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A Palestinian's Crying: Berlin Impressions

I shuddered again at the monumental images of the Holocaust and at the waters of the Gypsy pond: there was a broken heart, speechless, but, in this case, there were tears.



We had been moved by the Holocaust Memorial, which leaves you speechless and with many questions and heartache, we laid a red rose there, and then walked to the Memorial of the Roma and Sintis ["Gypsies"] of Europe, located south of the Reichstag building, in Berlin. Both are reminiscent of the Nazi genocide. In the round pond of the latter, where we met two Iranian ladies, the waters spoke to us in exact and very painful words. A poem by the Italian Roma [Santino Spinelli](#), entitled Auschwitz: "Sunken face / dull eyes / cold lips / silence / a broken heart / breathless / without words / no tears."



"There is no country that carries out ethnic cleansing with impunity as loudly as Israel and there is no country that silences this as loudly as Germany."



Near the German parliament building, under renovation, a man in black, with a Palestinian flag, harangued about the hardships of his people, the suffering of children and the elderly, the humiliations of Israel against a nation without territory and always burdened and ready to hate the enemy. He wore a white kafiyya with black arabesques and conveyed his uneasiness in English to a few onlookers.

My companion came over, shouted "Long live Palestine!" and hugged him. They hugged. The man was crying. So does she. I was the only one, the other, who joined in the hug and I let out a "Long live the Palestinian resistance!" They had banned pro-Palestinian demonstrations in Germany at the beginning of October, when Hamas attacks on Israel and Israel's response responded. That is why, in various strategic places in Berlin, as I later learned, there was only one Palestinian who, like the man with the embrace, exposed his pains and misfortunes to those who stopped to listen to him.

The gypsy poem and the tears of the Palestinian followed me for a long time. I was thinking about how hatred is fed in the world and in the tragedy of the peoples and in the overlooked intervention of politicians. And in wars and their victims, most of them almost

always civilians. My companion was still sorry and told me about the Palestinian's gaze, which was very sad, and how he cried on her shoulders, with a sort of infinite orphanhood. The Israeli writer David Grossman said that Palestinians and Israelis are children of the conflict "which has left us as an inheritance all the handicaps of hatred and violence." In his book *Death as a Way of Life*, a selection of articles on the dispute between Palestine and Israel, in which he tries to find a kind of unstable balance between the two peoples, he notes that the Palestinians have been outside of history. "They have been torn between inordinate legendary memories and the longing for a heroic future." And that both Palestinians and Israelis have tried to eliminate each other.

Another writer, José Saramago, said in 2002 that Palestine is like Auschwitz, which raised an unusual dust in Israel (where his books were widely read), and added that what was not a conflict between these two entities. "We could call it a conflict if it were two countries, with a border and two states with an army each." And in the same interview, from the BBC, in London, he warned that "a feeling of impunity characterizes the Israeli people and their army today. They have become Holocaust rentiers. With all due respect to the people killed, tortured and gassed."

What has been said, that was Troy. "Auschwitz is a wound for Jews that will probably never heal. But it's also a wound that they don't want to see healed, that they constantly scratch so that it continues to bleed, as if they were trying to make us responsible for it," he noted in an interview that appeared in the book *Palestine Exists*. The Israelis were in a state of anger and boycotted the writer, who had finished off his remark with this round: "Instead of learning from the victims, they have enrolled in the school of the executioners. That yesterday they were segregated? Now they segregate. That they were tortured? Now they torture."

Against the Palestinians, on the part of Israel, there is not only contempt, but hatred. And both peoples exclude each other, they are part of the networks of world power that, above all, have Israel as the standard-bearer of imperialist policies in the Middle East. And at this point it is worth remembering a passage from the poem *On This Earth*, by Mahmoud Darwish: "On this earth there is something that deserves to live: / On this earth is the mistress of the earth, / the mother of beginnings, the mother of endings. It was called Palestine. / It's still called Palestine. / Madam: I deserve, because you are my lady, I deserve to live."

We continued walking through Berlin and we both felt a kind of emptiness, of nausea, of contained pain, the so-called individual impotence. I kept hearing the voice of the man in

black, and also that of the Iranian ladies, who told us that they were exiles. I shuddered again at the monumental images of the Holocaust and at the waters of the Gypsy pond: there was a broken heart, speechless, but, in this case, there were tears.

Reinaldo Spitaletta for La Pluma, October 30, 2023

Edited by [Maria Piedad Ossaba](#)

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