *Perichoresis* “...states that the divine modes of being mutually condition and permeate one another so completely that one is always in the other two and the other two in the one.” (BARTH, Karl (1932): *Church Dogmatics I/1*. (Kirchliche Dogmatik). Transl by: G. W. Bromiley. Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1975, 370).

consciousness.”¹⁸ By “social existence” Marx means humans being part of a system of material relations especially connected with the means of production, in other words economy. These relations form the so called “base” in society that gives us a clue to understand the “superstructure” of everything else - mainly culture and the ruling political ideology. It is a well-known fact that in Marxism the so called *base* or *infrastructure* determines politics, culture, religion etc.¹⁹ Engels says that “...the economic structure of society always forms the real basis from which, in the last analysis, is to be explained the whole superstructure of legal and political institutions, as well as of the religious, philosophical, and other conceptions of each historical period.”²⁰ Some Marxist thinkers tried to paint a less simplistic picture of the forces forming and determining the ideological shape of society. The Hungarian Marxist Georg Lukács tried to deliver Marxist theory from economic determinism by stressing the dialectical relation between the mind and social reality. Nevertheless, in popular understanding Engels’ rendering proved the winner.

We think it can be shown that the historical phenomenon of capitalism cannot be reduced to economic and political relations of Marxist class struggle.²¹ But the sad historical fact is that whatever the sociologists, philosophers or ideologues say about the values at the base of democratic capitalism, political propaganda on both sides - western “capitalist” and eastern “communist” - identified politics with economics.²² And so finally both the capitalist (democratic) West and the communist/socialist (totalitarian) East believed in the omnipotent economy to produce earthly paradise. The result is the current rule of consumerism²³ in both parts of the world previously ruled by the antagonistic political systems.

Now, to correct this powerful belief, in the post-communist societies reinforced by the Marxist theoretical model of base & superstructure, theology and the church need to focus

¹⁸ FEUER, Lewis, S. (1978): *Marx, K. & Engels, F. Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*. New York, Anchor Books, 84.

¹⁹ Marx writes, “the whole internal structure of the nation itself depends on the stage of development reached by its production and its internal and external intercourse. How far the productive forces of a nation are developed is shown most manifestly by the degree to which the division of labour has been carried.” (MARX, Karl, ENGELS, Friedrich (1932): *The German Ideology*. (Die deutsche Ideologie). Translator not given. Amherst, Prometheus Books, 1998, 38.)

²⁰ ENGELS, Frederick (1878): *Herr Eugen Dühring’s Revolution in Science*. (Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft). New York, International Publishers, 1966, 32.

²¹ For example, Peter Berger in his book *The Capitalist Revolution* shows several *revolutionary* dimensions of capitalism. (BERGER, Peter L. (1986): *The Capitalist Revolution*. New York, Basic Books.)

²² “The leaders who crafted the postwar world could not and did not distinguish between politics and economics, and their competing visions were composed of models that integrated political and economic regimes.” (CRONIN, James E. (1996): *The World the Cold War Made*. London, Routledge, 2.)

²³ “Consumerism is a way of life combining material affluence with symbolic-emotional attachments to shopping, possessions and “waste.” (WOODHOUSE, Edward J. Consumerism. In: OLSEN, Jan Kyrre Berg - PEDERSEN, Stig Andur - HENDRICKS, Vincent F. (2009): *A Companion to the Philosophy of Technology*. Malden, Blackwell, 412.)

both on the negative critique and the positive alternative of consumerist lifestyle. Although in Scripture wealth and prosperity are the results of God's blessing there are also warnings of the temptation they present in alluring humans away from complete trust in God. We think it would be superfluous to give examples of the texts with this theme in the Bible. In my opinion it is more important to dwell on the positive alternative to a "consumerist paradise" - i.e. on what it means to be "rich toward God" (Lk 12:21).

Preaching and teaching about holiness is not in vogue in our therapeutic culture²⁴ and when it is mentioned at all it is usually presented as abstaining from the pleasures of the world. The theology of proclamation needs to return to the rich Christian tradition of finding fulness of joy in God. From Augustine's *Confessions* through medieval mysticism (e.g. *The Cloud of Unknowing*) to modern movements focused on the work of the Holy Spirit, the Christian life is presented as a life that experiences fulness of joy and deep satisfaction in communion with the living God.

To accomplish the above mentioned "program" we need to uncover and disable the hidden working of the Marxist utopian political promises - what is nothing less than a political gospel. Hannah Arendt has shown (1958) that the hopes of Marx based on the model of Athenian democracy were misguided and the liberated labour instead of "higher" activities led to mass culture and universal unhappiness.²⁵ Nevertheless, in 1964 Herbert Marcuse, the symbol and the spoke-person of the New Left of the sixties, published his *One-Dimensional Man*, with the following idea of freedom:

"Thus economic freedom would mean freedom from the economy - from being controlled by economic forces and relationships; freedom from the daily struggle for existence, from earning a living. Political freedom would mean liberation of the individuals from politics over which they have no effective control. Similarly, intellectual freedom would mean the restoration of individual thought now absorbed by mass communication and indoctrination, abolition of "public opinion" together with its makers."²⁶

²⁴ "...a sense of well-being has become the end, rather than a by-product of striving after some superior communal end..." (RIEFF, Philip (1966): *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*. New York, Harper and Row, 261).

²⁵ ARENDT, Hannah (2018): *The Human Condition*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 133-134.

²⁶ MARCUSE, Herbert (1991): *One-Dimensional Man*. London, Routledge, 6.

The “human condition” of Hannah Arendt is analogical to what Aquinas described as *bonum arduum* (arduous good), that has both something attractive and something repelling in it.²⁷ No economic or political measures can ever make human life completely free of cares and from the involvement in the struggle for spiritual growth and from the *bonum arduum* of developing a virtuous human character. The one continuous task of the church is to deconstruct the wildly impossible political promises that are constantly coming from politicians seeking to be elected, and proclaim the real hope offered in the gospel of Christ.

A fundamental assumption of this approach is the spiritual caregiver’s essential life experience, wherein they do not seek their value through conflict with others but find it in divine acceptance. The agape, which is for them not merely a theological notion but forms the basis of their self-understanding, permeates their social and professional relationships, liberating them from selfish self-assertion and equipping them with the ability to be selflessly present for others.

TRUTH AND THE ZEITGEIST

On October 13, 1806, Napoleon riding on a horse entered Jena. Hegel who was just finishing his *Phenomenology* saw him and wrote to his friend: “WE saw the Emperor - this world spirit (*diese Weltseele*) ... The spirit of the age, who commands history.”²⁸ This “world spirit” (*Geist der Zeit*, or *Zeitgeist*) is an expression of a belief that culture, mentality and social life of a given period in history make a unity and all people of that age feel, think and work under its influence. No individual can “leap beyond” his/her own age. His or her knowledge of truth (worldview, *Weltanschauung*) will depend on the era in which he/she lives.

For the Hegelian concept of truth, it means that every age in history has its own expression of truth and it develops over time as history proceeds. It means that “[k]nowledge depends on its own history, and also on the history of other, practical forms of culture, which are embodied in the objective world and which philosophical knowledge explicates.”²⁹ In Hegel’s words: “Philosophy is the supreme blossom of this entire shape of history, it is the

²⁷ AQUINAS. *Summa Theologica*. II-II, q.161, a.1, c.

²⁸ PINKARD, Terry (2000): *Hegel, a Biography*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 228.

²⁹ YOVEL, Yirmiyahu (2005): *Hegel’s Preface to the Phenomenology of Spirit*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 25.

conceptual root [*Begriff*], the consciousness and the spiritual essence of the whole situation, the spirit of the age as the spirit present and aware of itself in thought.”³⁰

In Marxist dialectical materialism the pursuit of truth is a historical process, and the final test of truth is human activity associated with material production and revolution. As in Hegel, the character and knowledge of truth differs according to historical circumstances. It also means there is no permanent answer to the question of what the absolute truth is until the final phase of human development in the classless communist society. But Marx insisted that Hegel in his philosophy had avoided the real conflicts of the age by focusing on theory and idealist explanation of reality. The result was an estrangement from reality. Marx insisted that the return to the truth of human existence is to focus on the socio-economic relations and their revolutionary transformation.³¹ In (revolutionary) practice it meant that whatever was counted good for the (Marxist) party of the workers was considered “true” in the given time-period.

In the contemporary situation, some activists call for “reloading Lenin” as the truth for those oppressed by contemporary capitalism. Lenin modified Marxism to suit a very underdeveloped Russian situation. He created the Bolshevik party as a spearhead fighting force and simplified Marxist doctrines into formulas suitable for the popular mind. Former Gulag prisoner Solzhenitsyn says that “...the creation of slogans for present needs was the ultimate purpose of all his [Lenin’s] thinking.”³² For example, Lenin attacked the “renegade” Kautsky (a German Marxist theoretician) because he stressed the right to vote for everybody. Lenin replied that “One must study the question of restricting the franchise in the light of the *specific conditions* of the Russian revolution and of the *specific path* of its development.”³³ In later development, the word “specific” became a key to the justification of millions of murders in the Soviet Union, in China, and other killings in the name of the Marxist justice for the poor. The dictators always explained their massacres as a necessity in the “specific” historical situation and as the only way to the emancipation of the oppressed masses. Such

³⁰ HEGEL, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1840): *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. (Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie). Transl. by: T. M. Knox and A. V. Miller. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2003, 25.

³¹ “The philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways, what is important is to change it,” is a well-known saying of Marx’s philosophy. (ENGELS, Friedrich (1888): *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy, Theses on Feuerbach* (Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen deutschen Philosophie, Thesen über Feuerbach). In: MARX, Karl. *Early Writings*. London, Penguin Books, 1992, 423.)

³² SOLZHENITSYN, Alexander (1975): *Lenin in Zürich* (Ленин в Цюрихе). Transl. by: H. T. Willetts. London, The Bodley Head, 1976, 23.

³³ LENIN, Vladimir Ilyich. (1918): *The Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky* (Пролетарская революция и ренегат Каутский). Translator not given. New York, International Publishers, 1934, 34.

emancipation “...in the enthusiasm of the absolute present, is always situated beyond good and evil...”³⁴ Conclusion: There are no permanently valid rules of justice and fairness that are true and valid in every situation, truth is an expression of *partisan*³⁵ interests of the victims of the “system.”³⁶

The (mis)understanding of the idea of truth in today’s popular mind is probably the most difficult challenge for the Christian proclamation of the gospel. It is an era of “post-truth politics” and “fake news.” The consequences are sad:

“What is the cost of lies? It’s not that we’ll mistake them for the truth. The real danger is that if we hear enough lies, then we no longer recognise the truth at all. What can we do then? What else is left but to abandon even the hope of truth and content ourselves instead with stories?”³⁷

But the problem lies even deeper than the contemporary omnipresence of untruth in the public sphere. The remnants of the Marxist philosophical and political reliance on the masses (not discontinued in democracy) and the vague belief in scientific progress (of Hegelian and Marxist legacy) still create expectations that truth shall be available in the newest and popularly acceptable ideologies.

The gospel that the church proclaims is neither popular with the masses nor new as the latest result of progress. For more effective communication, it may be useful to support Christian arguments by reference to secular critique of the mass culture³⁸ and the belief in progress.³⁹

The search for truth is a very individual matter. It is the narrow gate described by Christ in Mt 7:13-14. Apostle Paul calls Christians to run for a prize (1 Cor 9:24). An interesting comment by Kierkegaard is that “...everyone can be this one... everyone should be careful

³⁴ BADIOU, Alain, One Divides Itself into Two. In: BUDGEN, Sebastian - KOUVELAKIS, Stathis - ŽIŽEK, Slavoj (2007): *Lenin Reloaded*. Durham, Duke University Press, 13.

³⁵ BUDGEN, Sebastian - KOUVELAKIS, Stathis - ŽIŽEK, Slavoj (2007), 3.

³⁶ The situation is certainly not helped by modern capitalism that is “...decidedly atemporal if not anti-temporal...” (GROSS, David (1985): *Temporality and the Modern State*. In: *Theory and Society*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 75). But that is not a part of my argument against the Marxist-Hegelian legacy from the past.

³⁷ GIUSTI, Serena - PIRAS, Elisa (2021): *Democracy and Fake News*. London, Routledge, xiii.

³⁸ For example, a very revealing critique of contemporary media-governed public opinion is presented in the work by Daniel Boorstin, *The Image*. (BOORSTIN, Daniel J. (1961): *The Image*. New York, Vintage Books, 2012.)

³⁹ Karl Popper in *The Open Society and its Enemies* warns that progress is not a law of nature. History is made both of progress and decline. (POPPER, Karl (1947): *The Open Society and its Enemies II*. London, George Routledge, 185.)

about becoming involved with the others, essentially should speak only with God and with himself...”⁴⁰ The gospel is here for all but there is no mass-entry available. It is the way of the cross. The spirit of the time, the *zeitgeist* of today, demands that the gospel, if it should be considered at all, should be adjusted to the proclivities of modern culture. But the gospel speaks primarily about the unseen spiritual realm. The apostle says that “...the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal” (2 Cor 4:18). It is the temporal realm that has to adjust to the eternal not the other way round. The gospel can be (and must be) contextualised but it cannot be subjugated to the spirit of the times.

CONCLUSION

Marx said that “[t]radition from all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.”⁴¹ He did not think his revolutionary philosophy with which he meant to liberate humanity and introduce the final age of peace and prosperity will become one of the heaviest weights on the human soul in the following centuries. “Sanctified” violent conflict, paradise of material plenty and surrender to the *zeitgeist* are only three of many Marxist-Hegelian traditions that are still with us although in various different guises. Liberal democracy has only replaced the communist revolutionary conflict with capitalist competition, the future class-less society with the present consumerist paradise and the *zeitgeist* of living for the future with the *zeitgeist* of forgetting both the future and the past.

The church has a remedy in the gospel. The message presented as the real answer is in God’s agape-love in place of violent conflict, the spiritual wealth in God in place of animal materialism and encounter with eternity in the Cross of Christ. The gospel can correct the past in our minds.

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⁴⁰ KIERKEGAARD, Soren (1859): *The Point of View* (Synspunktet for min forfattervirksomhed). Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009, 106.

⁴¹ MARX, Karl (1852): *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte). In: MARX, Karl. *Marx, Later Political Writings*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, 32.

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