

PROGRESSIVE FORCES OR IMPOSTORS?

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We shouldn't equate the concepts of 'conservative' and 'reactionary'. Conservatives are actually very different in their preferences. There are revolutionary conservatives, social conservatives, liberal conservatives, loyalist conservatives, fascist conservatives and rightist conservatives. Their varieties are so many that, at present, this word only has practical value for publicity purposes. Practice in the modern world is such that, on numerous occasions, at least in the West, we have witnessed conservatives promoting the most audacious of liberal market reforms. At the same time, so-called pink social liberals have most often been seen as socialist or interventionist reactionaries, due to the fact that they have obstructed any 'market progress' by increasing government intervention in the economy to the degree that the state could no longer fulfil its obligations.

Unlike the term 'conservative', there has always been a stigma associated with the word 'reac-

tionary'. No one has ever bothered to endow the notion of 'conservative' with any sort of acceptable or encyclopaedic definition. The term 'reactionary' and its derivatives have always remained popular buzzwords used by journalists and PR specialists. The following example may serve as a characteristic example of this. A series of biographical publications was issued during the Soviet times under the title *Ardent Revolutionaries*. It contained the life stories of Russian populist revolutionaries, including both Decembrists and Bolsheviks. When this series first appeared, it provoked jokes about 'ardent reactionaries', but eventually lost its humorous aspect when some people came to believe it in earnest.

However, the thing is that being a 'reactionary' *per se* means consciously opposing or being regarded in opposition to generally accepted consensual ideas about progress. But we do not actually have a generally valid and accepted concept of 'progress' in the modern world. **Someone who calls himself a 'proponent of progress' is simply a fool and a liar.** Every generation, every national culture, every political party and every tiny coffee-club frequented by the intelligentsia gives its own meaning to this notion. Someone attempting to define the concept of 'progress', according to German tradition, would need to come up with a three-volume opus, and still the concept would largely remain elusive. As a consequence, the concepts of both 'reaction' and 'progress' are only buzzwords that are unfit for scientific discourse. These notions lost their meaning as far back as a century ago.

We should bear in mind that the study of such a notion as 'progress' is a major issue that leads us to conclude that progress

is something that amounts to a pseudo-synonym of some kind of development. However, even what each of us regards as development depends on what we hope to achieve with that progress. Whether we want to see ourselves pawns in the ironclad battalion of proletariat or leather-clad commander-companions to Leo Trotsky is up to us. **It is precisely this choice that influences what is labelled progress and what is to be deemed a reaction.** Regardless, whatever choice is taken, 'development' as we know it, will always bring doom to millions and dubious glory to but a few people.

Thus, for example, at the end of the 20th century, the stigma of progress was successfully employed as a Cold War weapon against USSR. Special books of quotations were compiled (sort of ethical codes for the builders of capitalism, as opposed to communism), which suggested that progress should be understood as the market economy, the freedom of movement, the freedom of repatriation to Israel for Jews, etc. However, these were merely propagandistic formulas, not definitions of actual progress. Since **actual progress is multi-layered, to begin with, it is realised in certain stages and, ultimately, these stages can hardly be implemented in full measure.** If you choose to promote a direct democracy model somewhere in Equatorial Africa, for instance, you shouldn't be surprised to see African tribes launching genocide against each other at the very next stage of 'democratic development'. As a result of the implementation of such a direct democracy model, the one who has more machine guns will eventually seize power. Such an outcome can hardly be considered as progress. ■

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