

also the Big Brother that assumes responsibility for systematically pointing out those states which do not duly comply with the dispositions in this document. In the last decade, greater emphasis has been given to this policy of denunciation. Nevertheless, the support of dictatorial regimes in Chile, Argentina, Guatemala and El Salvador, hostilities towards Cuba and Nicaragua, in addition to the recent invasion of Panama, have all damaged the "champion of liberty" image that the U.S. government has been promoting for more than thirteen years. This controversial topic is the subject of the most recent book written by Gregorio Selser, journalist and researcher for the Center of Latin American Studies (CELA) of the Political and Social Sciences Faculty of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). *La Violación de los Derechos Humanos en los Estados Unidos* (The Violation of Human Rights in the United States) analyzes the performance of several U.S. administrations (both Democratic and Republican) that alternated their declarations on the rigorous defense of human rights with the daily, premeditated violation of these same rights. Based on an exhaustive collection of data, it reveals "the dark side" of the U.S. political discourse and demonstrates that the U.S. ignores infractions of "friendly democracies" and on the other hand, points with an accusatory finger to similar illicit acts whenever they are committed by Eastern European countries or by leftist regimens in Latin America. In his research, Gregorio Selser gives specific examples of profound contradictions in U.S. domestic and foreign policy, beginning with the blatant U.S. disregard for the decision of the International Court of the Hague that obliged the U.S. to indemnify Nicaragua for economic damage caused by mining its ports, imposing trade sanctions and financing counter-revolutionary groups. Later he comments on the awkward situation of hundreds of activists from groups opposing the government when they had the "insolence" to demand their rights. Above all, Selser destroys the myth of freedom of thought and of association in a country where political prisoners and prisoners of conscience do exist, who have been detained through legal tricks for crimes still unproven and



evidently even including false crimes, and who have been judged and condemned by prejudiced, partial courts. Reading this book makes the reader infer a more serious conclusion: in the U.S. all men are equal before the law, although sometimes some are more equal than others.

The renewed concern for human rights in Washington was due in part to the increasing unpopularity of the Vietnam war, the Watergate scandal and the discovery of plans to assassinate leaders opposing state policy, damaging the image of Moral Guide that the U.S. had maintained since World War II. The only possible way to remedy this situation was the activation of a campaign in favor of humanitarian principles that did not evolve solely in the field of discourse, but also in the realm of concrete events. The interruption of military aid to Uruguay and Argentina, as well as measures of economic pressure against Chile, countries accused of genocide, renewed hopes among those who

thought of the Carter administration as the beginning of a new political era of true respect for individual rights. Refutations were not long in the waiting. Ultra-conservative groups considered the campaign detrimental to the high priority interests of national security, while leftist groups blamed the campaign for ignoring violations of rights that occurred in its own territory. President James Carter had to admit that "America also had human rights problems". It was the first official declaration that confirmed what the whole world knew: the espionage services of the FBI and the CIA abused their authority. Reports were made known on unjustified detentions, wire-taps and authorities dedicated to intimidating organizations and individuals whose only crime was to be in dissent with the state's politics. Those suspected of "subversion" included pacifist organizations, religious groups and workers' unions.

Any person who did not agree

THE SPECK IN ANOTHER'S EYE

Since the 1948 promulgation of the Universal Human Rights Declaration, the U.S. government has become not only one of its most enthusiastic promoters, but

with the opinion disseminated by the government in the mass media was a potential criminal. The paranoid activities of the U.S. government for more than a decade served as a context for the research presented by Gregorio Selser in his book.

The majority of **La Violación de los Derechos Humanos en los Estados Unidos** contains a detailed account of the treatment that leaders of Native American organizations, Puerto Rican independence supporters, Hispanic minorities, workers' unions and anti-racial supporters have received on the part of the Republican governments of Ronald Reagan and current president George Bush, administrations that have been characterized by a retrogression from the international level of human rights policies. The invasion of Grenada, the bombing of Libya, the harassment of Nicaragua and the invasion of Panama demonstrate this. On a domestic level, its procedures have not varied either. Cases such as that of Vietnam veteran Bryan Wilson, intentionally run over by a train loaded with munitions when he participated in a civil protest that tried to block the convoy's passage, or the case of the Native American leader Leonard Peltier, unjustly accused of murder and condemned to life imprisonment, illustrate unequivocally the type of relation that the government reserves for those who actively oppose the state's cause, even when peaceful protest and civil disobedience are rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

Selser's book calls attention to an aspect often ignored by apologists of the U.S. system who criticize "totalitarian" regimes at length for exercising methods of control and social repression, perhaps less effective, evidently, than those applied by their own government. Despite the efforts of institutions such as Freedom Now! that try to unmask this policy of simulation, the judicial power continues to fabricate crimes of political prisoners. In spite of the rise of the black movement, the egalitarian dream of Martin Luther King vanishes before the racist nightmare of the system. In spite of the supposedly good relations between Mexico and the U.S., in one year more than 380 violations of the human rights of Mexicans in

U.S. territory were reported. In spite of the United Nations' condemnation of "military intervention in Panama", the U.S. government continues to assault Cuba. How many more such condemnations remain?

La Violación de los Derechos Humanos en los Estados Unidos
(The Violation of Human Rights in the United States)
Gregorio Selser
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