

An evening with Rudolf Steiner and Karl Marx

hosted by Christopher Houghton Budd



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São Paulo, Brazil, 30 August 2022

A contribution to discussions within the anthroposophical movement in Brazil that risk seconding Rudolf Steiner to one or another political viewpoint. He, of course, would disassociate himself from any ideology or partisan affiliation. Facts should underpin social commentary, not prejudice, vested interests and so on. The main fact I try to show here is that Marx is no more Marxism than Steiner is synonymous with what his own sympathisers make of his legacy. Moreover, kamaloka is a reality that an individual faces, but this is not so for an ideology or what others have made of what one said or did, in order to hitch that to their own purposes. If the presentation and subsequent conversation, albeit short, can contribute to a politically-neutral anthroposophical movement in Brazil I am happy.

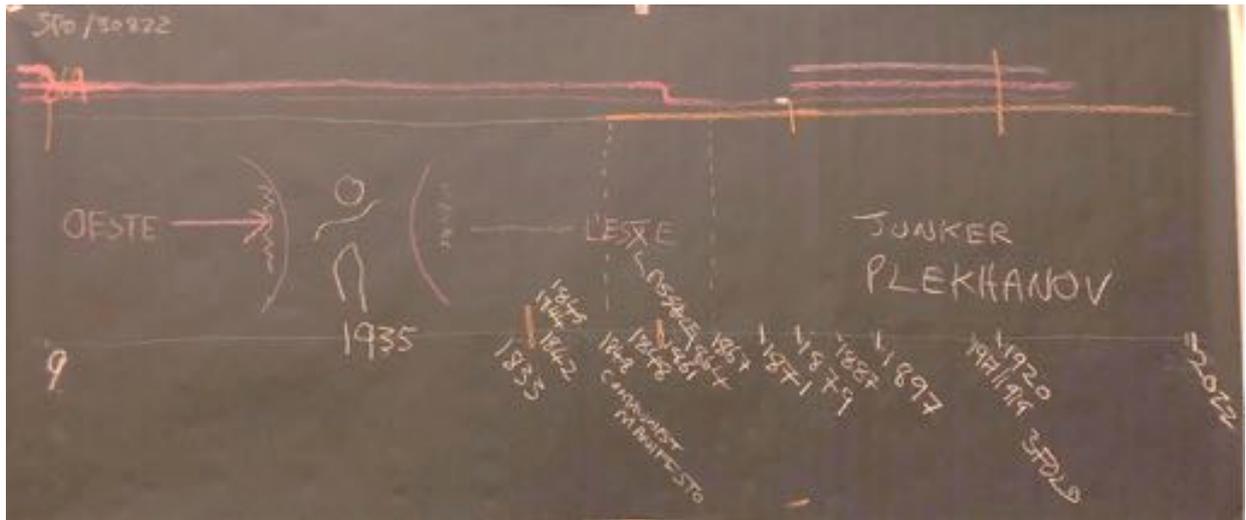
Thank you for coming. I didn't expect so many people! And I was expecting to have an intimate evening, so we have to create that intimacy even though there are so many people in the room... therefore no cell phones, please. And although I'm standing, this is not meant to be a lecture, so we have to imagine we're actually in one circle. I would also like to thank Xavier for coming to translate and Renata and her team for organising everything. Also, I'm responding to a conversation I had with Josiana, but I'm speaking here entirely of my own volition and in my own right. I'm not speaking on behalf of any organisation, also not the Anthroposophical Society. I'm speaking in my professional capacity as an economic historian, and I think the content will speak for itself.

We have another problem: if you're sitting on a red chair please find another chair. And if you've put your bag or your papers on a red chair please remove them. They are reserved for Rudolf Steiner and Karl Marx, if they deem we're intimate enough to join us, which is why it's called 'An evening with Rudolf Steiner and Karl Marx, hosted by me'. And then, for our protection I will ask Lucia to read a verse:

Christ John of Rose Cross protect us
Guide us on our path
In the hope that it is your path too
Help us be attentive
But nonetheless decisive

To centre the economy
Is to resolve the chaos in karma
Facing us with the astral life
In touching a task perhaps not his
Of keeping true the economic structure of the world

Grant us the courage
To pursue our objectives
And the forces of spirit
To remain conscious of you.



As it happens, I didn't plan to do this. I came to Brazil of my own volition to meet with some colleagues. I haven't been invited here and no one's paying me to be here. I just have a number of projects here and wanted to touch base after two or three years of not being able to be here. And so this evening is unplanned, unexpected and unfinanced – and therefore it's 'my' meeting in 'my' space on 'my' terms! Meaning, the responsibility for everything this evening is entirely mine and nobody else's.

Now it happens to be, but this was also not part of my thinking – not to the month, but to the year, it was 25 years ago when I first came here, I think, on Josiana's invitation and I gave a lecture, 'What Future Brazil?' I gave that in Monte Azul. It occurred to me earlier this morning that this is therefore a kind of anniversary.

And now I want to begin with a statement on current social history. We've become accustomed to two frameworks in modern social life. First, the first, second and third world. The first world is the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant world. The second world is the Soviet world. And the third world is everybody who was a colony of those two worlds. This is the origin of first, second and third worlds. It's been modified over the years, so that now we speak of 'developed' and 'undeveloped' economies, with Brazil an undeveloped economy and an 'emerging market'.

And then we have three sectors – business, government and civil society. The point I'm making is that these two triple terms began shortly after the First World War. They are not only caricatures, but they blind humanity to Rudolf Steiner's threefold social ideas. This is a very important phenomenon; we misguide ourselves completely if we think, for example, that the anthroposophical movement is part of civil society as understood normally. There was already a prior understanding of civil society in the 18th century Enlightenment, when civil society meant human beings are able to have a wider, albeit rational, image of life other than their self-interest. This is a potential all human beings have, whether they're in business, in government or in an NGO. In my judgement, these threesomes hide Rudolf Steiner's social impulse from humanity. So then one has to ask, if that is the case, why and how did this historical circumstance come about? What happened between, say 1848 and 1917-1919, the time when Rudolf Steiner published his ideas about the threefold social order, ideas he'd been working on for thirty years before he mentioned them in public, and amount to what one could describe as a spiritual scientific understanding of history and society?

In 1848, Karl Marx published the *Communist Manifesto*, which was the first appearance and the first concise formulation of the materialist conception of history. That's a historical fact and also a historical enigma: Why did the materialist conception of history incarnate or find expression so long before Rudolf Steiner's version of history? What I'm referring to is a very precise

phenomenon in history. It's part of our times, that if one has an image of life one is able to incarnate or implement that image if one is very methodical. In our time in history, be careful what you think because what you think today is what you'll do tomorrow. This is the condition of the time; anybody can have any thought and then can make it a reality on earth. That's why today is so completely chaotic. Nothing is working – governments are collapsing, markets are collapsing, everything is heading for a perfect storm.

And now, in that situation there are two examples to watch very carefully. First of all, what we call Marxism is not a synonym for Karl Marx. Marxism (and all its relatives) is the way the materialist conception of history enters into earthly life and has its organising power. Secondly, by the same logic, by the same circumstance, the way Rudolf Steiner understands social life is the way he then tries to implement it and it has the same power to organise human life. I have no doubt about this. I've been of this mind for many, many years – maybe fifty years, when I started doing this – and nothing has happened to cause me to change my opinion.

The first evening I held 'with' Karl Marx was the founding conference of the Social Sciences Section in England in 1974. And in 1980, I wrote but I didn't publish it until last year, a study of Marx, Steiner and Keynes called *Beyond Capital and Labor*.¹ And then, the first book I wrote in 1979, called *Prelude in Economics*,² was written in response to the *Communist Manifesto*. In a sense, the *Communist Manifesto* was a stream of consciousness book, written sort of non-stop. That's why I say through this book the materialist conception of history entered into human history. Similarly, I experienced my book as a response born of the seven years prior when I had been holding seminars on Rudolf Steiner's economics. It's also very short with 22 brief chapters and it was written non-stop walking on a Greek island, only stopping to eat and sleep. I'm sharing this to show that I have some credentials for the topic I'm talking about and to illustrate that it's too easy to oppose Rudolf Steiner and Karl Marx, but it is also too easy to put them in the same room. This is an extremely delicate topic, and that's why in my image we are here in a very intimate circle. We are not here to have political opinions about what I'm saying, but a conversation.

First, I have to present some material, but as soon as I can I will sit down. I'm going to begin with a story which some of you will know. I don't know who is an anthroposophist in the room, but some of you will know this story for sure. If you need the reference it's in *Karmic Relationships*, volume 2, CW 236. I should preface that by saying, per Steiner, anyone mentioned in those lectures has something to do with the anthroposophical movement. There, he talks about the king of Italy and Garibaldi and in the next paragraph he says, "for certain reasons, it occurred to me to focus on a forest in Northeast France in the 9th century." In my drawing, I have used some sort of scale, but it's not mathematical, to show that the 9th century was a long time ago. And in this forest lived a man who had an estate. In those times, the economy and society were made up of lots of private estates, each with their own money and their own armies. There was a man who was a great adventurer who left with his army on an adventure, maybe to take over another estate. And when he came back someone had dispossessed him. So for the rest of his life he became a serf of the new owner of his estate. Because he had been the estate owner he did not have to work, he was just a serf. He then spent the entire rest of his life in seething hatred of the man who dispossessed him. I'm paraphrasing, but it's almost verbatim. And then, Rudolf Steiner says, they returned in the 19th century, meeting each other again for the first time in 1842. The one who lost his estate was Karl Marx, and the one who stole his estate was Friedrich Engels.

This event had two main consequences. The seething hatred of Karl Marx in his last life became dialectical materialism, not *his* way of thinking, but a way of thinking where the material world is thought to exist independently of the spiritual world. This is a supremely important piece of

¹ Search aeBookstore.com.

² Prelúdio à Economia. aeBookstorebrasil

epistemology and if one doesn't understand this epistemology there is no way one can comment on Marxism. Likewise, it's extremely difficult to understand what is going on in modern history, especially for Marxists. And the second thing that happened, Rudolf Steiner says, is that Friedrich Engels funded Karl Marx for the rest of his life using one third of his entire revenue, an amount of money that left Marx free to do whatever he had to do.

And now I want to share three things in Marx's life which I think it is very important to know about, although I'm not putting any meaning on this and I'm not meaning any causation by it. I just want to mention them to you. In Marxist literature, something happened in 1844 in Marx's life which is known as 'the epistemological break'. If you read Marx before and after this time, it is very clear what this is about. His writings before 1844 were very idealistic. In my words, it's as if on incarnating he had had a huge vision of a united humanity at the end of its journey and this is what drove him in his early writings. There's a lot of idealism. But by 1844, his experiences in life meant he was being disappointed: what he thought he would find he didn't find. And so after 1844 he starts to write in his 'scientific' way. He starts to conceive how this vision is going to be practically realisable. This is my understanding of the epistemological break. He has a vision, but through his experiences on earth he loses direct sight of it and translates it into what he thinks is a practically possible social order.

And now the other two things. By now he is in complete conflict with the Prussian conservatism of his time, and specifically with Otto von Bismark, the Prime Minister to Germany's Emperor. So in 1845 he goes into exile in England and this is his main challenge: what he feels could happen is confronted by Bismark and the Emperor of Germany. This becomes a huge thing in Marx's life. Then there is a very strange event which is seldom referred to. I'm going to link it to another statement by Rudolf Steiner, but only by way of a question: Why did Rudolf Steiner say that it is possible for an initiate in a subsequent life to enter a body which is not suited to initiate status? He says this when he's talking about Marx and Engels, but it's not clear whether this is about them or just a general statement. For there's a very specific event in Marx's life around 1867. He has a serious bout of what today we call monkey-pox. He writes in his correspondence with Engels (he and Engels wrote a lot about each other) that, 'for this whole year I cannot sit down in the British Library reading room because my backside and my genitals are covered in boils.' I've known about this for a long time³ and I've always wondered if this is why he was so irascible. I'm not saying anything, but I don't understand why Rudolf Steiner makes this comment. On the other hand, as I'm sure we all know, however wonderful we are, however much we meditate, however much we try to be good anthroposophists, sometimes we are so annoyed by something that we forget our better selves. Speaking for myself, when I have pretensions about myself I am constantly on the look out for when I get angry or when something happens for whatever reason that links me to the less noble parts of my nature.

And now I want to give you another little chapter in these descriptions of history. At this time when Marx was alive, in late 18th and early 19th century, three people were born: the person who became William IV, Emperor of Prussia-Germany, Otto von Bismarck and Kaspar Hauser. Kaspar Hauser was murdered in 1833 with the specific consequence in history that Bismarck the servant did not serve Kaspar Hauser; he served William IV and then William I. I can't go into the whole history of Germany, and I expect many people in the room already know that, but the point is if Bismarck had served Kaspar Hauser he would have served a being of some stature. But neither William IV nor William I had such a stature. They were Prussians and with a hatred of the French. It's important to have a sense of that, of how very recently in the history of Germany, Napoleon had ended the German empire. And this phenomenon in history, that Bismarck did not serve the person he should

³ A special TV documentary by Kenneth Clarke with John Galbraith in 1976.

have served, turned him into the 'Iron Chancellor'. He became the instrument of Prussian Junker militarism.

The next piece of history that Rudolf Steiner points out is a kind of essential problem between Marx and Bismarck: Marx's support of the working class and therefore Marx's understanding of wages. This is something they would never agree on. However, at the same time as Marx, there was another socialist, Ferdinand Lassalle. He was not liked by the other socialists. He was the founder of a political party, a forerunner of the SPD party in Germany. And he had a theory of wages which Bismarck preferred. Meaning, Bismarck was able to entertain a socialism which was less strident than that of Marx and within the constraints of his (Bismarck's) parameters. But Lassalle insulted his prospective father-in-law, so he was challenged to a duel by his prospective brother-in-law who was a skilled shooter. Lassalle had only one day to learn to shoot, so he died. His 'Iron Law of Wages' died with him, and so the conflict intensified between Marx and Bismarck.

Now the reason why William IV came before William I is that there was a change in constitutional circumstance. William IV was the father of William I, but in the meantime the whole constitutional situation changed. That's why IV comes before I. The change took place in 1848. The revolution of that year ended in May with the Parliament of Frankfurt. This was a liberal affair that resulted in the people of Germany saying we want to have a constitutional monarchy, meaning, we're happy to have a monarchy, but we will crown the monarch. So in May 1848, they offered William IV the crown as Emperor of a constitutional monarchy, but he said – this is paraphrased as I don't have the exact quote – "I will not be crowned by the dirt of the earth." He then ruled through Bismarck. This is really important background. So that Bismarck is not even in a parliamentary situation; he was ruling as the agent of a despot who had lost his empire to Napoleon. It's really important to live the dynamic behind all this. This is in the background of Marx's life all the time.

And then something happened. Lassalle died in 1864, but very importantly in 1861 William IV had a stroke and became mentally incapable, so his son, William I, became the Emperor. He was not the cleverest of men and he hated the French. So much so, that in 1871 the unification of Germany was completed by Bismarck and the French were defeated. And, just as a side story, the amount that the Germans charged the French was 200 million, a great sum but it was an amount the French could afford to pay. This was agreed in the Palace of Versailles in Paris. And that was the reason why in Versailles in 1920 the French insisted on charging the Germans more than they ever could pay so they would never again be a threat to France. So far, these are external facts of history; you can check them for yourself and you can amplify them. You can corroborate them and if you find a mistake please let me know. This is the context, this is the situation in which these two men who had a prior existence met each other and formulated something against this incredibly complicated background.

And then I want to add two dates which are also important: 1879, this is the beginning of the current Michael Age. And then in 1897 there was a book published by George Plekhanov. Not many people know of this guy; you have to be a Marxist to know all this. This is a very short book and it's called *The Materialist Conception of History*.⁴ The *Communist Manifesto* is founded on the materialist conception of history, but Plekhanov describes that conception. By this time, all the antagonisms between Marx and the Prussians or among the Socialists, all this had resolved into one simple answer – we have the materialist conception of history and we have what becomes Marxism-Leninism. That will be the way the materialist conception of history manifests.

And now I want to change gear. This is external history still, but there's a big difference between the materialist conception of history and Rudolf Steiner's conception of history. If I describe this in epistemological terms, the materialist conception of history cannot think with multiple independent

⁴ International Publishers, New York, 1964. See Appendix.

variables. The opposite of that, if you want to think in the manner of spiritual science, the proof will be that you *can* think with multiple independent variables. The one is brain-based and the other is free of the brain. That's why, in the chaos of all the images everyone has in today's world there are only two you should look at, and then you have to make your choice: the materialist conception of history and an understanding of life based on spiritual science.

But Marxists are not the only ones who think in terms of the materialist conception of history. Anyone who thinks about society with the brain is practising the materialist conception of history. This is the subtlety of Plekhanov's book – with the materialist conception of history, it's only possible to think in binary terms, of two things. It doesn't matter which one you prefer, there are only two; there are not three, four, five or more. Anyone who thinks with the materialist conception of history in social terms will only think of a binary form of governance, the bi-party governance that has become the norm throughout the world in the 20th century.⁵ You can have a debate with five candidates for your presidency,⁶ but there are only two who matter. We don't know yet which two, but there will only be two. In England, we liken this to having a game of cricket. It takes three days to complete a cricket match because first it's your turn to bat, then it will be our turn, but there isn't a third turn or team. The whole of humanity is fixated on bi-party politics. Secondly, because of our binary thinking since 1917 and the Russian Revolution, which was not an innocent event in history, the whole of humanity is either of the West or of the East, or capitalist or communist. It doesn't matter which; we are divided forever into this or that and no other possibilities. And when the 70-year capitalist-communist experiment that began in 1917-1919 ended on time in 1989, the Wall came down and was immediately replaced by the West against Islam. And now this antagonism of the West against Islam is being replaced by the antagonism between the West and the autocracies of China and Russia.

A third example of this binary circumstance is the fake impartiality, for example, of the BBC. I don't want to insult your press, so I'll just insult mine! We claim to hear both sides of the argument. We hear one, and then we hear the other – and this is the end of discussion. And this is reinforced... if you watch the news, there came a time in the United States about 40-50 years ago when the news began to be broadcast by two people. Initially, two men but then a man and a woman. And so began the game of one guy saying something hard and the other guy saying something soft, "don't worry about it."

I'm coming to the close of the presentation. I've tried to show you external history and the dynamic introduced in the 20th century, which is binary or twofold but not threefold. And then I was going to close with the question: If we have a binary situation in the world who's fault is that? Is that the fault of history or is that the fault of anthroposophists, who are the only people who know about the threefold social order? I always remember a lecture I attended in 1978 at the Goetheanum by Rudolf Grosse, the then President of the Anthroposophical Society, about the Baader-Meinhof Gang. They were young German revolutionaries described as terrorists. And he said very categorically that it's not for us anthroposophists to call them terrorists. They came to earth expecting to find on earth the threefold social order functioning and that immense disappointment turned them into terrorists. So, the real question is, if there is no threefold social functioning whose fault is that? To make that a bit more concrete, in the book *Die Kernpunkte*,⁷ Steiner makes clear that the idea of a threefold social order is born out of trying to understand what form of social order belongs to human beings when understood in terms of thinking, feeling and willing? This is what he took thirty years to research, his discovery of the threefold nature of the human being. It's on the same level as William Harvey's discovery of the circulation of blood. This discovery by Harvey completely turned the medical world and the understanding of the human being upside down.

⁵ In *The Occult Movement in the 19th Century*, Lecture 1, CW 254, Rudolf Steiner hints at the occult background to this.

⁶ Referring to the Brazilian TV debate two nights previously.

⁷ *Towards Social Renewal*. Rudolf Steiner. Rudolf Steiner Press, London 1977 [1919].

So, now, to close. I don't know if they're in the room because the chairs are still empty: Were they here? Did they come and then leave? Where are they now? But one should never forget that the threefold social order, *Die Kernpunkte*, the three articles that Rudolf Steiner wrote in *LuziferGnosis* in 1905 – everytime he begins his social analysis he begins in effect by saying, "I've been communing with Karl Marx with whom I have a lot of empathy, but I recognise where he made a mistake." And, therefore, Marxism begins where Marx stops thinking clearly. And I will give you one very specific instance where Rudolf Steiner shows this. It's in the second lecture of his economics course, where he says Marx's theory of labour is "a colossal piece of nonsense." This is very important because it means that if one wants to build up a conception of society it will depend on one's theory of labour. Get that wrong, and everything will be wrong. What that means is, if Marx's theory of labour was a colossal piece of nonsense, insofar as Marxism and all its derivatives are based on this they are an even more colossal piece of nonsense.

And now I will say something that Rudolf Steiner didn't say directly but that you can see in his own story. "I should know when a theory of labour is wrong, because as Aristotle I made a mistake that became the labour theory of value. I repeated this mistake as Thomas Aquinas, when I just put it in Christian language. But I corrected it in my twin theory of value."

And now I'm going to end with a particular theme. I've said a great deal and I'm covering a great period of time. I've even included 2022 in my storyline here, when an intimate conversation took place in São Paulo in Brazil! But the whole story here now becomes concentrated between the mid 1840s and early 1920s. As you know, Rudolf Steiner had an understanding of history as symptomatology. Every single date is pointing to something up here (the upper part of the drawing, orange line). If you learn dates you learn nothing. Dates and events are symptoms of the true history which is happening invisibly. And now Steiner asks in that context, so what happened in the 1840s, this period when Marx met Engels, when Marx lost his vision and went into exile, when he wrote the *Communist Manifesto* and when the Emperor of Germany refused to be crowned by his people? What is the background to all these events?

He answers: The whole of humanity crossed the threshold unaware and unprepared.

This then had two consequences. In general terms, certain beings then took charge of human history, retrograde, backward-looking beings. And they drove the bellicose history from then until the First World War, including the vengeance of the French at the end of the First World War. They were the effective authors of the false nationalism that has reigned ever since, with the idea that every country has to have its own economy and its own central bank. And second, this you can see in his biography at the end of his life, Rudolf Steiner has to do everything possible to bring to humanity's attention the fact that the whole of humanity has crossed the threshold unaware and unprepared. And only when we wake up to this, one-by-one, will we be able to remedy our situation and take charge of life again. We can then go back in history and we can rerun history.

I hope with that that you have a sense of why in my understanding – and I haven't mentioned anything to do with Steiner's teaching of the workers in Berlin or anything like this – if you know your history, it is 'technically' not possible to associate Rudolf Steiner with Marxism. It's spiritually impossible and incarnationally impossible because they still have a relationship. There's no way you can associate Rudolf Steiner or anthroposophy with Marxism, but there are ways you *can* associate Rudolf Steiner with Karl Marx.

After the presentation, some conversation took place but it was not captured well by the microphone. However, what follows is the substance of my main response.

You did not speak about all of Karl Marx's incarnations...

Sorry, no, but that was not my aim, nor do I know anything other than what I have just repeated from Rudolf Steiner.

There were a couple of questions concerning the 1930s in Germany, the role of the Nazis, and the current rise of the Right in Italy. These had a political tinge to them, which was not the point of the evening. The aim was not to go into the more overtly political aspects of the last 150 years or more, but to provide a spiritual-historical background to the 20th century, in order to help understand why things have played out the way they have – and continue to do so.

The Economics Conference of the Goetheanum, held a conference in Vancouver in March 2019, with a specific theme and context. The context was a worldwide meeting of the Economics Conference. We moved to Folkestone in England in 2016, directly across from the frontline in the First World War against the Germans. 2014-2018 remembered these events in great detail, including the 8 million men who marched there to war. That is also where the Treaty of Versailles was completed. So part of our work was to try and see behind these events, especially to the second Renaissance, visible in jazz, cubism, and so on. And especially in the history of bookkeeping. But nobody saw this event because of the war. We then began to feel that humanity has a second chance. You can follow all these things into 2022 – so our thesis then, as now, is that 100 years after the end of WW1 we get a second chance, but we will not get a third.

We have the ability to go back in our minds to a point in history – 869, to be precise. At that point there was spirit, soul and body (the various pink lines on the drawing). But in 869, the spirit became subsumed into the soul. Then, in the mid 19th century, 1848, both are subsumed into the body. That is the materialist conception of history. However, you can deny you have a spirit and also a soul, that you are but a body; you can think this, but your experience will not believe it. Instead, you come to the experience that one has to pause and one has a split second to make a choice of world conception – materialist or spiritually scientific. Here is where Rudolf Steiner rethinks everything – for it is not possible just to have a body. The material world is part of the spiritual world; it does not exist unto itself. He discovers the threefold nature of the human being, but he does not talk about this until he speaks of the threefold social order. So the thesis (which is not a moral one), argues that if we can understand that we have crossed the threshold unprepared, one can go back to that point one by one and know where one is in history and in respect to the threshold event.

Not only where one is, but what it is one has to do now, now when we have a second chance. I think there is a phenomenon whereby in this way one can 'fast track' and overhaul all the historical problems, meaning the sooner one understands this history, the sooner one will not be involved in binary affairs – I want Lula, or I want Bolsinano. Things will not be binary. To use a superdramatic image, it occurred to me in this building this morning, when talking to a lady, that everyone has a specific purpose, even karma, that can be made conscious. Not everyone has the karma of being able to speak with central bankers, that is my karma; we each have a specific karma and should not think in terms of someone else's story being more important, but that each one of us can know what he or she should or should not do. Just as, in my view, I know what is about to happen in the world of finance – a perfect storm is brewing – so each in his or her own field can know the next step.

I then drew a picture of Rudolf Steiner between the East and the West (the colours or not significant). Coming from the East, ever since at least Uruk, Mesopotamia, is one personality

coming *with* RS incarnation after incarnation is one personality, Ita Wegman. And coming *to* Rudolf Steiner out of the West is another personality, Daniel Dunlop. In 1935, both these individuals were thrown out of the Anthroposophical Society. The one from the East has been ‘rehabilitated’ (an unfortunate term usually used in reference to drug addicts or prisoners), the one from the West not yet. So, until this movement adopts the mission of Dunlop, coming out of the West to meet Rudolf Steiner who was his brother, there is not the foundation to go beyond all the problems, the rise of Mussolini, the Nazis, and all the things that have happened in recent decades, including Korea, Algeria, Viet Nam. The world has been in permanent war since the end of World War One.

I cannot say how an individual compensates errors in his biography or incarnations, but I have no doubt that when one becomes aware of the threshold phenomenon, what it means, you will know exactly what you have to do, but you will then face a problem. There will be a gap. The forces you need to do that you will not have. So you will be afraid to do it. And only by standing in it will you be given the forces. I think that is true in all realms; I can vouch for it in finance. Nothing from the past has validity tomorrow; nothing from the blood. Everything now comes from your *I when you believe in yourself*. I think, this is axiomatic for this period where we have a second chance.

But that window or door will close not so far from now. And then it will be too late. I think this has clear biographical consequences. It includes how one compensates for one’s ‘bad’ deeds, or whatever. Because, don't forget, we do not know what Karl Marx may have done to Friedrich Engels in the time before, so that in the 9th century Engels’s theft of Marx’s property may already have been compensatory. And we also do not know this – but can imagine it – that when Marx left his earthly life as Marx, he would have seen the mistakes in his thinking. And he would have seen everything done in his name which he would not then put his name to.

A comment concerning Kaspar Hauser...

I know of the Kaspar Hauser story via Peter Tradowsky and Steiner, but also from Werner Herzog’s film. There is a background image of Napoleon as a human body without a soul, and Kaspar Hauser as the Child of Europe denied a body. Meaning, the way he was imprisoned – he was not killed but was kept unable to stand upright so he would not be able to bear the mission due to him. He was not supposed to find the professor and his wife who brought his development to a place where he could receive his mission. He was of royal birth, and if he had found his mission this would have been the opposite of Junker Prussian militarism.

And then Bismark would have asked: How can I make your image of a united, catholic Europe a possibility? A Europe of everyone, not a Europe of Prussians. Then there would never have been a Mussolini, or today’s many nationalisms. We have to develop a clearer sense of symptomatic history in order to understand affairs on earth. This is especially true for Russia, where life post Tsarist times has been so demonising and spoiling of Russia that Putin is no surprise today. His call to Mother Russia, to *ur* Russia in eastern Ukraine, and so on – it tugs on Russian heart strings, but it continues to play into the game of binary social existence.

Now, to close this space, I would like to ask Lucia Sigolo to repeat the opening verse:

Christ John of Rose Cross protect us
Guide us on our path
In the hope that it is your path too
Help us be attentive
But nonetheless decisive

To centre the economy
Is to resolve the chaos in karma
Facing us with the astral life
In touching a task perhaps not his
Of keeping true the economic structure of the world

Grant us the courage
To pursue our objectives
And the forces of spirit
To remain conscious of you.

Appendix: A Non-Materialist Conception of History

Published in *Associate!* June 2022, p.5.⁸

Ever since 1917, the world has been caught in the headlights of the idea that we have to decide between the West and East, between capitalism and socialism (or nowadays the West and Islam, or the West and the increasingly dangerous autocracies of China and Russia). However, notwithstanding its seriousness, and whether intentional or not, this is a great charade: the true choice we have to make is between the materialist conception of history and a view of history born of what Rudolf Steiner calls ‘spiritual science’, the scientific method applied beyond the sense-perceptible world (such as prices, ratios, etc...).

The materialist conception of history is quickly and often described in terms of economic relationships as primary, from which derive laws and rights life in general, out of which in turn arises cultural life as ideology. There is a sequence of causation here which is the very opposite of that implicit in Rudolf Steiner’s threefold image of society, according to which the spirit comes of itself, the role of rights life is to facilitate this, and that of economic life to resource it. Expressed as a positive policy, how can the initiative of human beings be capitalised such that those who bear them lose no autonomy at the same time that the world accepts them?

A ‘slower’ explanation of the materialist conception of history would pause at the step prior to the statement about economic relationships being primary. In 1897, George Plekhanov published *The Materialist Conception of History*. If one gets past the occasional invective in his arguments, the key is how one understands our relationship to the natural world we stand within. Is that a world to be conquered or tamed? To conquer is to think in terms of power; to tame is to think in terms of shared endeavour. More deeply, when relating to nature one has to ask: Do I come from there? Am I born of a clod of earth? Or do I have my origins and therefore my identity elsewhere?

The point of this brief wondering? One’s conception of history cannot be divorced from the social construct one occupies and considers right. The materialist conception of history ineluctably will manifest as a world in which we are thought to be born of the earth, of matter. Hence, ‘materialist’. If we come to earth ‘trailing clouds of glory’, as Wordsworth puts it, we can argue over the details of what that means, but we are compelled by our enquiry to create and inhabit a social order in which what people choose to do with their lives in the deeper sense of their biographical potential becomes the ‘driver’ of everything. What rights are then needed and what resources (what call on the earth) for that to become social fact?

Insofar as Rudolf Steiner’s sociology is representative of such a questing, his answer is what he describes in everything known generally as the threefold nature of social life.

⁸ <https://economics.goetheanum.org/publications/newsletters>