

at personifying the illness and finding the appropriate cure. In other hand, his intellectual message was not addressed only to westerners but also to the other nations mainly Muslims, so as not to be attracted and fascinated by misleading slogans and deceptive appearances of western civilization. His works, have been translated into many languages continue to exercise a deep influence on hearts and minds, but no one can replace him or eliminate from his work the unilateral insight and dogmatism of some of his views.”<sup>(1)</sup> In all of this, the reputation of Guénon rests on his incisive critiques. He was a pioneer and no one before him, “had perceived and defined the errors and deviations of the modern world with such perspicacity and philosophical clarity.”<sup>(2)</sup>

#### المصادر والمراجع:

1. العبيوي، خالد، مشكلات الديمقراطية، مركز إثماء البحوث والدراسات، بيروت، ط1 ، 2015
2. رينيه جينو، أزمة العالم المعاصر، ترجمة: سامي محمد عبدا لوحييد، مؤسسة النهار للطباعة و النشر، 1976
3. سهيل فرح وآخرون، دراسات إنسانية و اجتماعية، جامعة وهران ، عدد خاص ، دار القدس العربي، جوان 2012

1. Frithjof Schoun, René Guénon: Some Observations, Sophia Perennis, New York, 2004
2. Julius Evola, René Guénon: A teacher of Modern Times, Translated by Guido Stucco, Holmes Publishing Group, USA, 1994
3. René Guénon, The Crisis of Modern World, Translated by Marco Pallis, Arthur Osborne and Richard C. Nicholson, Sophia Perennis, New York, Third edition, 1996
4. , La crise du monde modern, Gallimard,2012
5. , The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of Times, Translated by Lord Northbourne, Sophia Perennis, New York, Third Edition, 1995

#### Websites:

<http://www.dictionnaire.com/12-11-2016,11h:23>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oswald\\_Spengler12-11-2016,08h:20](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oswald_Spengler12-11-2016,08h:20)

1 - Ibib., p. 13

2 - Frithjof Schoun, Op.Cit, p.XIV

diversity that exists in a given country? Of course there is no answer from democratic point of view, for it is clear that they have no right in reality. It is obvious that the representatives of minorities have a false role since all the political affairs are dominated by the majority and all decisions are made by them. Minority's Contribution in practice serves as a help to Majority achieving its goal. "It is precisely in the 'reign of quantity,' and only then, that the opinion of the majority can claim to be taken into consideration at all."<sup>(1)</sup>

As a brief interpretation; we cannot establish a political system founded on materialistic principles, in other words, we are in a need of spiritual values that can give us an appropriate interpretation of life and help us realize political and social equality. And this could not be found only in spiritual principles. After having studied carefully many doctrines and religions, Guénon found out the appropriate answer in Islamic religion which can achieve harmony in social life and make term to any conflict between individual and public interests. This is the very necessary alternative needed by westerners in order to overcome their crises.

What should especially be extracted from Guénon critiques to democracy is that he was profoundly aware of the deep historical changes of modern civilization and its contradictions. In order to resolve these latter, he gave many contributions that reveal his more concern to reform the western thought. He was so eager to serve the welfare of humanity including his nation. Unfortunately he "has been boycotted in France, his native country, by occult forces, for the most part composed of anti-traditionalists, who have gone as far as attempting to take his work out of circulation."<sup>(2)</sup> Despite the hostility of some western milieus to him mainly the church after adopting Islam in 1912 and settling in Egypt in 1930<sup>(3)</sup>, he did his best to show his enemies the right way. And that expresses clearly his kindness and understanding of Islamic values. There is no doubt that his objective critiques aimed at reforming and not neglecting western thought absolutely, in other terms

---

1 - René Guénon, *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of Times*, Translated by Lord Northbourne, Sophia Perennis, New York, Third Edition, 1995, p.4

2 - Julius Evola, *René Guénon : A teacher of Modern Times*, Translated by Guido Stucco, Holmes Publishing Group, USA, 1994, p.13

3 ينيه جينو، أزمة العالم المعاصر، ترجمة: سامي محمد عبدا لوحيد، مصدر سابق، ص-ص. 16، 17.

easily dominated by means of mass media. And those who own mass media can lead the general opinion according to their self-interests or making it up regardless to the interests of the majority in a given society. We cannot be certain at a given extent about what the majority of citizens choose whether it is a successful choice in all cases, even if it comes to our minds that the election is executed far from any influence or control by any side else.

That is to say, there is no logical argument to prove that the method of majority is valid. This latter is mostly formed by who lack knowledge and are less competent mainly in the political field and social interests. The opinion of majority is influenced by the choices of a big number who vote without being aware of what they do. But the question is how could this idea dominate? And how was it introduced in modern democracy? This question leads us to another one, which is related to historical and cultural factors that have convinced westerns to accept such idea as an absolute truth. The interpretation of such conviction could be found in modern science and its quantitative method. For instance, if we put a body under the impact of two forces that have neither the same direction nor the same value, the resultant force will be in the direction of the most influential one. This easy example, taken from dynamics, can illustrate the scientific background of modern democracy.

According to Guénon, the elite in a given society should be restricted to the intellectual group whereas democracy is represented by fraudulent elite that takes over governing tasks which are based on materialistic principles. In this case the law of majority is a tyranny-shaped or dictatorship-shaped rule which in turn helps the tyrannical class to occupy strategic positions in society and use the public funds to serve its own interests, consequently it manages to orientate public opinion through political propaganda means. Banning in the process people access for free voting and expressing their choice by different manners. Hence, this political system frauds the vote results. What appears to be bizarre and strange is that vote results are divulged publicly to be a real choice for a self-governing system.

The question to ask is the following: do the minorities have a political right? What about the political right of minorities mainly under considerable intellectual and cultural

continuous change is a walk towards unknown destinations. This progress expresses the state of anxiousness and failure because of lacking spiritual principles; therefore it leads to such blind behaviour.

Without going through these general critiques, we try to present the main critiques of René Guénon to the western democracy as a political system that reflects contradictory thoughts of this civilization. Among them, we find that people cannot be the origin of power that they do not themselves possess.<sup>(1)</sup> It means that they cannot accord any kind of power to the representatives.

It appears illogical to accept the meaning of democracy as it is defined: the government of people by themselves, so we must not be deceived by words since it is impossible for individuals to be both governors and governed at the same time. “Because to use Aristotelian terminology, the same being cannot be ‘in act’ and ‘in potency’ at the same time and in the same relationship.”<sup>(2)</sup> Democracy “expresses an absolute impossibility and cannot even have a mere de facto\* existence-in our time or in any other”.<sup>(3)</sup> So it is impossible at a given moment that there are governed without governors even these latter are not legitimate. Politicians managed to mislead their citizens by convincing them that people govern themselves. And so as to make this come true and have successful functioning they have developed some thoughts such as the idea of universal ballot which means the dominance of majority’s opinion. “It was to create this illusion that universal suffrage was invented: the law is supposed to be made by the opinion of the majority, but what is overlooked is that this opinion is something that can very easily be guided and modified...We cannot recall who it was who first spoke of ‘manufacturing opinion’, but this expression is very apt”<sup>(4)</sup>

In practice, the choices of voters are not free and far from to be realistic and can be

---

1 - René Guénon, *The Crisis of Modern World*, Translated by Marco Pallis, Arthur Osborne and Richard C. Nicholson, Sophia Perennis, Third edition, 1996, p.73

2 - *Ibid.*, p. 73

\* ‘de facto’ (Latin) means in fact, in reality or actually existing ,especially when without lawful authority (<http://www.dictionary.com>)

3 -*Ibid.*, p.73

4 - *Ibid.*, p.74

critique of the modern world on the basis of strictly traditional principles.”<sup>(1)</sup> It took a long time and considerable efforts from his part before finding the solution in Islamic tradition between the two world wars. He adopted a specific style in writing that could be suitable to western mentality. In which terms take a new significance in a particular context such as traditional civilization, tradition and intuition. For instance, the word “tradition” has a different meaning than of its general sense , not as opposite to reason but in a general sense that include the meaning of reason it self<sup>(2)</sup>. Setting up his own terminology, the aim was to treat the confusions of western understanding when considering equality as a mathematical process between individuals regardless of their differences

In his investigations on the western civilization, he has indicated to some very important notes that could be summarized as follows. Historically speaking, there is not only one human civilization that is still in process of continuous development but there are many different civilizations that are independent from each other. And we can recognize easily that one of the most characteristics of western civilization is its strong attachment to some aspects which are not constructive or essential whereas neglecting what is called the “basic core”. In other terms, this civilization is more interested in quantity than in quality. From which it falls into an infinite analytical details from a material point of view and neglects the intellectual aspect of knowledge.

The western thought restricts itself into a narrow situation, which is full of confusion and contradictory theories. Furthermore, it depends heavily on materialistic aspects that may lead to an unexpected catastrophe because of the huge acceleration of all human activities which is due to the great development of science and technology. The abuse of this latter is a significant feature of modern civilization which is based on colonialism and exploitation of many nations.

The most critical situation is, how the western civilization is neglecting the principles of others and trying to destroy the values that it needs. And without any legitimate reason it imposes its own values which are not appropriate to these nations. The quick and

---

1 - Frithjof Schoun, René Guénon: Some Observations, Sophia Perennis, 2004, p.XIII

2 رينيه جينو، أزمة العالم المعاصر، ترجمة: سامي محمد عبد الوحيد، مؤسسة النهار ، 1976، ص20.

## *René Guénon and Western Democracy*

KADRI Abderrahmane (1) (2)\*

The modern world has known up to present a lot of changes during the last three centuries. And there is no doubt that industrial revolution affected positively human life through discovering and exploitation of nature. Unfortunately, the consequences of this development were to some extent unsuccessful and even counterproductive. One of the most negative aspects of modern civilization was the phenomenon of colonization based on ethnic discrimination and racism. This led to two aggressive world wars and tragic economic, social and political crises mainly during the first half of the 20th century. That is why many philosophers such Oswald Spengler<sup>(3)</sup> (1880-1936) and René Guénon<sup>(4)</sup> (1886-1951) did their best to alert the dangers of this situation and tried to find the right path for humanity to avoid a catastrophic collapse which seems to be inevitable. The following pages in this paper deal with Guénon's attempt in discussing this issue. It deals exactly with the material principle of modern civilization and how it represents the influential factor in western democracy.

Guénon was so interested in metaphysics and comparative religion. According to him the western world had lost most of his tradition and spirituality and had become more influenced by materialistic view. "A very important characteristic is his deep-reaching

---

1 أستاذ محاضر، كلية العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية، جامعة سيدي بلعباس.

2 الملخص: تمثل انتقادات روني جينو للحضارة الغربية المعاصرة وما تتبناه من قوانين سياسية واجتماعية نموذجاً متميزاً لتفكير تجاوي قادر على وضع ما يبدو أنه حقيقة متفق عليها أمام أسئلة نقدية فاحصة، تجلي كثيراً مما تنطوي عليه من تناقضات. وتكشف هذه الانتقادات بوضوح عن الأساس المادي للحضارة الغربية المعاصرة وعن الشروط العلمية والتاريخية التي شكلت العقل الغربي ووجهته لتبني قوانين سياسية معينة تتعارض في حقيقتها مع ما تدعيه من عدالة ومساواة. هذا ما يتضمنه هذا المقال، مع محاولة تبسيط وتقريب لأفكار جينو وأسلوبه في الطرح والذي يتميز بالعمق والتكثيف والاختزال والدقة والشمولية إلى حد كبير.

3 أستاذ محاضر، صنف ب، كلية العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية، جامعة سيدي بلعباس \*

- Oswald Spengler (1880-1936) was a German historian and philosopher who is best known for his book *The Decline of the West (Der Untergang des Abendlandes)*. ([wikipedia.org/](http://wikipedia.org/) 14.12.2016)

4 - René Guénon, later known as Shaykh `Abd Al Wahd Yahya (1886-1951) was a famous French thinker and a critical figure in the domains of metaphysics and comparative religion. He wrote and published in French and his works have been translated into more than twenty languages. ([wikipedia.org/](http://wikipedia.org/) 14.12.2016)