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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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21.10.2023

And after condemning, what?

It is high time that we understood that neither our values nor our interests coincide at the moment with those of the Zionist State of Israel. And that there is no point in condemning Hamas now if we do not condemn yesterday, and today, and tomorrow, the Israeli occupation and all its crimes.



Palestinian flags at the rally against "a new act of Israeli terrorism" in Madrid's Puerta del Sol. E.P./Diego Radamés

I confess: I have tried to rebel against institutional unanimity; It irritates me very much that hypocrisy dictates to me, on pain of ostracism, what I should condemn and what I should not. But I succumb ethically and politically; and viscerally. Without the slightest hesitation or hesitation, I condemn the killings of civilians, sometimes accompanied by inhuman cruelty and cruelty, committed by Hamas fighters in the operation called, in an eloquent echo of Israeli nomenclatures, "Al-Aqsa Deluge". These murders must be

condemned on principle (because we condemn Israel's crimes) and immediately also because they put the people of Gaza, besieged and starved for years, at the mercy of a paroxysmal military vengeance. There is, at the same time, a third reason. A few years ago, the French philosopher Etienne Balibar explained that Palestinians are always required to have an exemplary and superior morality, as victims of the Occupation and of the muscular Zionist propaganda. The asymmetry is not just military. It is also, if you will, ethical: because it happens that an equivalent response to the terror of the victimizer turns the victim not into an equal criminal but into a greater criminal. The Palestinians therefore suffer this double injustice: that of living under illegal occupation and that of having to be more just than their enemies and this in conditions of constant pressure and humiliation: injustice, that is, of not being able to be as criminal as their executioners. You can't. They shouldn't. All the semiotic (or geostrategic) advantages that they believe can be acquired through this type of violence are immediately nullified by the violence itself, which degrades the one who commits it, which conceals the history of resistance in which the action is inscribed and which justifies Israel, now purified of its crimes and authorized to commit greater ones.

Now, when Israel's leaders react by evoking the attack on the Twin Towers ("it's our 11/11"), we are obliged to denounce a fraudulent propaganda ploy. First, because with that reference the most primal empathy of the Western population is being sought; because (second) that equation already heralds disproportionate and illegal military measures that we should all be concerned about (Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Galant announced yesterday: "I have ordered a total siege on the Gaza Strip. There is no electricity, no food, no gas, everything is closed. We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly"); but above all because (third) it identifies Operation "Al-Aqsa Deluge" with a terrorist action, the most effective procedure for extracting it from any historical context and thus for absolving Israel of any form of responsibility. The </> attacks were a terrorist attack; the killings of Israeli civilians by Hamas, on the other hand, take place in the context of a military operation against an occupying force. Netanyahu, after learning of the militia incursion in Sderot, immediately spoke of a "state of war", a "state" that was later formally declared by the Internal Security Cabinet. Israel, yes, has been at war with Palestine since its founding seventy-five years ago. Hamas's horrendous crimes against Israeli civilians therefore constitute "war crimes." The difference between a war crime and a terrorist action is not quantitative, and it certainly does not prioritize the pain of the victims and their families. But the difference is important, because to speak of "terrorism"

in this case has the effect of concealing the unequal war between Israel and Palestine, an asymmetrical war in which an occupying power with military resources superior to those of Spain, the vanguard of weapons technology, faces armed groups of very limited strength, when not - as we have seen in successive Intifadas - entirely unarmed populations. This asymmetry, moreover, is revealed in the proportion of victims on both sides in the last decade: one Israeli killed for every twenty Palestinians.



A building bombed in the Gaza Strip in retaliation for Hamas' attack on Israel. Europa Press/Naaman Omar/APA Images

Would the solution be to reduce this proportion? That is, in increasing the Israeli death toll? Even if it were possible, I think the answer is no. But it's also impossible. Isaac Rosa explained it very well in a [recent article](#): the asymmetry is so great, and the vindictive mafia character of the Israeli state so implacable, that the increase in Israeli victims will only increase the number of Palestinian victims a hundredfold. Will the solution, on the other hand, be to increase the disproportion: zero against twenty, zero against a hundred, zero against a thousand? The Palestinians have tried everything in recent decades, including becoming the ideal victims, handing over more territory in Oslo, agreeing to the internal security of the Palestinian Authority, looking for alternative, peaceful and even pacifist forms of resistance. Nothing has worked. They have always been met with new bombings, new colonies, new walls and new annexations, a premeditated strategy aimed at radicalizing an enemy with whom there would otherwise be no possibility of negotiating. It was Israel that facilitated the rise of Hamas in the 80s so that it would not have to negotiate with Arafat. Netanyahu needs, like Bashar al-Assad, violence, terrorism, jihadism. The strategy works, but it's suicidal. Let us not forget the [lucid warning on Friday](#) of Ami Ayalon, war hero and former head of the Shin Bet, Israel's internal secret

service: "We will have security when the Palestinians have hope." Israel has lost the security battle because the Palestinians have lost all hope of reaching a peaceful settlement with Israel that would allow them to build at least a small independent State, even on a rock, even on a sheet or a handkerchief, even on the tip of a pin. It is this radical lack of hope that Hamas exploits in the face of an irrelevant and repressive Palestinian Authority that can offer neither democracy nor territorial liberation.

So Hamas takes the initiative against a backdrop of radical geopolitical desperation. When the far-right Netanyahu government embarks on policies of recolonization of the West Bank that point to a possible territorial annexation, when Saudi Arabia, after Bahrain, the Emirates, Morocco and Sudan, is about to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, further isolating the Palestinians from their natural context, and when the radicalization of Zionist policies has not translated into a distancing on the part of the US and the EU, Hamas decides to undertake an unexpected and spectacular action in which the dead serve as symbolic and psychological "messages" on the margins of an "international public opinion" from which no Palestinian expects anything anymore. By suddenly shining a light on the vulnerability of this enemy that was believed to be omnipotent, Hamas shakes off its isolation by appealing to the Arab populations who dissent from the policies of "normalization" of their governments and shakes in a terrible way the despair of the Palestinians, who suddenly see the possibility of inflicting a military defeat on Israel. even if it is provisional and counterproductive. That's the thing about hopelessness. Palestinians abound; Everyone has plenty of them. Luz García Gómez said [in an excellent article](#) that Hamas's military action was going to unite Israelis, and it is true; But it will also unite, at least for a moment, the Palestinians, who are left no common homeland but death. I remember images of the Israeli residents of Sderot taking their chairs out into the street, gin and tonic in hand, at the foot of the border, to contemplate in rapture those night bombings of Gaza in 2014 in which 2,200 Palestinians, 1,563 civilians, 532 children were killed. Is it understandable that, bereft of hope, the Palestinians today celebrate the sudden vulnerability of their enemy? There is still a difference between the nihilistic joy of a supremacist and the nihilistic joy of a battered loser, but this nihilism, a consequence of unequal violence, is at the same time an obstacle to any future peace. Victory over common nihilism will not be possible without victory over Israel's Occupation; And that victory depends less on the Palestinians than on the Israelis and their allies.

Hamas's action, in effect, will unite Israelis, now politically at odds, against the Palestinians. Thousands of Israeli democrats have been demonstrating for months against

the judicial reform, a stab at the rule of law dealt by Netanyahu's far-right government. But most of these Democrats have never questioned the Occupation or its policies, much less will do so now; Rather, they will forget their disputes to join the most radical military measures of that same government that they describe as "fascist". I'm sorry, but you can't be a democrat in Tel Aviv and a colonial supremacist in Gaza and the West Bank. A similar argument applies to the EU and the US: I am sorry, but you cannot defend the victim in Ukraine and the occupier in Palestine. It is not possible to defend the right of Ukrainians to fight the Russian invasion and ignore for decades the Israeli occupation, the extension of settlements in occupied territory, the deliberate attacks on civilians, the inhumane siege of Gaza. As long as Israelis don't become truly democratic, and Europeans and Americans don't really defend the human rights they pompously enunciate and the UN resolutions they themselves sign, many people in the global south will end up taking refuge in monstrous regimes, terrorist organizations, and violent, reactionary joys. The war crimes of Hamas must be condemned, without any hesitation, and with a trembling soul, but the same trembling soul has been demanding from us for decades a little empathy with the Palestinians and a little pressure from our rulers (who are now withdrawing humanitarian aid to that strip of Gaza without water, electricity or bread). Because our hypocrisy, like Israeli barbarism, is in fact fueling Hamas and Jihad in the face of other alternatives and pushing away any possible negotiated and democratic territorial solution. I highly recommend [this CNN interview](#) with doctor and peace activist Mustafa Barghouti, secretary general of the Palestinian National Initiative, the party he founded in 2002 with the great Palestinian-American intellectual Edward Said. No one can confuse this man's positions with those of Hamas, but for that very reason no one should fail to listen to what he says about the Israeli occupation and the West's fatal complicity. Together, we are building the desperate Palestine that Israel wants to destroy.

Term. [Says the Israeli journalist](#) Haggai Matar: "The terror felt by Israelis, including myself, today is the same terror that Palestinians have felt for far too long." Let us condemn and prosecute all war crimes, but let us not condemn the Palestinians to oblivion, violence and annihilation, the Israelis to a repetition of last Saturday's terror and the world to an endless war in which the EU and the US can only lose. It is high time that we understood that neither our values nor our interests coincide at the moment with those of the Zionist State of Israel. And that there is no point in condemning Hamas now if we do not condemn yesterday, and today, and tomorrow, the Israeli occupation and all its crimes.

Santiago Alba Rico

Edited by [Maria Piedad Ossaba](#)

Source: [Público](#), October 10, 2023

Facing a genocide | Conversation with Santiago Alba Rico

16 Oct 2023

For decades we have reflected on what Hannah Arendt called the moral collapse of the German population, which knew and did not know what was happening in the death camps without rebelling against it. Today we are facing an ethnic cleansing broadcast on television and bouncing around on the networks, but the international community not only does not rend its garments, but, on many occasions, joins in the applause. Then we will ask ourselves with sorrow how such a thing could happen without anyone lifting a finger, how international law and the soul of the West rotted. The ultimatum of the State of Israel has now concluded. A million people are trying to abandon everything to flee the slaughter, without water, food, electricity or fuel. And while the bombing continues. We take advantage of this video to link to the dramatization that Juan Diego Boto, Olga Rodriguez and Nacho Vegas made of Santiago Alba's poem "The owners of all the lists", in 2014. It is shocking to see its terrible topicality.

La Pluma. net 18.10.2023