Trump, McCarthyist

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When Donald Trump accused of McCarthyists to those who unsuccessfully attempted to remove him from the presidency, for his attempt to discredit his main Democratic contender, Joe Biden, and his pressure on the Ukrainian government on that matter, he was mocking his detractors, because since taking office, he has been involved with the most dissimilar attempts to restrict freedom of speech, besides accusing of communist those who annoy him, as he did with Senator Bernie Sanders, the most progressive of the candidates who opposed him.

An example of that is the contempt for the press that regularly attends the White House, when he is asked something that upsets him, with expressions only surpassed in the bad taste by his star student Bolsonaro in the same situation.

Trump's mismanagement that caused the spread of Covid-19 epidemic and his accusations that China is behind it and it’s a "communist" virus, as well as giving a free pass to supremacist groups that try to keep him in power at all costs are part of the structure he wants to make profit and erase the logical disadvantage he currently faces on the race for the presidential reelection.

If Trump had lived in times of Joseph McCarthy, it would not take much guessing to know which side he would be on and, perhaps, cleverly, he would have stepped aside, when the furious anti-communist senator fell from grace, due to his own follies and blind hatred.

It was in the 1950’s that the word "McCarthyism" was tagged as a synonym for harassment for ideas or for association with ideas, when the United States Congress formed "Committees for Anti-American Activities" on the basis that thinking as a socialist or communist was the same as being the enemy of your country.

McCarthy denounced the existence of a communist conspiracy against the United States, infiltrated in many different sectors of the country, among others, no less than within the State Department, with which the "witch hunt" was initiated, it reached the military, public employees, film directors, screenwriters, artists, writers like Bertolt Brecht —who had to flee to Europe—, and many other citizens from different sectors who were affected. Hollywood

was especially punished. The most widely used and most effective tools were espionage and betrayal, usually based on subjective evidence that reached unsuspected levels of truthfulness.

Instead of complainants having to prove the guilt of the accused, the principle prevailed that the accused had to prove his innocence; that is, the legal principle of belief innocence disappeared. Exactly as it had happened in the Spanish Inquisition and identical procedure to that used by all dictatorships worldwide.

The accusations were most unusual and most damaging, reaching personalities of great social and political importance. Voices like Arthur Miller's were heard with his work "The Salem Witches" or that of journalist Edward R. Murrow, defending freedom of speech until, finally, they managed to neutralize Senator McCarthy and his dreadful "witch hunt".

Sprout that Lives Again

We highlighted how Trump's attitude revives that era, in different ways.

But Trump, I point out, becomes the victim of a McCarthyism that only exists within him, in order to wash his image that, unfortunately, is still haunted by elements that could perpetuate him in the presidency, despite recent polls which are unfavorable to him.

However, worrying signs of government keep popping here and there that demonstrate that the United States has no leadership, as it claims, in terms of democracy and freedom. Under the umbrella of the Patriot Act, a policy of fear and discrimination has been used against prominent thinkers.

One of the cases of ideological persecution occurred against the academic Tariq Ramadan, an expert in Islam history and literature, who was to preside over a lecture on the subject at the University of Notre Dame. The excuse given by the State Department was a contribution he made to a Palestinian organization "suspected" of terrorism.

They are ridiculous accusations that recall the most shameful days of an unsurpassed McCarthyism and that at the time attacked writers like Graham Greene, Pablo Neruda, and Gabriel García Márquez.

This is a new witch hunt that affects the beneficial and positive dialogue that should be encouraged with taught and moderate sectors of the Middle East, and, in this context, the current U.S. administration prevents many North Americans from having the right to know in depth which are the cultural, political and religious roots that have shaped the modern map of that region filled with conflicts and its ambivalent relationship with the West.

The worst strategic mistake made by the North American diplomacy is to be afraid of debate and the plurality of positions on modern conflicts. To walk out of the Iraq swamp or move forward on the path an eventual negotiation about the territorial integrity of Palestine, the current ruling group must dare to argue and negotiate precisely with those who don’t use fanaticism or violence to express their interests.

But recent events prove the contrary of what should be done, by falling into totalitarian resolutions, because he cannot win in the field of ideology and, in that regard, Trump's role, as a good McCarthyist, has been shameful.

That is why, in the United States, it’s not surprising that, with all kinds of tricks they can make the excuse of a future wealth prevail over the many infected and killed by the pandemic, a question that, in a nation like the United States, where it’s voted for the pocket and those privileged always have the greatest control, the worst could actually happen.

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