

The political Ideology of the process

One of the questions more difficult for all analyst on the phenomenon Chávez is his political thought, his ideas that help to conform the personality like commander, the ideological components that configure the revolutionary process that he leads.

From the day that emerged to the public light, Hugo Chávez has been a character difficult to understand and to decipher. The ideas that encourage his speech have been and they continue being arcane in the classic Latin sense: something mysterious and secret, with the intelligence of the reasons it hides for a histrionic and foamy rhetoric, replete of ambiguities or trifles that -casual or deliberately - they deviate the attention of their true objective, which could be revealed as contradictory with what is invoked as his ideas or apparent values.

- There is (Paciano Padrón) who assure that the Commandant doesn't have a defined social political thought, he "has a ranch in the head, he doesn't think of big, in progress, in ascent and development but in confrontation and destruction." "This revolution will be very rich in weapons, but it is very poor in ideas. In the country a problem of actors doesn't only exist, but also of script (Gerver Torres)." An expert philosopher affirms that "Hugo Chávez is an ideological monstrosity because there is of everything and in the most contradictory way: militarism, ideological archaism and a point of leftist mythology, but of rhetoric, of emptiness (Fernando Rodríguez)." It is also spoken of an ideological labyrinth, in which cannot be a country-society project to settle down (Agustín Blanco).
- There are -in the front corner- who assure that we make a mistake and we deceive on Chávez, mainly at the beginning of the

journey. "Every thing that Hugo Chávez is making and undoing, it follows a preconceived plan with a defined objective and some means to reach it (Jorge Olavarría)."

- In an intermediate fringe there is who say that existing some tendencies and relating ideological undeniable, the 'chavism' comes knitting and unweaving its doctrinal cloth, being about advancing in zigzagging, without defined ideology, following the voice of the captain's of the yacht control in their "Hello Sunday president", conditioned by the winds that blow and the variable circumstances of the national and international environment that it forces to be corrected the route and to overcome jolts.

We will be about specifying the *most characteristic elements* in that cluster of political ideology that it could define Chávez's régime. It is a stranger mixing or salmagundi ('tizana') of several fruits of indefinable flavor. Although some elements can be distilled after a process of having sifted of their long and generous speeches, it is venturous to classify Chávez like revolutionary or as democratic, as Marxist or Fascist, as socialist or communist or anarchist. Alexis Márquez sustains that his true problem is not bounded to the ideological thing that it boils in its head, but to the inability for the delicate government functions that he has accumulated in his hands. "Neither bourgeois democracy neither dictatorship of the proletariat, neither capitalism neither socialism: which will it finish being the real content of the 'bolivarian revolution?'" (A. Sánchez García).

Because we know of these topics, for our political profession, so we can point out in Chávez some characteristics:

- Inclination for the social *darwinism* ('the strongest are those that survive') and tendency to the authoritarianism to achieve the ends - without scruples- regarding the means to use, features that have

been characteristic of the fascism and in general of all the totalitarianisms.

- They are verifiable certain references to a *Peronist justicialism*, through the version that facilitated him initially Argentinean Ceresole: liquidation of the parties, key worker-military alliance, popular communication direct boss-masses, populist speech and distribution of goods beyond what takes place.
- A certain influence of the call "*Fourth Via*" of the German Heinz Dieterich resident in Mexico, with the intent of upgrading the Marxism for Latin America proposing that they are the revolutionary fellow the indigenous and impoverished masses of the subcontinent. And more recently his confused proposal of "Socialism XXI" century.
- The obsessive speech against the 'oligarches' and the convocation to those deprived that is borrowed of a classic *Marxism-Leninism*. And there is a clear favoritism, although 'anachronic', for the *Castro Cuban pattern*.
- The insistence on assemblyman democracy, with decisions that take in meetings of masses, could evoke some reminiscence of *Robespierre* and the French Revolution in its beginnings.
- After the intents of to concentrate more powers on the Executive and to be helped of some dark Montesinos could be projected the shade of *Fujimori* in Peru (initially successful and at the end unsuccessful).
- Expressed allusions to *Zamora and Bolívar* like autochthonous inspiration could be assumed more as rhetoric than as political

thought and they would spread to reinforce the *authoritarian neo-populist mark* in what the bolivarian movement really moves.

As a synthesis that would base the "Bolivarian revolution" it continues being spoken of the "*tree of the three roots*", to which they made reference the commandants of February 4, precursors of the movement (in a stranger and anachronic mixture of elements). They are them Simón Bolívar, his teacher Simón Rodríguez and Ezequiel Zamora. But to supposed roots they adhere to other plants climbers coming from the Cuban habitat as Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, José Martí. The result is a confused mixture of militarist nationalism, political 'caudillism' (with nostalgia of the 'necessary gendarme' according to the political Venezuelan mythology), kind of an autocratic democratism, a certain tendency to the socialism and indigenism, and a charismatic, leaning evident *neo-populism*, fed by the reality of a financier and paternal State, like it is the Venezuelan.

One of the most serious experts of happening Venezuelan summarizes the impression that it leaves us the ideological cluster of the "bolivarian revolution": We "always said that the chavism is a heterogeneous movement crossed by many contradictions." (Teodoro Petkoff, *Such Hugo Chávez*, 2002).

A foreign observer from the Center of Studies Interamerican Dialogue, notices the particular and atypical of the current Venezuelan case:

"That of Venezuela is a very particular situation. It is difficult to say that there is a left government. Wall Street is happy with him although he is not a neoliberal. He doesn't have a national project, there is not coherence in his policies. He shows a definition lack and his movements are basically to strengthen his power. Up to now he has been able to give the luxury of not governing, because the political crisis has served him as excuse. But now, after the elections

of October 31, he will have to be defined, to assume responsibilities and to begin to govern. And he won't be very successful if he makes it without concerting, to dialogue and to negotiate" (Manuel Schifter, 2004).

1. ¿Is *Fascist* Chávez?

In general it couches to describe from "Fascist" to any Bonapartist régime, to a simple authoritarianism, to any repressive attitude although it is not systematic. Speaking correctly -see my recent book (*The knowledge of the power. Introduction to the Politics*, 8th edition 2004)- "the fascism denotes, so much the movement that took to Mussolini to the power in Italy (1922-1945), as the political ideology that inspired to this movement and parties similar of other countries." Italian Umberto Eco has coined the term "Ur-fascism" that would be equal in English to "elementary fascism" applicable to many other phenomena that are not of the national Italian or German environment. This "fussy fascism" describes it Eco with twelve characteristics, five of which are applicable to our case:

1) the rejection to the modernity.

2) the irrational like cult of the action for the action. To think is a castration. It is admired the man that "throws the kick"

3) the call to the popular frustrated classes that can be taken to the search of magic, miraculous solutions.

4) the people is conceived like a monolithic unit that it expresses the common will and whose interpreter is the leader.

5) the tangled ideas, the quilt of pieces.

But it could be recognized that there is a "Fascist dynamics" in Chávez's movement, in the terms in those that our colleague Ramos Jiménez formulates it:

"More than a political ideology, the fascism constitutes an attitude in the face of the life that -feeding in the conflict that provokes the

chaos to the long one- it lives under strong tensions that they serve it as fuel. Hence, the Fascists always appear as the 'administrators of the chaos' that demand the permanent mobilization of the mass under a more warlike military discipline".

2. ¿Is leftist Chávez?

To more than "the three roots" evoked as their ideological foundation by those raised of 1992, they already existed other more concrete and cultivated roots inside the Venezuelan Military Academy and the barracks. One of them the militarist Left that will go of the hand with a military Nationalism.

.We should accept that the Left of Marxist inspiration, has made crisis as much in Europe as in Latin America. I have come repetitive sustaining that the Left should be different to what has been up to now so that it is viable politically, and for it cannot follow it being so dogmatic neither so ideological The current Uruguayan political intellectual, Enrique Rubio, author of *The left of the future* (2000), recommends to the Marxist left so that it is viable in the national current joints: 1) to reprocess their memory (to liquidate some pending bills of the classic Marxism); 2) to govern with the globalization (that is to say to be inserted in it, but in accordance with its own objectives); 3) to give bed to the transnational push and the regional integration; 4) to reform the State with an eye toward a democratization of the economy; 5) to stimulate the dynamism of the society; 6) to look for the forks from the progressive forces to international scale; and 7) very important, to promote more democracy and not less. The watchword: "we want new wine in new wineskins".

In our concrete Venezuelan case, Teodoro Petkoff (with his long revolutionary journey and leftist baggage) he has been very emphatic in denouncing that anchored left in the years sixty ignores the fall of the wall

of Berlin. He denominates it "the Bourbon left". It is handicapped intellectually and unable to learn of the old errors and to decide once and for all to turn the page (*The two lefts*, 2005).

It is necessary to locate Chávez in the left, in spite of conservative elements of his environment and of the "Fascist dynamics" of extreme right of his movement. His gestation in the breast of a left militarism, many of his favorite readings, his privileged national and internationally friendships, his visceral anti-American hatred and especially, the narrow nexus that has settled down for 20 years with who is his model and revolutionary guide, Fidel Castro, doesn't leave place to doubts. We don't still pronounce ourselves on if the president Chávez continues anchored in the Venezuelan "left Bourbon" or he could end up representing to a very different new left and, for the same thing, viable in the political and global current scenarios of our new century. As Tarre Briceño has affirmed, "between Montesquieu and Ceresole, Hugo Chávez has to decide. He cannot continue mentioning to the first one and obeying second."

With realism, Vargas Llosa has expressed that

"the lecture against the 'newliberalism' it has not brought a resurgence of the 'Marxism', but of the 'Fascism', two ideologies that Hayek showed in "Servitude Roads", they are quite more near than they seem. Because both have the scorn of the culture of the freedom in common, and of the democratic institutions, as well as the religion of the almighty and vertical State, transformed into panacea for all the wrongs of the society."

3. ¿Is populist Chávez?

The speech, the style, the demagogic expressions usually suggest populism. In our region there are recent examples of leaders' new populist return like Collor of Melo in Brazil, Carlos Menen in Argentina, Alan

García and Alberto Fujimori in Peru, Abdalá Bucaram in Ecuador. Of course, who wants to arrive to the government and to stay in him, he has to appeal to the 'I populate' and to be about mobilizing masses. That is to say, in some form to become in 'demagogue' (people driver).

"The populism is a political plate that one cooks with all the sauces: populists were Hitler and Mussolini, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan, Charles De Gaulle and Menahem Begin; and in Latin America they have been (one way or another) Perón and Rómulo Betancourt, Lázaro Cárdenas, Getulio Vargas, Alfonso López and Fidel Castro" (Manuel Caballero).

But it is not enough a simple appearance neither the simple promises. It is necessary that the good ruler or leader, really drive to their people of where it is to where it should be. The populism, as movement of mobilization of urban masses -a ideological times sometimes not a lot- it requires from a bound speech to the people.

"Another thing that is to say that Chávez is the most formidable demagogue that has known the history of Venezuela and with Perón, Latin America. You have ended up saying that he synthesizes in a single person to Perón and Evita. In any event, as the Argentinean, Chávez is what his auditory wants that he is: militarist or civilist, right-wing or leftist, socialist or fascist. His appeal to man's fidelity to man, passing above the institutions, and his will of establishing a personal and lasting régime, assimilates him much more to the old commanders of the century XIX Latin American than to any other politician specimen" (Manuel Caballero).

The populism is characterized mainly by an obliging distribution of the wealth from a paternal Government that doesn't assure the corresponding production of this wealth. It usually accompanies of a gigantic State and a growing interventionism of the public sphere in the whole society. There is excessive bureaucratization. It goes putting on in evidence the inefficacy of

the State to give answer to the necessities. It goes taking place a general dissatisfaction for the created expectations and not satisfied, a disillusion of the people for the promises that were made not fulfilled, until a collapse of the régime for inefficacy and non governance (Enrique Neira Fernández, 2004: "Crisis and decadence of the populism", *The knowledge of the power. Introduction to the politics*).

After two periods of government ¿will it be necessary to wait one more, to see the populist and charismatic new model's results imposed by Chávez and to judge of the real effects of his programs and government's decisions, as well as the success of his 'popular missions'? But, he has the great advantage of to support and to feed his model in a long Venezuelan tradition of paternalism with base in a super financier State with enormous revenues thanks to the international high prices of the petroleum.

"The Venezuelan is the secular receiver of a paternalist tradition. It has been accustomed by their governments (and in this there are not differences practically between democratic and authoritarian) to receive it and to wait everything of the State; and, therefore, the Venezuelan is not able to less than to welcome with enthusiasm to whom shows up as a beneficent father and, mainly, distributor of a natural wealth not produced, this is, received effortlessly"

(M. Caballero).

4. ¿Is revolutionary Chávez?

A Venezuelan serious historian (J.L. Salcedo Bastardo, 1996) notices that

"the term revolution is the most wornout and inexpressive voice in the political Venezuelan lexicon. It is used and it is abused to label each revolt, each lift, each insurrection, blow, rebellion, invasion, coup d'etat, rebellion, plot, usurpation, push, sedition, pronouncement, assault or mutiny, because

they are many the synonyms for the unfortunate same reality,
and none is revolution."

A cultural, social or political simple change cannot call itself 'revolution.' We should call it 'reform' inside the system adopted by the country. Neither a revolt although it is armed, neither a coup d'etat although it is successful they constitute a revolution by themselves. The relief of some elites that they held the power for other new ones that enter to occupy the positions and to get rich, it is not revolution. Neither it can call itself such a paradise promised for illuminated, neither a jump to the hole and much less a march behind in the history. As we already exposed it in our Conceptual Frame (Topic 12), a revolution is a serious goal and of great encouragement, with one taking of the conducive power to the substitution of a system of life and of socio-political organization for another better than the existent thing. It requires: 1) a plan of the society to be built, 2) a lot of organization and 3) the dedication of leaders with a lot of vision, commitment and sacrifice for the cause.

Outside of the lexical "revolution", of which is used and abused in all the tiresome speeches of the régime, consecrated to each step in the Constitution of the 99 and its new mutations, labeled in the whole official stationery at national, regional and municipal level, after ten years of Chávez's "revolutionary" experience in Venezuela, it has not been clear neither the society project to which wants to drive, neither there is an organization operator of the project, neither the supposed agents have the size of true "revolutionaries." ¿Will it be necessary to still wait other 10 years more so that the results in the economic, social areas, politics, cultural, ethics and international they corroborate that Fifth Republic truly began a Revolution in Venezuela and does it endorse it like the model for other countries of limited development?

Meanwhile, there are strong critics who affirm that Chávez more than a revolutionary is just the opposite, a reactionary:

"Chávez represents exactly the opposite of what Fidel represented in 1959: if Fidel was a revolutionary, Chávez he is a reactionary. If Fidel had a project of good or bad country but to which one could refer to approve it or to attack it, Chávez doesn't have, apparently not even in the most secret in his brain, a project that it is not personal that is not to achieve the form of prolonging his personal command [...] In the whole history of Venezuela there is a conductive thread: all the governments have sought and some have achieved it, to make advance to the country, to take it until the following century building a modern State, without personal cult. That of Chávez looks for just the opposite, to return to assume in person the power; to make that the country feel down that who sends he is not the President of the Republic, but commanding Hugo Chávez Frias. Under such conditions it is not exaggeration to say that that of Chávez is the most reactionary government that has had Venezuela in all its history" (M. Caballero).

5. Chávez ¿what so *bolivarian* is?

The cult to Bolívar

Well it has been said that "the bolivarianism constitutes the form of filling an ideological hole and the alibi for 'to nationalize' a revolutionary project with transnational pretenses. Bolívar transforms into a specially useful figure because it is implanted as one of the most essential values in the Venezuelans (Carlos Blanco)".

Same Bolívar already foresaw it, when from Popayán, near to Cali, in letter of 6 december 1829 to a political Venezuelan (Antonio Leocadio Guzmán, jr) sensed that there would be very different and interested interpretations of his thought:

"If some people interpret my way sinisterly of thinking and in him they support their errors, it is very sensitive, but unavoidable; with my name it is wanted to make the well and the wrong, and many invoke it as the text of their nonsenses."

Germán Carrera Damas pointed out in 1986 that:

"Established to give legitimacy to the national State in historical specific circumstances, the cult to Bolívar has ended up constituting the spine, and in not few occasions the universe, of the Venezuelan thought. It has expanded the reach of the cult to such an extent, and it has been intensified his message so much that in the mind of many Venezuelans, and be said without establishing differences of social or cultural level, it has ended up taking place an identification between the most elementary signs in the cult and the nation."

In Venezuela -cradle of the great Liberator- very authorized voices have risen preventing against this exaggerated cult to Bolívar (sometimes transformed into a cult as god) and the perverse use that people make of him for almost everything. According to Carrera (*The cult to Bolívar*), three are the fundamental lines that sustain in Venezuela said cult: -1) to transform it into factor of national unit, with their principle of the order; - 2) to transform it into source of political inspiration; -3) to transform it into factor of national to better yourself, as religion of the moral and civic perfection of the Society.

Luis Castro Leiva (*To think Bolívar*) showed that the cult to Bolívar, so much intellectual as political, it ended transforming into a religion that contains many dangers, among them that if any Venezuelan questions that what was said by Bolívar, he becomes almost in traitor to the homeland. And it is that Bolívar gives for everything, in words of Andrés Eloy Blanco, mentioned textually by Consalvi (*El Nacional*, 5 June 2005):

"As a senator had been about reinforcing his thesis mentioning Bolívar, putting it in favor of his cause, Andrés Eloy Blanco responded him: 'Bolívar cannot make an appointment but carefully, because it is good for everything. Bolívar is oceanic. Bolívar he has to justify an act of advanced democracy. Bolívar he has to justify an act of repression. Bolívar 1828, taking to the archbishop from Bogotá like member of the Council of State, he is a dictator in the middle of exercise of the dictatorship; Bolívar 1830 is no longer but the creator's detachment made bitter by the creation. But Bolívar is oceanic. He is the tree: the one that wants a fruit to give that to eat somebody, there fruit-bearing Bolívar is; the one that wants a stake to give him from blows to a 'yangüés', there is Bolívar with slaps; the one that wants a cross to nail somebody, there has Bolívar with its crossed branches; the one that wants a flower to adorn the forehead of the Homeland, there flourished Bolívar is; and the one that wants a shade to hide and to hide a trap or to shoot a pellet there on some electoral incautious bird, Bolívar leafy is."

This explains to us why rulers as Guzmán Blanco, Juan Vicente Gómez, López Contreras and now Chávez Frías they have reinforced the Bolívar cult.

Use and abuse of Bolívar

Although the cult to Bolívar has been a constant in the Venezuelan history, in Chávez's régime the Bolivarian ideology acquired a triple emphasis:

- programmatic: what Bolívar would have made in similar circumstances;
- ethical: the defense of the essential values of the homeland;
- and symbolic: to be faithful to Bolívar in the current time is to be faithful to the revolution and its direct personification, president

Chávez.

The Liberator's unexpected function has allowed to fill an ideological, programmatic and intellectual hole that existed in the movement, as well as to do without of definitions and precisions that it requires all revolution in process.

Simón Alberto Consalvi comes denouncing the fact that "in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Bolívar goes with red beret and his portrait is harnessed with the effigy of Che Guevara". With an irreverent style that we have rejected always, the Colombian columnist Antonio Caballero has referred to the topic (*Week*, Bogotá 9 August 1999):

"Chávez doesn't seem to know much of the action and Bolívar's reflection. It is limited to use it [...] Of Bolívar he takes the worst thing: the temptation of the dictatorship [...] It only copies half of Bolívar: not the useful reflection, but the useless action ('The one that serves to a revolution plows in the sea'). What is truly 'bolivarian' in Hugo Chávez is not his ideas, but his character."

The Liberator has been transformed into the immense alibi of the régime. But, with running of the time, is there already who wonders why seemingly Bolivarianism step is giving to the Socialism, in the speech and preferences of the President Chávez (Aníbal Romero 2005).

1) It is that there are implicit values in the bolivarianism that have been knowingly stood out by the chavism.

2) While other values of clearly republican court (that today we recognize as characteristic of a right State, liberal and of social progressivism) are left aside, and it makes aware.

- Among the first ones that usually stand out more (for their utility) they are:

1) Bolívar's homeland has a right and a duty of influencing decisively in the international environment;

2) National Armed force should be constituted in the first factor of national and popular conduction;

3) Bolívar should continue being, with his great authority, the great corrector and censor. To attack Chávez and his government, to differ of his executorships, it transforms into a direct aggression to the bolivarian will.

- Among the seconds to those that are given smaller importance (supposedly of more span but of smaller utility) figure the republican big principles of Bolívar's political thought.

What Bolívar wanted for us was something new, something adapted to the peculiar conditions of southern America. Something that could not be neither the return to the deposed monarchism neither a limitless liberalism following the pattern of North American Presidential model or that of the British Parliamentarian. It had to be a half term, something that moved between the demagogic anarchies (to those that are inclined our citizens) and the tyrannies of monocracy (to those that spread the mechanisms of power in a Machiavellian slope of Caesarism). It was not ideally about the best thing, but of what was more affordable and adapted to our condition. The proposal was, because, that of a tempered democracy, with a stable, strong and permanent government that assured the achievement of a social progressivism. Bolívar's political deep perspicacity, reconciling theory and liberal practice, and scrutinizing the American reality historical Hispanic, induced it to place the Executive as the axis capable of unite the social dispersed forces of our national States in formation. For him, a republican government for our Polis should be characterized by "unit-solidity-energy" (Manifest of Cartagena 1815), and clearly he understands it as a constitutional, legitimate, fair and liberal government (Letter of Jamaica 1815).

A great specialist of Bolívar's political thought, (José Félix Restrepo Vélez, *Bolívar and liberal republican Democracy*, 1991) finishes his book reaffirming something we make our:

"We don't share feeling of those who assimilate his authority and commander's power with a democratic Caesarism, or an ambitious bonapartism, or a monarchist and autocratic tendency, or an advance of the totalitarian modern dictatorships, or a prelude of the fascism; these exaggerated interpretations leave of an unilateral and insufficient consideration on the nature of Bolivarian Executive, with an excess of simple reductionism that it assists more to the external form than to the content of the principles of the Bolivarian institutions."