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The Danger of "Fixed Truths"

It is possible, doing a kind of flashback, that old Mao was right when he said: "Let a hundred flowers be opened and a thousand schools of thought compete..." Or maybe, it's just another dogma.

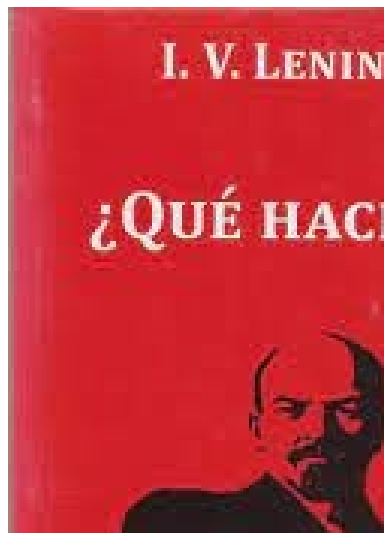


What the father (not just the priest) said was an immovable word. No possibility of subjecting it to criticism or questioning. It was the voice of the family, the one that defined their directions, even if they were wrong. And there was no possibility of turning the house into an agora of free people, because they were all like believers or faithful, who welcomed without a hint the vision of the "[pater familias](#)". Perhaps (Freud should be studied more) from these attitudes derive the desire for parricide.

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Those of us who studied in non-secular times, when in Colombia still State and Church maintained a conspiracy of beds, it was very difficult [to contradict Father Gaspar Astete and his old catechism](#). It was the divine word that sounded there. No way to contest or doubt. No space to the question that went out of the canon. Still less to some dissident point. Dogma prevailed, untouchable. It was an article of faith. "What is Faith? "Believe what we don't see."



In Colombia there were generations that were raised with the permanent fog of dogmas, of the divine word, unquestionable, without a doubt and less to the freedom of criticism (of which, for example, Vladimir Lenin spoke in his book [What to do?](#)). That dogmatism was a commonplace in right-wing politicians, in those of the National Front, let's say, was part of "normality", but that this tendency, which does not admit skepticism, was assumed by the "leftists" or extreme leftists, was already having been left with the snake's egg in the brain.

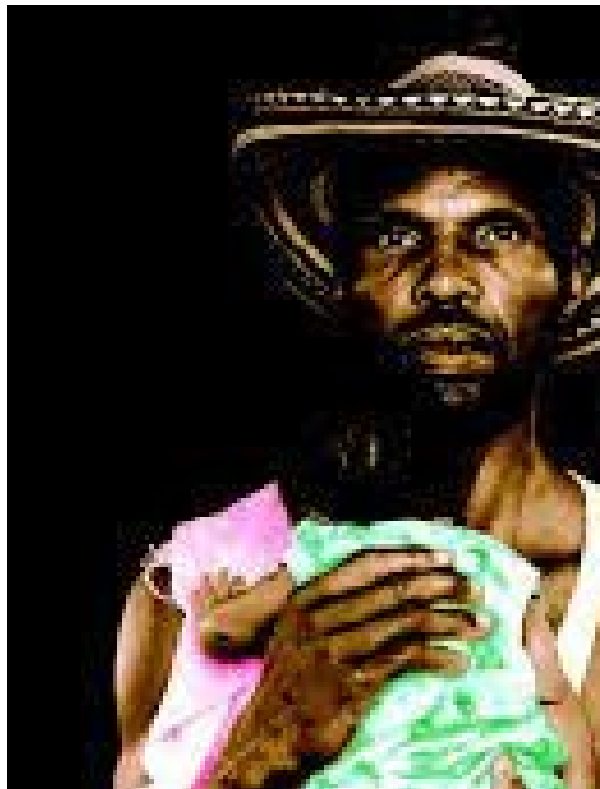
The new redeemers were the guerrillas (those of the "[revolutionary mule](#)", of Pablos Gallinazo), a kind of prolongation of the revealed truth. There were times when if some other sector (well, perhaps sect), also called left-wing, proposed participation in elections, it was immediately condemned to the stake. And branded as a traitor to the proletarian deeds (which they did not embody either). More dogmas.

And so new canons, untouchable and divine, were configured, such as that of the "[protracted people's war](#)", that of "[combining all forms of struggle](#)" and many more currencies, in the Christian-Marxian-Maoist-Leninist-Trotskyist tone, which pointed above all to the "revealed truths" and not to the application of scientific methods.

That the right and the far right used dogmatism as if it were their scapular or their novena was natural; but, what did not sound, was that the so-called left, resorting to the negation of dialectics, of criticism, with their new gospels, differed little in their methods from their antipodes. There was no shortage of the most novice prophets or the masters of the truth.

Later, when some of those anointed slipped into drug trafficking, or fully declared their sympathies for the mafia bosses, all their ancient "principles" were diluted. Or, as [Groucho Marx](#) may have said, "[these are my principles, and if you don't like them, I have others.](#)" It seems that, in these territories of God and the devil, everything is bought, everything is sold.

Perhaps, with so much time of religions, of new opioms, of a long mentality of "fixed truths", a unique way of seeing things was created, without contradictions, without gray areas, and, in any case, with the univocal presence of supreme pontiffs, or of "messiahs", as happened, for example, in the times of the "[authoritarian spell](#)" of Álvaro Uribe. It was the voice of the "father", incontrovertible. Whoever dared to break this shell of deific revelations, was exposed to the inquisitorial fire.



[The authoritarian spell: First year of Álvaro Uribe Vélez's government](#) PDF format

Dogmatism, whatever its creed, when it becomes fanatical will see the other, the one who is not in its flock, as an enemy, who, depending on the circumstances, will have to be forced to believe or, if he opposes and kicks a lot, then he will have to be ostracized or erased from the map. Colombia has suffered, in different temporalities, the horrifying presence of religious and political fanaticism. And it is already known how many misadventures they have caused.

Dogma almost always rides on the ignorance of those who are subjected to a single worldview. It is one-sided and displeased if the opponent manifests other forms of thought and analysis. Dogma, which is untouchable, resists "falsification", that is, to submit to methods of searching for truth that rely on science, experimentation, confrontation...

TODAY Gustavo Petro responds to Carlos Mejía, You are not left over senator, stay here

In an article on the origin of fanaticism, [Cioran](#) said: "[The real criminals are those who establish an orthodoxy on the religious or political plane, those who distinguish between the faithful and the schismatic.](#)" We hope that, in the country, the new times (whatever this means) will be conducive to criticism, the coexistence of dissimilar positions, the study of the various problems, the struggle against dogmatism and absolute truths.



[Mao's Hundred Flowers Campaign](#)

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Reinaldo Spitaletta for La Pluma

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