

# **The Philosophy of History**

**with specific reference to whether we can and should re-write history, and if so, for what purpose and to what effect.**

# Some Ideas about History Done Right

- No history can be comprehensive, no description complete
- Diverse perspectives are valuable
- The problems of the present will influence what aspects of the past are of interest and what perspectives seem valuable
- A new perspective is not a re-writing of history, it is an augmentation
- Nevertheless, historical scholarship may cast doubt on some past analyses making some “re-writing” desirable
- All the above assumes an honest and competent search for objective truth

# Some fears about History as Propaganda

- Postmodernism casts doubt on all (historical) “narratives”:
  - doubting objective truth, comprehensive rather than selective scepticism
  - viewing all narratives as “socially constructed” and serving a power structure
  - regarding language as meaningless
- Deconstruction leads to Reconstruction
  - Redefine all terms to suit the chosen narrative
  - The narrative is not intended to reflect “the truth” (which does not exist), but to serve some political agenda
  - “Critical social justice” is such a reconstruction - to what end?
  - See: Pluckrose on “The Evolution of Postmodern Thought” for a narrative about that narrative