

Holocaust without end

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By Guillermo Alvarado

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About 30 years ago I had the opportunity to tour, together with a group of guests, the Sachsenhausen camp in Brandenburg, near Berlin, where German opponents of the Nazi regime, Jews, homosexuals, Poles and Soviet prisoners were confined and summarily executed.

Medical experiments and other barbarities were carried out in that facility. There is still a track where groups of prisoners had to walk between 25 and 40 kilometers every day on various surfaces to test German military footwear, and those who could not endure these marches were eliminated.

The records indicate that 160 thousand people were in that place and 30 thousand of them died and their bodies were destroyed in the crematorium ovens.

The tour took up a good part of the day and by late afternoon very few among us were able to taste the food. We had only seen a faint image, a glimpse of what had happened elsewhere, such as in the Auschwitz extermination complex.

It is inconceivable what hatred can lead a human being to do against his fellow human beings, hence how important it is to stop fanaticism, extremism, false ideas of a superior race, fear of what is strange or different in time.

It is more complex to try to understand how widespread indifference allows acts similar to those that occurred in Europe during World War II to be repeated, almost as a matter of course, in other parts of the world.

I am thinking, for example, of the Palestinian people subjected to a cold policy of extermination that is little different from that suffered by the grandparents of their current victimizers.

I remember the 440 villages wiped off the map of Guatemala, many of them along with their inhabitants, or the atrocities suffered by indigenous women, such as the brave Ajchi women, who had to fight for 30 years to obtain the conviction of the paramilitaries who raped them en masse.

How can we forget the tens of thousands of Latin Americans tortured and murdered in the dungeons of dictatorships throughout the region.

The Jewish holocaust, which was also of other peoples, has not ended, the ideas that fed it are alive, they walk around Burma, they bombed Libya, they destroyed Iraq and Afghanistan, they threaten Russia, they assassinate social leaders in Colombia, they hide in impunity. Until when?

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