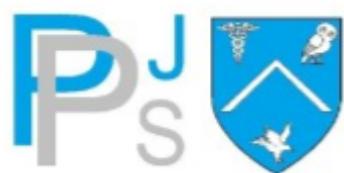


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The Critique of Democracy in the Writings of Nicolás Gómez Dávila
(1913 – 1994)

Abstract

The Western world is experiencing the "death of God" and is living in a self-proclaimed "postmodern era", which boasts of "liberating" the human being, thanks to the cult of reason and the rejection of religious dogmas. In the twentieth century, in Latin America; in the heart of Colombia, Nicolás Gómez Dávila lived and thought. The thinker emphasizes the limitations of human reason, in opposition to the modern cult of reason, freedom and the aspiration to build an earthly paradise. The objective of this article is to present this "illustrious unknown", considered by many researchers as one of the most original thinkers of the twentieth century, who played the role of philosopher-writer in the modern world in a unique style; and his critical view of democracy.

Keywords: Nicolás Gómez Dávila; Democracy; Critique of Democracy;

1. Who is Nicolás Gómez Dávila?

There are writers who seem to come from nowhere. They appear unpredictably from a background that is foreign to them, unprepared for anything or anyone; unprecedented, free of recognition or of useful signals to define them. Eccentric, uncomfortable, unusual; they are unclassifiable and unmistakable. In his manner of writing, Nicolás Gómez Dávila certainly counts as one of them.¹

Born in Bogota, Colombia, on May 18, 1913 and died on May 17, 1994, this great Latin American writer and philosopher is the author of work that is just beginning to be recognized. He was one of the most comprehensive critics of democracy. He achieved international recognition a few years before his death, thanks to German translations of some of his works.

Gómez Dávila spent most of his life among a circle of friends and the confines of his library. He belonged to high social class and was educated in Paris. Due to severe pneumonia, he spent nearly two years at home, where he was educated by private tutors and developed his admiration for classical literature. However, he never attended college. In the 1930s, he returned to Colombia and never visited Europe again, except for a six-month stay with his wife in 1949. He gathered an immense, private library containing more than 30,000 volumes around which gravitated all his philosophical and literary life. In 1948 he helped to found the University of Los Andes in Bogota.²

Nicolás Gómez Dávila's work was true to his times. He did start with disappointment as a life attitude which echoes that of his teachers Burckhardt, Montaigne and Thucydides; his work has a unique position in the history of philosophy, which allows the development of a critique of the major topics of modern culture such as democratic religion and nihilism, capitalism or

¹ F. Volpi, Nicolás Gómez Dávila *El Solitario de Dios*, Villegas editores, 2005, p. 17.

² Retrieved from https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolás_Gómez_Dávila.

socialism. In order to avoid falling into apologetics or pedagogy, he focuses on a genealogy of error, developing a work mainly aphoristic. His caustic criticism similar to that of Nietzsche and Cioran departs, however; from their nihilistic despair due to an aristocratic irony and a firm belief in God.³

2. Who inspired Nicolás Gómez Dávila?

Highly erudite and a great expert of classical languages, Dávila defended a skeptical anthropology founded on an in-depth study of the historians Thucydides and Jacob Burckhardt. He believed that hierarchical structures such as, the Church and the State should order society, and criticized the concept of popular sovereignty. Like Donoso Cortés, Gómez Dávila believed that all political errors ultimately resulted from theological errors. This is why his thinking is described as a form of political theology.⁴

As a Catholic with high ethical standards, his work is openly critical of certain forms of modernity such as, democracy and liberalism which shelter decadence and corruption. His aphorisms, called by him "glosses", are loaded with corrosive irony, intelligence and deep paradox.⁵

Gómez Dávila recognized the French philosopher Michel de Montaigne and the Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt as leading masters of thought, and particularly appreciated their methods of thinking, "My patron saints: Montaigne and Burckhardt".⁶ In fact, although he mentioned them explicitly very little, he had the complete works on the thought of these two authors in his library.

³Serrano Ruiz-Calderón J., *Democracia y nihilismo. Vida y obra de Nicolás Gómez Dávila*, Eunsa, 2015.

⁴ Retrieved from https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolás_Gómez_Dávila.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ Gómez Dávila N., *Escolios a un Texto Implícito*, Atalanta, 1977, p. 428.

After a lengthy study of his library it is possible to determine the philosophical currents that influenced the thought of Gómez Dávila: 1. The intellectual school of the French Action, with its representative Charles Maurras; 2. The counterrevolutionaries, Loyalists, French Catholic traditionalists and pamphleteers; 3. The Counterenlightenment (Gegenaufklärung) and German Romanticism; 4. German thinkers of the "Conservative Revolution"; 5. The Romantics, apologists of Christianity and British Conservatives; 6. European intellectual and economic liberalism.⁷

This classification emerged after a lengthy examination of Gómez Dávila's library catalogue. The analysis was done both on a quantitative level (the number of volumes of each author listed or unlisted) and a qualitative or implicit one, by confronting the text itself. From this research is possible to find the influence of Gómez Dávila's readings in shaping his political ideas condensed in aphorisms.

The grouping made under these currents of thought obeys both, a cultural and historical linguistic logic (Loyalists and French maurassianos, Romantic and German neo-conservatives, British Conservatives) and an obvious intellectual affiliation to traditionalism, conservatism, reactionism, Christianity; all characteristic of Gómez Dávila's philosophy.

Some writers were in the forefront of his library such as Justus Moser, the father of rural conservatism and the Russian edition of the complete works of Konstantin Leontiev, famous castigator of the "average European" as an instrument and ideal of universal destruction. In addition, there were Joseph de Maistre, Donoso Cortés and other sources of reactionary thought who

⁷ Rabier M., Biblioteca gomezdaviliana: las fuentes bibliográficas del pensamiento de Nicolás Gómez Dávila (I). *Revista Interamericana de Bibliotecología*, 2013, vol. 36, n° 3, p. 235-248.

accompanied him since his youth in Paris, such as Maurice Barrès and Charles Maurras, who left a mark on Gomez in his formative years.⁸

What did Gómez Dávila think about Nietzsche? He read him, no doubt, and admired him. He sympathized with him to the point of considering that, compared to Hegel who was "blasphemous", "Nietzsche was only "spoiled." He understood the gist of the German philosopher, because he foresaw that "reading Nietzsche's response is not understood. Nietzsche is a huge question mark". Gómez Dávila was careful not to summarize the work of Nietzsche under the generic label of 'atheism', preferring to speak of him as a "maverick" who invented Superman as "human comfort to the death of God". Thus, he distinguished it from Gnostic atheism, which proclaims the divinity of man, hence democracy. In his words, "democracy proclaims the sovereignty of man, God's Christianity."⁹

Nietzsche and Gómez Dávila are disparate thinkers with notable features in common, but while one sprang from the Protestant tradition of Saxony, the other was the outcome of "Catholicism as the cradle of reaction." These two thinkers shared much of their philosophy of life inspired by the transition to the twentieth century. They also shared 'aristocratism', but one connected it to life while the other found it in the structure of the feudal middle Ages. Both were notorious and lucid critics of modernity and its ideology, but their opinions differed, however, in terms of diagnosis and improvement.

Both in their own way emphasized art as a sublime activity. Their ontological approach to the power of the will is partially complemented by the theory of deification of man. One, being a platonizó who glorified values, while the other actually said openly that value is what the will values. The basic difference between them is faith, which determines Gómez Dávila's submission and

⁸ Gómez Dávila N., *Escolios a un texto implícito*, Atalanta, 2009, p. 31.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 36.

surrender, and his conception of democracy as blasphemous and catastrophic to civilization against the Nietzschean vision of the death of God as liberating and opening up human creativity.¹⁰

Gómez Dávila, in his turn, considered 'disinterested simplicity' with monastic austerity as the most appropriate expression of "wavering thought, filled with contradictions," and claimed that his notes and glosses are "the most discreet and the closest verbal expressions of silence". This is just "because things have meaning when we see them as God sees them".¹¹

3. What current of thought can Nicolás Gómez Dávila be classified under?

Nicolás Gómez Dávila writes from the position of what he calls "reactionary". In his opinion being reactionary in our times means opposing the ideas of equality and unlimited freedom, progress and democracy, materialism, socialism, capitalism and revolution. In other words, his stance is to oppose everything that is considered as universally accepted and contemporary. On the other hand, being reactionary is to be strongly linked with feelings of one's own impotence against the abrupt changes that revolutions bring. The Thinker consciously departs from what is contemporary and keeps everything, even conservatism meaningless because in the modern world almost no decent things are to be preserved.¹²

Gómez Dávila devotes much space to philosophy. One can risk the opinion that he maintained dialogue with all major philosophers of the past and expressed his opinion on almost all basic philosophical problems. For him, philosophy meant endeavoring to constantly answer the same questions with a

¹⁰ Gutiérrez B. Carlos, *La Crítica a la Democracia en Nietzsche y Gómez Dávila*, Ideas y Valores vol.56, no.136, Bogotá Jan./Apr. 2008.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 121.

¹² Urbanek K., *Krótki wstęp do myśli Nicolasa Gomeza Davilii*, Furtasacra, Warszawa 2010. [Breve introducción al pensamiento de Nicolás Gómez Dávila, Furtasacra, Varsovia 2010].

changing vocabulary. But he believed that cultivating philosophical reflection not only requires technical competence but also an ability to analyze, literary talent and the ability to use metaphors.

Nicolás Gómez Dávila is an enemy of all currents of human thought that ignore the complexity and internal plurality of human reality.¹³ He is against the ideas of materialism, utilitarianism and determinism. He is among the thinkers who systematically reject theistic concepts, while feeling a real liking for Nietzsche - at least he gives that impression- and believing that only the philosopher is fully consistent and truly brave. Gómez Dávila gives much attention to Marx, whose achievements he recognized, and the Marxists, whom he judges abortive and careerists.

He holds highly reactionary thinkers such as Plato and Christian thinkers in great esteem and based on his teachings on them. Furthermore, Gómez Dávila appreciated philosophers like Descartes, Pascal, Kant and Schopenhauer, but warns of the dire consequences of adopting Stoic doctrines, Hegel and those related to the French Enlightenment.

This so-called Bogota Solitaire is presented as a God-centered thinker who identified with the past in the conflict between the rationalists and voluntarists while constantly emphasizing the fundamental character of grace and the redemptive work of Christ. He cannot accept either the current trend to place man at the center of the universe, nor Gnosticism. Nor does he share the modern faith in the liberating force of progress, scientific and technical development. Instead, he expects a miracle to happen and puts his trust in the efficiency of patiently repeated prayer¹⁴

¹³ Retrieved from http://furtasacra.pl/download/Breve_introduccion.pdf.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

Nicolás Gómez Dávila was known as a liberal thinker with aristocratic reactionary thought and scholasticism. Deeply religious and a zealot in his works, he described himself as a Catholic – a reactionary – verging on gender traditionalism. What he had in common with thinkers like Joseph De Maistre or Juan Donoso Cortés was an unshakable trust in traditional truths. These were not, however, expressed in a vast and slow prose like that used in the nineteenth century but in spirited style characterized by disappointment, rebellion and lucidity.

4. What is democracy for Nicolás Gómez Dávila and what is his critique of democracy?

For Nicolás Gómez Dávila, modern democracy is the theology of man-god, as it assumes man as God and from this principle derives its rules, its institutions, and its accomplishments. But "if man is the only end of man, a vain reciprocity stems from this principle as two empty, mutually reflecting mirrors."¹⁵ This image being like a relapse into emptiness is equally unacceptable to Nicolás Gómez Dávila on the political level for example, in his belief that democracy is the best system of government. On the contrary, it forms part of a mistaken view: "The error of democratic thought: each individual himself attributes all attributes to the concept of man." ¹⁶

"Democracy is a system in which the just and the unjust, the rational and the absurd, human and bestial, are determined not by the nature of things, but by an electoral process."¹⁷ In addition "Democrats describe a past that never existed and predict a future that is never made,¹⁸ and this makes empirical democracies alive, while they are trying to evade the consequences of theoretical democracy". "The more severe are the problems, the greater the

¹⁵ Gómez Dávila N., *Escolios a un Texto Implícito*, Atalanta, 1977, p. 79.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 343.

¹⁷ Gómez Dávila N., *Notas*, Villegas Editores 2003.

¹⁸ Gómez Dávila N., *Escolios a un Texto Implícito*, Atalanta 1977.

number of the inept that democracy calls to resolve". "The people's vote is a vote and nothing else".¹⁹

After such meditative reflexions the reactionary's attack on modern society appears everywhere as a constant leitmotif, like the incessant droning of an insect the idea obsessively follows Don Nicolas everywhere, even within the walls of his aristocratic library, where he found shelter from that despicable and sordid society consisting of a violently homogeneous mob: 'Life should resemble a room with well-educated people where everyone knows each other but where no one embraces one another...the anonymity of a modern city is as intolerable as the familiarity of existing customs.'²⁰ The same crude product of this democratic society, "modern (man) attempts to draw with lust, violence and vileness, the innocence of a hellish paradise".

For Gómez Dávila it is not necessary to illustrate a view, just open your eyes and look around to confirm what has been said, because it is true that "modern society has been progressively reduced to swirling animals in heat",²¹ while the two poles of modern life are, obviously, business and sexual intercourse. And in the midst of such absurdities, "recent generations of humans wander through the rubble of Western culture like caravans of Japanese tourists by the ruins of Palmyra" Such a poignant frightening and accurate image crystallizes in one of the great aphorisms by the author: "Modern society is not educated to live but to serve".

According to Nicolás Gómez Dávila's thought "Democracy is an anthropotheistic religion. Its principle is an option of a religious nature, an act by which man takes on the role of man god. Its doctrine is a theology of God man; in practice it is the realization of the principle in behavior, in institutions

¹⁹ Gómez Dávila N., Notas, *Ibíd.*

²⁰ Bielsa José A., *El pensamiento reaccionario de Nicolás Gómez Dávila (1913-1994), Una Introducción*, 2010, Retrieved from josbiarbi.blogspot.com.

²¹ *Ibíd.*

and at work."²² Both Capitalism and Communism, and their hybrid, shameful forms, are just different paths leading towards the same or similar goal. Their supporters propose dissimilar techniques, but abide by the same values. The solutions divide; the ambitions however are identical. Their methods are placed in rivalry but their achievements are identical.²³

The ideologues of capitalism do not reject the communist ideal; Communism does not censor the bourgeois ideal. When investigating the social realities of these concurrent ideologies with the aim of denouncing their vices, or disputing the exact identification of the facts, each of them judges with similar criteria. If Communism preaches economic contradiction, the alienation of man, an abstract freedom, the legal equality of bourgeois societies, Capitalism in parallel, stresses the ineptness of the economy, a totalitarian absorption of the individual, political slavery, the restoration of real inequality in communist societies. Both apply the same system of rules, and their dispute is limited to discussing the role of certain legal structures. For each of them private property is a hindrance to another stimulus; but both agree on the definition of property that either hinders or stimulates action.

Bourgeois ideologies and ideologues of the proletariat are, at different times and for different social classes, carriers of rival banners of one and the same hope. All proclaim themselves as an impersonal vote of the same promise. Capitalism does not consider itself as a bourgeois ideology but a construction of human reason. Communism does not declare a class ideology because it says that the proletariat is only a delegate-body of humanity. If Communism denounces bourgeois fraud and deception, Communist Capitalism, are both historical hybrids of the democratic principle; both crave a society in which Man is actually, master of his destiny.²⁴ Rescuing man from the greed for land,

²² Serrano Ruiz-Calderón J., *Democracia y Nihilismo Vida y obra de Nicolás Gómez Dávila*, Eunsa, 2015, p. 191.

²³ Gómez Dávila N., *Textos*, Atalanta, 2010. p. 57.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 58.

from the scourge of blood, social slavery is their common purpose. Democracy expects the redemption of man, and claims that he is in charge of redemption himself..

To overcome his terrible misfortune is the most natural desire of man, but it would be ridiculous for a needy animal, which is threatened and oppressed to place his trust solely in his own intelligence to subjugate the majesty of the universe without attributing to himself greater dignity and a loftier origin. Democracy is not an electoral procedure, as naive Catholics imagine; nor a political system, as the hegemonic bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century thought; or social structure as taught by the American doctrine; or economic organization as recommended by a Communist thesis.²⁵

Those who witnessed the irreligious violence of democratic convulsions believed they were witnessing a profane revolt against the sacred alienation. Even though the popular animosity only breaks out sporadically in furious fierce riots, a cruel criticism of the religious phenomenon and a militant secularism deaf and surreptitiously accompany democratic history. Its explicit manifestations seem subordinated to a deeper desire - sometimes hidden, sometimes public, sometimes quiet, and sometimes outspoken - to secularize society and the world. This irreligious fervor, which lies demurely within, projects a soul-cleansing principle of all mystical excrement.

The religious aspect of the democratic phenomenon is usually explained in two ways: for bourgeois sociology, it is the similarities that sway social turmoil propagated in the emotional strata which is the source of religiosity. For communist sociology, the similarity confirms the social character of religious attitudes. There, intense emotion assumes the form of religion masquerading as

²⁵ Bielsa José A., El pensamiento reaccionario de Nicolás Gómez Dávila (1913-1994), Una Introducción, 2010, Retrieved from josbiarbi.blogspot.com.

social purpose.²⁶ For the research of any democratic fact, only religious analysis helps us to clarify the nature of the phenomenon and allows us to attribute democracy its right dimension. Because by proceeding differently we will fail to establish its genetic definition or show the consistency of its forms or tell its story.

The divinity that democracy attributes to man is not only a poetic figure of speech, but brings forth a strictly theological principle. Democracy speaks to us eloquently, and using a vague lexicon, proclaims human dignity, the nobility of one's origin and destination, intellectual dominance over the universe of matter and instinct. Democratic anthropology is one which agrees with the classic attributes of God.

Anthropotheism, given the current misery of our condition, defines the divinity of man as a past reality, or as a future reality. In his present misfortune of being a fallen man there is god, or is he a risen god. Anthropotheism poses the dilemma of the first two-faced god.²⁷

The democratic doctrine forms an ideological superstructure, thoroughly adapted to its 'religious' tenets. Its tendentious anthropology extends to militant apologetics. If one defines man as consistent with His (God's) postulated divinity, its ideology, in order to confirm the myth of anthropotheism, defines the universe in a manner consistent with the man-contrived definition of man. The doctrine has a speculative purpose. Every democratic thesis is a contentious argument, but no verdict has been given by the judge. In order to fulfill its theological purpose, democratic anthropology defines man as a will. Democratic man has no nature but a history, an inviolable free will that his earthly adventure cannot masquerade or alter.

²⁶ Gómez Dávila N., *Textos*, Atalanta, 2010, p.59.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

If the will is his essence, the man is just freedom because freedom is autonomous determination, essential will, man is essential freedom. Democratic man is not conditional liberty, liberty which human nature can condition, but it is total freedom. Only his free acts are acts of his essential being, and what reduces his freedom corrupts him. Man cannot be subordinated without giving up. His freedom does not prescribe because essence cannot be prescribed.²⁸

For the democratic anthropology men are sovereign and equal entities equipped with free will. After settling his anthropological definition, the doctrine proceeds to develop the four ideological theses of his apologetics. First and foremost, the most obvious democratic ideology is pathetic atheism.

Democracy is not atheistic because it has proved the unreality of God, but because it firmly demands the inexistence of God. The conviction of our divinity involves a denial of His existence. If God existed man would be his creature. If God existed man could not feel His alleged divinity. Transcendent God overrules our futile rebellion. Democratic theology of atheism is an immanent God.²⁹

The theory of values is the thorniest companion of democratic ideology. Atheism and progress only ask an emphatic rhetorical question because God's existence is not obvious, because a simple gesture towards the future confirms the faith of a hesitant progressive; while the presence of values is the fact that nullifies the democratic principles with quiet insolence. According to the democratic doctrine value has a subjective status that tests the correlation between the will and fact. The objectivity of value is a function of their empirical generality, and its normative character comes from its vital reference. Value is what the will recognizes as its own property

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 28.

²⁹ Gómez Dávila N., *Escolios a un texto implícito*, Atalanta, 2009, p. 98.

The last thesis of democratic apologetics is universal determinism. To strengthen its prophecies, the doctrine needs a rigid universe. Effective action requires predictable behavior, and suppresses the indeterminacy of casual certainty of purpose. As man is not sovereign but is governed by a blind necessity of the universe, the doctrine refers to external circumstances that are the attributes of man. If the world, society and the individual are not, in fact reducible to a mere, casual constant even a tougher, smarter and more methodical effort may fail before the inscrutable nature of things, before the unsuspecting history of societies, before the unpredictable decisions of human consciousness. Total freedom of man asks for an enslaved universe. The sovereignty of the human will only be able to rule the corpses of living things.³⁰

To be held in control by behavior, institutions and work, the democratic principle comes with cruel consistency. The apparent confusion of its phenomena manifests the extraordinary evidence of the cause. In different circumstances the paths are different for the purpose remains intact. Two successive forms of democratic practice inspire the principle: the principle as sovereign will or as authentic will.

Although it does not allow for legitimacy of the free will, democracy is translated into final rule, balancing momentary expressions of the will in a multiple electoral market. The proper functioning of the market is an area free of ethical erudites cleansed from the spoils of the past. The validity of political decisions and economic decisions is a function of the pressure exerted by the will of majority. Ethical rules and aesthetic values are both involved in the same balance of power. Automatic market mechanisms determine the rules, laws and pricing.

³⁰ Gómez Dávila N., *Textos*, Atalanta, 2010, p. 69.

For democracy, volition is free of internal obligations without the right to appeal to higher courts against popular standards, formally enacted against the law or against the personally established price. A democrat cannot declare that a rule is false but he craves for another rule; or that a law is not fair so he wants another one; or that a price is absurd so he chooses another, more suitable one. Justice, in a democracy, is what exists at any time. Its regulatory structure is formed by a configuration of wills, their legal structure being a sum of positive decisions, and its economic structure a set of acts.³¹

Democracy suppresses any institution that involves irrevocable commitment, rebels against continuity which is revealed in everydayness. The democrat rejects the weight of the past and does not accept the risk of the future. His will seeks to erase past history while creating future history, unhampered by anything. Incapable of loyalty to a company earned by years of work for it, his present is not based on the passage of time; his days aspire to the discontinuity of a sinister clock. A society governed by the first form of democratic principle is inclined to theoretical anarchy of a capitalist economy and universal suffrage.

The principle is in its second form when the use of freedom threatens democratic principles. But the transformation in a collective and despotic democracy does not violate the democratic purpose or purposes which are like an adulterous promise. The first form contains and carries the second as a possible historical extension and as an inevitable theoretical consequence.

A collectivist and despotic democracy subjects the heretic will to an autocratic management of any nation, class, party or individual who embodies the right will. For a collectivist and despotic democracy, the realization of a democratic purpose has precedence over any other consideration. All things are lawful in

³¹ Ibidem, p. 70-71.

establishing real equality that allows true freedom where the sovereignty of man is crowned with the possession of the universe. Social forces must be channeled with unwavering determination towards an apocalyptic goal, sweeping across troubled ground, exterminating those who resist. Trusting his purpose corrupts the authoritarian democrat who enslaves others for the sake of freedom awaiting the advent of a god in the debasement of man. The practical realization of the democratic principle actually calls for, a frantic use of technology and relentless industrial exploitation of the planet.³²

The technique is not a product of democracy; it is the cult of an art and the veneration of its work, faith in its eschatological triumph, these are the inescapable consequences of this democratic religion. The technique is a tool of its deep-seated ambition, an act of ownership over the subjected universe.

The Democrat hopes the technique redeems him from sin, misery, boredom and death. The technique is the word used by the god-man. Democratic humanity accumulates technical gadgets with feverish enthusiasm. It matters little that their development and production besmirch the planet or are life-threatening to man. A god who forges his weapons has no scruples about mutilating man. The democratic religion nests in medieval crypts where the seething larvae of heretical texts proliferate in the damp shade. The modern democratic religion is like plasma in which the Bogomil dualism and Cathars combine and merge with apocalyptic messianism.³³

Leaving the gloom of his furtive incubation, the democratic religion spreads through the centuries developed by evil cunning, the colossal superstructure of

³² Bielsa José A., *El pensamiento reaccionario de Nicolás Gómez Dávila (1913-1994), Una Introducción*, 2010, retrieved from josbiarbi.blogspot.com

³³ Bogomil (Богомил) was a Bulgarian priest and heretic of the tenth century, which was a founding patriarch of the heretical stream of Bogomil, gnostic-Manichean sects that denied the divine birth of Christ and were in favor of returning to the origins of Christianity. The Cathars were heretics of Christianity, for criticizing the structure of the church and the exercise of power of the church, and calling themselves pure (that means the name) ended up adopting a different faith to Christianity, i.e. Manichaeism.

its successive ideologies. As the democratic doctrine can display at any time and by any individual the full meaning of its theoretical implications, history does not present a doctrinal development, but a progressive possession of the world. Before enacting the sovereignty of man, the democratic enterprise delimits the premises where the enactment seems lawful. In proclaiming the sovereignty of the state, Bodin gives man the right to reach his destination. The sovereign state is the first democratic victory. As every democratic episode raises, in its most fervent proponents, a spasm of anxiety about the claim that unmasks every form of doctrine implying a negative copy that seems so alone, with its faded and pale image, one that is indeed a reactionary reflexion of the abyss.³⁴

The second stage of the democratic invasion begins when man claims, in the framework of the sovereign state, a sovereignty that democratic doctrine grants him. Every democratic revolution consolidates the state. The revolutionary people do not rise against the omnipotent state but against its momentary possessors. The people do not protest against the sovereignty that oppresses them but against its envied holders. They claim the freedom of being tyrants of themselves.

The democratic era presents a unique economic development because economic value is partially malleable by democratic principles. Bourgeois society is characterized by a notorious predominance of economic function, whereby the economy determines the structure, fixes the targets and measures the prestige. Economic power in bourgeois society not only accompanies it and gives it luster and social power, but also creates it; the democrat does not conceive wealth, in different societies, resulting from the reasons that underlie the social hierarchy.³⁵

³⁴ Serrano Ruiz-Calderón J., *Democracia y Nihilismo Vida y Obra de Nicolás Gómez Dávila*, Eunsa, 2015.

³⁵ Gómez Dávila N., *Textos*, Atalanta, 2010, p. 79.

The veneration of wealth is a democratic phenomenon. Money is the only universal value that the pure democrat obeys, because it symbolizes a usable piece of nature and because its acquisition is allocable to human effort alone. The cult of work with that man flatters himself is the engine of the capitalist economy; and contempt of hereditary wealth, traditional authority of a name, of the free gifts of intelligence or beauty, expresses a Puritanism which proudly condemns what man effort is not granted to himself.

Man forgets his impotence and mimics divine omnipotence before the useless pain of another man whom he tortures. In the universe of the dead god and the abortive god, the empty space left after His death is, stunned, by its own vacuity. The human being rebels against the act of killing God. The comprehensive rejection of democratic doctrine is the final exiguous bastion of human freedom. In our times rebellion is reactionary; otherwise it is merely a hypocritical and facile farce.³⁶

³⁶ Ibidem, p. 84.

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