Abstract

Populism is a matter diversely studied in Colombia, particularly associated with the political figure of the assassinated leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. This paper first evaluates the meaning of populism in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico parallel to similar Colombian factors. With these arguments, the paper makes some critical assertions on the populist adjective that have accompanied the public profile of Jorge Eliécer Gaitan, focused on the populist parameters of the Cono Sur’s populism, and his government programs designed and proposed during the 30s and 40s of the 20th century. Finally, the paper observes the personal character of Gaitan, asking first if the leader was at least rather a pale popular than a real populist leader, as can be concluded by checking his relationships with the paradigmatical labor unions of Antioquia. The second part evaluates the contradictions of his personal low-class condition, which made him a person with a clear proclivity to climb into the Colombian little bourgeoisie. As a central matter, this paper works around diverse expositions from the Colombian researcher Marco Palacios, so it does not focus on the analysis of the Latin-American populism as a whole or the diverse political-electoral perspectives of Gaitan’s phenomena in Colombia, which almost all are concerned with his obscure assassination in 1948.

Keywords

Bipartisanship, social classes, gaitanism, populism, popular, syndicalism, violence