



Someone dies in the hospital under mysterious circumstances. There is a suspicion of errors in the care of the sick. The search for culprits begins.

A bridge crumble in mid-traffic. Dozens of deaths. It immediately initiates the investigation into those responsible, including through a judicial process.

It's common to look for culprits in certain human facts. Some, more relevant, require a complex investigation task. Others, simpler, have everyday situations as their focus: who left the iron on?

In the search for culprits, we sometimes look to the past. The current economic crisis was due to the mistakes of a generation that caused that financial bubble that makes us suffer so much now.

This search may be distorted more or less consciously. When does that happen? When you search in the remote past a kind of exculpation of the responsibilities of the immediate past. Or when you resort to myths that distort history and find fault where there are none.

In her book "*Empirephobia and Black Legend*", María Elvira Roca Barea describes this phenomenon, more widespread than we think, of finding the causes of evils that afflict us in the distant past to hide responsibilities in the most immediate past or even in the present.

The idea appears several times throughout his book. For example, in the following paragraph on the issue of economic failure in South America:

"Blaming the Spanish Empire on the economic failure of South America is like blaming on the Roman Empire what happens in the Iberian Peninsula in the time of Atanagildo and Leovigildo (6th century), but the inveterate habit of entering the history of the old empire to seek guilty and to judge, both the very and the strangers, is too ingrained to dispense with him suddenly. The great advantages it provides should be noted: it exempts contemporaries from responsibility and offers as a scapegoat to an enemy who already had a great literary and historical

tradition as a demon causing evils. One of the nourishing sources of black legend in particular, and of any *empirephobia* in general, is to offer a comfortable seat to self-justification that seeks to rid yourself of guilt or responsibilities. If the fault is the Spanish Empire (or the empire), it is not mine" (Maria Elvira Roca Barea, "Empire and Black Legend", Part II, Chapter 7).

Seeking culprits in the past with the desire to evade one's responsibilities is wrong, as the barely reproduced text indicates. It leads to a blurred, even ideologically deformed story and to conceal closer responsibilities that require serious study and confrontation.

The path of human history is full of actions that have consequences. Identifying those that have caused more, or less serious damage allows us to point out those who are true responsible for them, not only to accuse the culprits, but also to learn not to repeat in the present the mistakes of the past.