The New Herald and the False Shame of the Proliferation of Fascism in Florida

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Just a few days after the United We Stand Summit was held, where President Biden spoke against white supremacism that incites extremist, racist ideas and violence, an editorial published in El Nuevo Herald reports how this fascist phenomenon has increased in the state of Florida.

Under the title “It’s unfortunate that Florida, home to many Proud Boys, is a source of white supremacy”, the editorial points out that the extremists that proliferate in the so-called Sunshine State: “They demonstrate at the Capitol. They fly Nazi flags on Florida highway overpasses. They have distributed anti-Semitic flyers in Miami Beach, home to a large Jewish population. They have demonstrated outside Disney World, a beacon for culture wars after the company opposed a state parental rights law that critics dubbed "Don't Say Gay."

According to the article: «A new report from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) shows that in Florida there has been a spectacular increase in anti-Semitic incidents -an increase of 50% in 2021 compared to the previous year- and of hate crimes. Nationally, anti-Semitic acts also increased, but at a slower pace, with a 34% increase. The organization also found that between 2020-2022 there were 400 cases of distribution of white supremacist propaganda — 95% of them anti-Semitic — in the state.

But the aforementioned editorial, rather than being in tune with the criticism launched by the president during the Summit Against Hate held last Thursday, is actually seeking to give a boost to the Florida power group closely related to these fascist tendencies.

"Many will easily jump to the conclusion that we're blaming Donald Trump and Governor Ron DeSantis, who have focused on the same elemental issues that also lure extremists, such as immigration, racial resentment (via code speeches like "critical race theory") and an anti-LGBTQ agenda. But neither Trump nor DeSantis invented anti-Semitism and extreme ideology", claims the article.

According to the Miami anti-Cuban mafia newspaper, Trump and Governor DeSantis are excluded from being part of such groups because both "have been strong supporters of Israel. DeSantis signed laws requiring schools to certify to the state that they teach about the Holocaust and that they protect students from anti-Semitism."

And later, in an attempt to show some objectivity, he adds: "We can't ignore that Republicans have a problem with extremism, and an even bigger problem with repudiating it within their ranks. According to the ADL, Florida has the largest number of people arrested in connection with the January 6th attacks. There was a "significant increase in violent rhetoric in right-wing online spaces" following the FBI search of Trump's property in Mar-a-Lago, according to the report.

Speaking of the latter, the editorial overlooks a recent AP report entitled "Trump Embraces and Amplifies QAnon Conspiracy Theory," which claims that the former president, who has flirted with the conspiracy theory for years, has openly embraced it.

According to AP, Trump has recently posted dozens of QAnon-related messages, in contrast to 2020, when he just said that while he didn't know much about QAnon, he couldn't refute its conspiracy theory.

Back then when he was asked what he thought about QAnon theories, which argues that the former president is saving the country from a satanic cult of child sex traffickers, Trump replied that he didn't know anything about QAnon, but quickly asked: " Is that supposed to be a bad thing?

"If I can save the world from trouble, I'm willing to do it," he added.

Last week, using his platform Truth Social, the former Republican president forwarded another person's message, which featured a photo of himself wearing a Q badge overlaid with the phrase "The Storm is Coming").

In the phraseology of QAnon supporters, the "storm" refers to Trump's final victory, when he will supposedly retake the White House and his opponents will be put on trial, and potentially executed live on television.

According to Mia Bloom, a professor at Georgia State University, who has studied QAnon, cited by the agency, the former president could be trying to rally his most unconditional supporters at a time when investigations into his behavior are intensifying and meanwhile he runs into potential rivals within his own party.

"These are people who have elevated Trump to a messiah status and right now only he can stop this plot," Bloom told to AP on Thursday. "That's why you see a lot of images (in QAnon spaces on the internet) of Trump depicted as Jesus."

According to Janet McIntosh, an anthropologist at Brandeis University who has also studied QAnon language and symbols, by using QAnon language to speak directly to the group's supporters, Trump is essentially telling them that they are right and that he shares their secret mission.

For McIntosh, that also allows Trump to endorse his beliefs and his hope for a violent uprising without saying so straight out, and she cites his recent message about "the storm" as an especially terrifying example.

And with good reason like AP says, "the same weekend, a man in Pennsylvania who had repeated QAnon content on Facebook was arrested after he allegedly broke into a Dairy Queen chain restaurant with a gun, saying that he was going to kill all Democrats and put Trump back in power."

The complicity of the former president and some of his supporters with such calls for hatred and violence are undeniable, so it’s not surprising that in future editions El Nuevo Herald publishes another editorial stating that Trump, despite manipulating his outlandish theories, didn’t invented QAnon.