

The Four Horsemen of Democracy

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Indications are clear. In Venezuela, everything is ready for elections. In Washington (US State Department and its OAS section), everything is ready to discredit and immediately condemn the results. Even though the Bolivarian Revolution is capable of mobilizing thousands of people every rally, in every state, something major news media aim to overshadow, El Nuevo Herald has orders to say and repeat the candidate Maduro is 30 points below candidates Edmundo-María Corina in voting intentions. They intuitively know that Maduro will win, so the goal is actually to validate such accusations.

But one piece of news seems promising: four neutral and impeccable horsemen (one lady and three gentlemen) of bourgeois democracy, all former presidents, will be in Caracas on election day: Panamanian Mireya Moscoso, Bolivian Jorge "Tuto" Quiroga, Costa Rican Miguel Ángel Rodríguez and Mexican Vicente Fox. Since historical memory in post-truth times is so weak and random, I will offer some data taken from the Internet about the democratic record behind these imminent

judges, who could already pass the sentence from their respective residences (it is already written).

Mireya Moscoso, president of Panama between 1999 and 2004, achieved international notoriety when she pardoned the confessed terrorists Luis Posada Carriles —he had blown up a Cuban civilian plane in mid-flight in 1976, causing the death of its 73 passengers and crew—, Gaspar Jiménez, Pedro Crispín Remón and Guillermo Novo, all prosecuted and imprisoned for planning in 2000 the blowing up of the Auditorium of the University of Panama, where thousands of students, professors and national and foreign guests would gather to listen to Fidel Castro, with the sole intention to assassinate the Cuban leader. But everything has an explanation: Moscoso had been an active promoter of the presidential candidacies of her husband Arnulfo Arias, an ally during World War II to the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis.

Jorge 'Tuto' Quiroga, vice president of a famous leader in the region, elected in 1997 to govern with a narrow majority of 22%, years after having served as dictator: Bolivian general Hugo Bánzer, who seized power through a bloody *coup d'état* in 1971, torture, forced disappearance and the murder of its opponents, whether they were students, indigenous people or clerics. When he fell ill with cancer in 2001, Quiroga replaced him as president. In 2005, he ran again, but lost the election to candidate Evo Morales. As a “neutral” observer he has all the credentials. I only reproduce this vibrant and “patriotic” statement of his, taken from a television interview given in Argentina during Milei's inauguration: *“if Bolívar and San Martín from the North and the South gave us an independence of two centuries, [María Corina] Machado in Venezuela, political freedom, and Milei, economic freedom from the South, we will be able to reissue those times of glory...”* He said it, it must be said, as if he really believed it.

Miguel Ángel Rodríguez, president of Costa Rica between 1998 and 2002. He faced intense social protests when he tried to privatize the state monopolies of telecommunications and electricity, an iconic moment in the history of Costa Rican popular mobilizations. A few years later, he was accused of having been bribed by the French company Alcatel that was trying to win the telecommunications contract, and

sentenced to five years in prison, although a later court dismissed the case. For this reason, he had to resign from the position of Secretary General of the OAS, for which he had been appointed by the United States Department of State. The NTN24 channel asked him about the possibility of Maduro winning the elections, although he said it differently: *"If Maduro, the regime, decided to steal the elections, what should the international community do?"* - asked the interviewer. *"It has to be a total repudiation. The guarantor countries of the Barbados Agreement would have to be very consistent with their reactions and the diplomatic and commercial siege of the Venezuelan regime would have to be total."*

Vicente Fox was the first Mexican president, since 1929, elected by a party other than the PRI. In fact, the two new parties were born of that one: the PRI right-wing became PAN, to which Fox belonged, while PRI left-wing became PRD. The "new" three parties proved to be almost the same in the long run. In the 2024 elections, they participated in an alliance. The neoliberal policy adopted by Fox entailed full alignment with the United States and with George W. Bush and his defense of the FTAA, which led him to strong disagreements with the Cuban Revolution, but also with the progressive governments of Venezuela and Bolivia. He tried unsuccessfully to remove Andrés Manuel López Obrador from his position as governor of Mexico City, where he had gained great prestige and supervised the electoral fraud that took the presidency of the Republic from him in favor of Felipe Calderón in the elections of 2006. It was not his only move in favor of democracy. On a visit to Colombia a few years ago, perhaps influenced by the subtle methods of Democrat Duque, Fox revealed his most intimate wish: the Venezuelan president, he said, *"resigns or leaves with his legs first, in a casket."*

To join the bellicose squad of democracy, you only have to have been president at some point, and let a few years pass so that people forget how that office was held. But I am never ceased to be surprised by the lack of memory, the impudent way in which social networks, not at all innocent, are remaking history, more effectively than its scholars. For countries in Revolution like Cuba, the reconstruction of history constitutes one of the fundamental aspects of the cultural war. Each

socio-political model has its pantheon of heroes. Ours is presided over by those who have fought in defense of the rights of the people, for social justice and independence. The opposite system builds its own among an elite of “successful” politicians and businessmen, increasingly more cynical and opportunistic. Our heroes are the militiamen who faced the invasion of Bay of Pigs. But those who seek to restore capitalism in Cuba claim as heroes the mercenaries who arrived on American-flagged ships.

I was walking down a street in Havana's Vedado and passing between two people who were arguing on the sidewalk, when one said (it was impossible not to hear): *"Batista was a progressive man, he was the one who promote the Constitution of '40."* It can't be! I exclaimed, unable to contain myself. The improvised and ignorant “historian” was silent for a few seconds, and I continued on my way, while I reviewed some facts in my mind: Batista, certainly, always manipulated his participation in the so-called Revolution of 1930—which, through the actions of men like him, “*vanished,*” in Roa's words—and he was also the one who conspired with the American ambassador, turning his back to the people, against the nationalist government of Grau San Martín and Antonio Guiteras, and the one who later murdered him. The most progressive items of that Constitution were promoted by the communists. But it was Batista who annulled it in 1952 with his *coup d'état*, the man who, clinging to power, murdered thousands of young people.

Had he lived in these times, he would surely be the fifth horseman of Democracy, and he would be this July 28 in Caracas, to certify (a conclusion already adopted) that Maduro and his “regime” do not respect democracy.

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