

CHOOSING BETWEEN VARIOUS OPTIONS OF THE PAST

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The Russian political struggle is a struggle of backward conservatives with macabre reactionaries. However, macabre reactionaries win, as a rule, because they have more drive, they are more energetic, and they have a certain vision of the future, which often entails returning to the past. In principle, whoever is not a reactionary, is a conservative. The word 'reactionary' is a rather ambiguous one, and it bears a large emotional load, hence people here tend to direct the term 'reactionary' towards anyone that they don't like. If we consider historical and philosophical criteria, the reactionaries are those who are presently in power in Russia, because they are trying to bring the country back to the social system that existed in the 19th century, i.e. to reverse the historical process, in the strict sense of this word. Undoubtedly, the return to capitalism was a reactionary phe-

nomenon. That's why the Russian elite, the Russian intelligentsia, and the Russian political class en masse are reactionaries.

There are no others at the establishment level. Everything else is marginal. Hence any progressive, leftist, or even simply educational tendencies in Russia are marginal and are not perceived seriously at the level of politics.

Argumentation of these reactionaries stems from certain ethical notions: the market is good, everything else is evil. In his own time, Stuart Hall introduced the notion of 'discursive struggle,' when discourses, rather than theories, compete with each other. And once you move into a discursive struggle, argumentation is no longer needed and is indeed seen as something harmful. He who appeals to reason in his position is in an extremely weak situation. Of course, he loses whenever he tries to do that in order to rationally justify his position.

The progressive agenda is not allowed to participate in any serious discussion. The paradox is not in the fact that today's agenda of the progressives looks like one targeting the return to certain principles of the middle of the 20th century. **Conditionally speaking, there is a struggle going on between the 19th and the 20th century. Those who say: 'Let's return to the 20th century' look the most progressive.**

The current situation in Russia is such that we can now choose between various levels of orientation with the past. All the rest, based on the level of mass consciousness, will simply be rejected because today mass consciousness does not perceive any project for

the future. At best, it will accept a certain project aimed at restoring something good that once existed in the past. Any other project will be perceived as utopian and unrealistic.

This is a property of the mass consciousness, demoralized by the defeat of social revolutions and any democratic projects in general. Simply speaking, it is a person who knows that all his attempts to do something good end up in something bad, something his entire life has proved to him, conclusively and unambiguously. Of course, he will follow this pattern of thinking. It is another matter if he gains a new experience in the course of his further life, then he can be talked to in a different way. But right now he has no such experience.

For instance, any tangible attempt to return to the social state or to industrial development, which goes beyond the interests of the elite, embracing democratic values, will immediately shape a project of a future based on this practice. A future project is not possible within the frame of capitalist ideology. Either Fukuyama is right: there is no future, there is no history, we will always be where we are now, or a certain future will come, and this future is socialism. There are no Russian specifics in it. **Our only specific trait is the Russian archetype.** Here all the processes that happen everywhere and are rather banal take on an extreme character, simply due to their extreme intensity. But the processes themselves contain nothing unique. ■

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