



Essay on the Revolt

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ABSTRACT

The essay seeks to draw a portrait of contemporary Brazil from the multiple violations of human rights practiced and legitimized by reactionary and genocidal governments. It aims to thematize how the murder of the black Councilwoman Marielle Franco and the obstacles placed in the course of the investigations are the result of a political, systematic and programmatic project, which has at its core the genocide of the black population in Brazil supported by stigmatization and marginalization of this racial group. Finally, the perception of the revolt as a force of resistance also resonates in these lines, whose cry for justice is materialized in the insurgent voices and bodies, which denounce the intolerable measures, gestures and actions anchored in the racial and sexual pacts in the country.

Keywords: Racism, Sexism, Genocide, Necropolitics, Justice.

Resumo: O ensaio busca traçar um retrato do Brasil contemporâneo a partir das múltiplas violações aos direitos humanos praticadas e legitimadas por governos reacionários e genocidas. Visa tematizar como o assassinato da vereadora negra Marielle Franco e os obstáculos interpostos no curso das investigações são fruto de um projeto político, sistemático e programático, que tem como cerne o genocídio da população negra no Brasil, respaldado pela estigmatização e marginalização desse grupo racial. Por fim, ressoa também nessas linhas a percepção da revolta como força de resistência, cujo clamor por justiça materializa-se nas vozes e nos corpos insurgentes, que denunciam o intolerável das medidas, gestos e ações ancorados nos pactos raciais e sexuais vigentes no país.

Palavras-chave: Racismo, Sexismo, Genocídio, Necropolítica, Justiça.

Resumen: El ensayo busca esbozar un retrato del Brasil contemporáneo a partir de las

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múltiples violaciones de los derechos humanos practicadas y legitimadas por gobiernos reaccionarios y genocidas. Tiene como objetivo discutir cómo el asesinato de la concejala negra Marielle Franco y los obstáculos traídos en el transcurso de las investigaciones son el resultado de un proyecto político, sistemático y programático, que tiene como eje el genocidio de la población negra en Brasil, apoyado por la estigmatización y marginación de este grupo racial. Finalmente, también resuena en estas líneas la percepción de la revuelta como fuerza de resistencia, cuyo grito de justicia se materializa en las voces y cuerpos insurgentes, que denuncian las intolerables medidas, gestos y acciones que se sustentan en los pactos raciales y sexuales vigentes en el país.

Palabras-clave: Racismo, Sexismo, Genocidio, Necropolítica, Justicia.

Introduction

The spirit of rebellion can only exist in a society where a theoretical equality conceals great factual inequalities.

Albert Camus, The Rebel

Sunday, March 14, 2021, marks three years with no answers. 36 months, 1095 days without knowing who ordered the murder of Councilwoman Marielle Franco and who was interested in her death. Trap, ambush, siege, whatever you want to call it, a woman, black, parliamentarian, bisexual, slum dweller, mother of Luyara was MURDERED, I repeat. This is the mystery of the crime that hovers over the Republic of Barra da Tijuca.

1095 days ago, I was out of Brazil, in France, for the doctoral meeting of the Centre Michel Foucault in March 2018. In the evening, after the works of the day, I read the fateful news in a digital newspaper. I reread it. I read between disbelief and despair that cold word: EXECUTED. Victimized by the summary death penalty. In the shared room, I cried, my eyes full of emptiness, in front of my Iranian colleague, who was looking at me without understanding what was happening. I cried because I knew the work of Marielle and had followed her militancy for some years. My vote in the 2016 municipal elections was for her, along with the 46 501 people who joined the tide full of hope and struggle of this frank and combative speech. I cried because it was a Wednesday in Rio de Janeiro and I was far away, and the winter of our discontent took over the whole landscape. There, in Estácio – a neighborhood that bears the nefarious legacy of colonization in its name –, exposed in the back seat of the car, under the rain and lightning, the body of Marielle was bleeding,

pierced by a genocidal, brutal, virulent project, which did not give truce to black bodies. For a black woman.

Today, the militia, drug trafficking, narco-militia, the church, media, necro-Pentecostalism, the bullet, ox and evangelical benches, whose power project converges to public necropolitics, ecocide, devastated land, continue to dictate the rules of the game (of chance). How to deal with the revolt in the face of the increasingly modern cocked revolvers, which fill with gunpowder and holes the surfaces of insurgent bodies which confront the current disorder and setbacks? Marielle, a giant, has become a symbol, a signifier – the incendiary cry, the howl against the sound of the combat boots that crunch on the bones, on the march, with glossy boots bathed in blood, verses and gunpowder. Here, in my inner revolt, I think about what she must have thought in that last moment... The shock, the rain, the wind, the open chest, cowardly knocked down when she denounces the permanence of the basements, the beating and the corrupt benches that promise new worlds and produce apocalypses.

On the edge of life, which flowed through the fingers, through each bleeding hole, how not to feel the impact of each one of those bullets in our dreams; in the egalitarian, anti-racist and anti-genocidal project to prevent stray bullets from finding the same bodies as always; in the voice that faces, outrageously, and says it will not be interrupted by a bunch of crook, scoundrel males? She, who does not shy away from the fight, who does not fear her own death, now murdered, while in the putrid rooms of Brasília the hyenas and the Bolsobarbarian vultures break signs and celebrate (too soon) her downfall.

What Future?

In the throat, in the neck, armed to the teeth - cowards - the same pit, the same ditch as always: the abyss, the mass grave of our history, the amnesic memory of a country paved over the trampled blood of Marielles, Cláudias, Ágathas, Dandaras, Marias, mothers, sisters and our missing ladies, in flood tides and complexes that bring together the devastating force of the slave patriarchy, the military, militias and necropolitics that, with their captains of the bush, produce the surplus of capital at the cost of the deficit of black, indigenous, trans, transvestite, female lives.

Revolt? The uncompromising demand of justice. Insurgent: without contingencies,

moderation or surrendered to the rhetorical agreements of the republic.

Here, you expect me to bring some answer, breathe, turnaround announced. But it has not been easy to breathe. Nor write without asking you, without questioning me what have we been doing to hasten the end of this world? This world-system that feeds on death. The globe of death of everything. The revolts emerge, they pop up in the world with bare hands, clenched fists. It was necessary for them to see, obscenely, the apnea, the asphyxia, to echo the cry against the intolerable: the despair of seeing trampled on as a thing, by a white policeman, a black citizen, under the spotlight of digital cameras filming, live, to the living, the MURDER of a PERSON.

In Brazil, every 23 minutes a young black man is murdered (BRASIL, 2016). By the time you finish reading this text, one more victim will have been executed. By the Brazilian State? By the jailer? In the ravines of Paraisópolis? In the alleys of Mineira? Mestre Moa, João Alberto, Amarildo, the bricklayer who was disappeared by military police from a pacification unit. The data reveal war figures in a supposedly democratic scenario: every year, 23 100 young black people, mostly between the ages of 15 and 29, are murdered in the country. That represents 63 homicides a day, on average. One every 23 minutes, I repeat, epidermically suspect. Like Johnatha de Oliveira de Lima, son of Ana Paula, killed at the hands of public agents of the Brazilian State in Favela de Manguinhos by the most lethal police in Brazil, that of Rio de Janeiro. For every 4 deaths committed by the Brazilian police, 1 is in the city of girl from Ipanema. Here, where I live, is also the state in which the police die the most. Among the dead and wounded, winners and losers in the daily life of the ravines, alleys and slums, most of the bodies lying on the ground are black men, the main targets of the anti-black genocide in the diaspora (FLAUZINA; VARGAS, 2017). The dynamics of State terror fulminate social rights and consolidate “a policy that strengthens the Penal State with the objective of containing those who are on the margins or 'excluded' from the process, formed by a significant number of poor and black people, increasingly more placed in the ghettos of the cities” (FRANCO, 2014, p. 40-41).

The stereotype of the number one suspect and the image that frightens the middle class is: the young black man from the slum with something in his hand that will always be interpreted by the police as a weapon or a drug, even if it is just a bag of popcorn. As a militant young black man told me: “In Brazil, the color of fear is black!” (GOMES; LABORNE, 2018, p. 4).

On that day, May 14, 2014, at 4:30 pm, when Johnatha was returning home, I, who

worked at a school neighboring the community of Manguinhos in FIOCRUZ, heard the sound of tracer bullets that ripped through the afternoon. I wonder if I heard the gunshot that hit 19-year-old Johnatha in the back. The bullet cut through the chest of the mother, sister and aunts, women who, since then, have not ceased to denounce violations that devastate generations, destroying trajectories. Stories interrupted by firearm projectiles, which materialize the project of the Brazilian penal state: “the police will aim at the little head and... fire!”¹, declared the former governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro, removed from office for suspicion of corruption and embezzlement of public funds destined for health, in the midst of the pandemic of the new coronavirus.

In 2020 alone, 22 children were shot and 8 murdered in Rio de Janeiro, such as little Emily Victória, 4 years old, and Rebeca Beatriz, 7 years old, who were playing outside their house. Black children fulminated by the bullets that pop and mark the Brazilian peripheral childhoods. That upset families and pierce throats. Those are lives lost and not bullets. The target is already prefigured: the shooting is collective “and any carelessness in life death is certain” (EVARISTO, 2017, p. 17).

It is breathtaking, yes, you know it well. Brazil is also a world record holder in violence against the LGBTTQIA+ population. It is the country with the highest number of trans and transvestite people murdered in the world. Death killed. Life expectancy: 35 years – half the national average, according to IBGE data from 2013.

The State has not only been silent, but has also been the agent of various violations and violence against trans people. The anti-trans policy, the lack of government data, the setback in public policies and the lack of responses to the historical process of precariousness of the lives of trans people are part of a very well-articulated plan between the State, anti-trans groups and others that encourage hatred against this portion of the population (BENEVIDES; NOGUEIRA, 2021, p. 43).

In the country of samba, sympathy and football, every two hours a woman is murdered – 68 % of them are black according to the 2020 Atlas of Violence (IPEA; FBSP, 2020). This is the case of Marcinha Shokenna Bastos da Silva, a 28-year-old trans woman who was found dead with club marks at her home in Maricá, metropolitan region of Rio, on June 14, 2020. Nobody has been arrested. In 2020, 175 murders of trans women and transvestites were recorded in the country (BENEVIDES; NOGUEIRA, 2021). Hate crime. Impunity. Revolt.

Between 2018 and 2019, there was a 150 % increase in the numbers of violence

against indigenous and quilombola populations according to the Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI, 2019). In the middle of the agribusiness path, there was a village, a quilombo. Ruralists, land grabbers, squatters, miners possessed by the colonial-capitalist rage do not think twice. AND... Fire! They tear down the fields, burn the forests, the peoples of the countryside, poison rivers and springs. Fire day. They speak the language of death, deforestation, slaughterhouse. In early 2020, around 180 Guarani and Kaiowá families were violently harassed by private security guards in Dourados, Mato Grosso do Sul². The confrontation with the lackeys-militia of ranchers lasted 16 hours and ended with seven indigenous people wounded by rubber bullets and firearm projectiles. Among them, a 12-year-old child, who lost three fingers on his left hand when handling a grenade left behind by the police, who also acted truculently against indigenous peoples.

Who Polices the Police?

In early 2020, two quilombolas were cruelly murdered in Arari, Maranhão. Celino Fernandes and Wanderson de Jesus Rodrigues Fernandes, father and son, leaders of the quilombola association of Cedro, were shot to the face in their own home invaded by four gunmen. Celino and Wanderson had denounced the conflict between the community and the land grabbers in the region, who take over and surround public land to raise buffaloes. The fence, the surrounded, the siege. Trapped. Quilombo isolated. The ambush to asphyxiate life. The unpayable Brazilian debt. The state repression that squeezes the kitten. Zumbi resists. Revolt.

In *O Negro Revoltado*, which gathers the annals of the sessions of the I Congress of the Brazilian Black held in 1950, Abdias Nascimento ([1968] 1982), one of the greatest Brazilian intellectuals of all time and space, is incisive in stirring the open wounds of colonialism to expose the festering heritage of racial and sexual violence that is perpetuated in the eviscerated bodies and in the open veins of Ladina Amefrica. On the ground of this Amefrica, in the paths of another unavoidable intellectual for Brazilian social thought, Lélia Gonzalez, the mass graves of oblivion are opened, where the indigent, nameless, lie, while militiamen and generals baptize the streets of the city rewarded for putting an end to the epidermically inferiorized bodies. Congratulations for keeping intact the privileges of white supremacy - the same that, for more than 300 years, enriched at the

cost of the lash of the flesh, death, capital, the captain of the bush, like the one who today (des) rules the country – implode! Demilitarize greedy, acquitted, inflamed armies, all the bandits in suits and ties – sordid – who set fire to the forest, the village and the quilombo with their morbid policy of devastated land to make “the cattle pass”. R-E-V-O-L-T.

It was Lélia who showed that racism is the "symptomatic that characterizes Brazilian cultural neurosis" (GONZALEZ, 2020, p. 76). The violent effects of the repressed element, which must be removed from the scene, do not fail to present themselves obscenely in what they imagine to hide. That is what re-turns (re-volt). The symptom is hidden because there are those who benefit from it. The corpses are hidden. The denial reveals that the murderous racial contract continues to work at full steam fed by the mortal remains produced by the repressive apparatus of the State. No effective racial democracy: “Blackness is inscribed in the sign of death in Brazil”, reveals Sueli Carneiro (2011, p. 92). “How many more will have to die for this war to end?”, asked Marielle.

You ask me, once again, what is revolt? What is this return, this cocked revolver I speak of, this rebellious return that turns the earth, affronts, goes round, spins? You tell me that mutiny, uprising, insurrection, rebellion, riot, insubordination and defiance, bang, burst, shuffle and bustle are seeds of insurgency. Ask me to turn to them. I revolve. Why are so many words, you see, mobilized to denounce the inadmissible? Why so many reinvented words thrown to the wind, so many struggles, legacies? I venture: to generate what, with them, was silenced. Cosmopower, cosmopolitics, ancestral cosmo-insurgencies dedicated to the memory of unrecorded revolts, the screams muffled with lead, the revolts of Búzios, Carandiru, Araguaia, Carrancas, Chibata, Malês...

This did not prevent, however, other revolts from taking place in 1809, 1810, 1814, 1816, 1822, 1826, 1827, 1828 and 1830. The death sentences, deportation, and public floggings with which their leaders were subjugated did not seem to intimidate blacks [...]; on the contrary, they seemed to serve as a stimulus to the libertarian spirit brought and inherited from Mother Africa, fully revealing the cruelty of the system that subjugated them (NASCIMENTO, 1998, s.p.).

This is what Abdias in a speech on May 14, 1998, in the tribune of the Federal Senate, remembers, revisits and recalls – re-turns (re-volts) – in his praise of the Malê Revolt, an uprising of enslaved black people, which took place in Salvador, Bahia, in 1835. Revolt is resistance. It is to give political form to the subjective experience of injustice, teaches us Abdias, our ancestor. It is combat, confrontation, on the open front of the

refusal to collaborate with the oppressors. Revolt is action. Recreation that strains the excluding, discretionary, autocratic and authoritarian bases of legal systems, institutes and governments that work supported by terror - of the State, in all its poker faces, counterfaces, interfaces. Against the objectification that exploits and kills, the revolt names, denounces, expropriates and makes responsible. It demands justice. It asserts rights, sometimes, against the current Law. It denies everything that undermines the potency of life and tortures and kills. It says yes to the legitimate defense of the living against the myths that reappear, from time to time, to legitimize summary execution, arbitrary arrest, sectarian politics as a password for authoritarian fury. But no revolt defines revolt. Perhaps its most corrosive and concrete element is also the most difficult to enunciate and describe: The power of time to come; the seed of life multiplied, disseminated, stubborn. Marielle.

At the door, the assassins await us. Scavengers, voracious and swift, predators and raptors, fly over the immense ruins of shredded flesh. And they laugh, without masks. They produce, in urban, city and police mills, the substratum of their grotesque oppression. The aft-history of the country that revolts against colonies, catastrophes and current torture. In the re-turn (re-volt) that knows: tomorrow will be bigger. The eternal return. The revolt that resounds in the denunciation of the (battered) whispered words by Cacaso (2012, p. 158) in his floral games:

*Brazil has become modern
the miracle has become modern:
Water no longer turns to wine,
it turns straight into vinegar.*

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