

NOBODY WANTS TO GO BACK, NOBODY IS EAGER TO MOVE FORTH EITHER

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In Russia, where both the Left and Right are united in one overwhelming urge to spend petrol money, it would be improper to speak about reactionaries. After all, reactionaries are people who are interesting in bringing back some essence of order that existed there previously. The old order for Russia is something that has no longer around and this has been the case for some twenty years. During that time, all reactionaries quite naturally vanished and thus, this word is no longer applicable to those who still remain here. The people who are now resisting change are doing so, not because they possess some inner conviction to the effect that it is good to act the way they do - this is simply not the case. They act this way because any changes would disrupt the currently existing process of cashing in on petrol money, which they are very comfortable with. Any changes would only mean that this system would have to be reconsidered. The costs would soar and profits would fall. Naturally, they would eagerly resist any new *perestroikas*. Nevertheless, their resistance can be easily overcome. One is reminded of the confrontation between the Ministry of

Finance and businessmen: each time the former comes up with some new social tax, the later snarl at it for a while but eventually pay it or develop methods by which it is possible to evade them.

This means that, **even those people who herald changes are part of the present order and thus, they are in no way revolutionary.** Hence, there is no way they can challenge the old grumblers who want everything to remain the way it is now.

In fact, this is also why their personal reaction cannot be taken seriously, since all they do is grumble and complain. All of them are in the same boat and they are not interested in fighting each other.

Certainly there exists the potential that some Orthodox fascist force will emerge but for now, this is only a possibility. The bearers of church banners are mere buffoons - they do not constitute a political force. Those people who call us back to cellars and forests also cannot be called a political force and are doomed to remain on the outskirts of politics.

When speaking about reactionaries and conservatives, we are merely fantasising with political terms that have never found any application in our country. For example, a conservative in England has a well-defined set of political programmes. However, what we tend to do is make up terminology due to the lack of any clear ideology in our country, other than that which is ultra-liberal perhaps. Even our liberal parties employ leftist slogans in their election campaigns. However, **conservatism is more than a system of political views; it is a state of mind and soul.** A person tends to embrace conservatism by the time he reaches a certain age. Any person goes through certain stages of development as his worldview changes. When he's twenty years old, he often espouses ultra-liberal views, but by the time he reaches forty and is burdened with children and possessions, he becomes more conservative. This is also true in the case of Russia. We see people who are

demanding changes - let's call them liberals or modernisers for the sake of this discussion. They elbow their way forward, pushing the conservatives aside and become conservatives in their stead. Then comes new modernisers and the process once again repeats itself. This process is still ongoing in Russia. We do not yet have a pendulum of political extremes, as we are still observing waves coasting in, They wash away previous political forces and bring out new ones.

When these forces become conservative, they are not transformed into reactionaries. In fact, the term reactionary sounds rather malicious to me. **When modernisers push conservatives aside, it is those conservatives who want to return to the political arena who eventually become reactionaries.** But I do not see such people in our country, because those who were pushed away have moved abroad and ended up living happily ever after.

The absence of reactionaries can be explained by the young history of the Russian political process. We do not have people who, roughly speaking, have strong recollections of the imminent past. All that we remember of this is so dull and dreary that no one wants to return there. At the same time, the political elites are only concerned with monetary values. **The elites are not entertaining strategic thought but rather think in tactical terms with reference to their own manufactures, media outlets and steamboats.**

However, this is not to say that we need reactionaries. This only proves that we have a strange construct in place: **no one wants to go back and no one's eager to move forth either. In short, people are comfortable with what they currently have. Such is the characteristic features of our political situation: everyone is happy with the status quo.** This is because the introduction of any changes would otherwise demand some action, but no one wants to be involved since there's enough money to go around anyway. ■

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