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PEDAGOGY OF CRUELTY: RACISM AND THE EXTERMINATION OF BLACK YOUTH¹

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ABSTRACT: Black youth is the central focus of this article. To understand it, we sought to analyze the relationship between youth, inequality, race and racism in the conformation of black youth's extermination. The text presents and discusses statistical data on homicides of black youth and interprets them in the light of the discussions on whiteness and racism. Understanding violence as a multi-causal phenomenon, this paper also discusses racism as the macro-cause of this situation, fruit of the idea of race that was built since colonial times in Brazil. Race and racism became even more complex ideas and practices after the abolition of slavery making possible the racial whitening policy. They are part of the structure of inequality experienced by the Brazilian black population. The analysis also points out the protagonism of black youth in denouncing the situation of violence they experienced, going beyond the idea of extermination and politicizing it as genocide.

Keywords: Black youth. Racism. Extermination. Education. Violence.

PEDAGOGIA DA CRUELDADE: RACISMO E EXTERMÍNIO DA JUVENTUDE NEGRA

RESUMO: A juventude negra é o foco central do artigo. Para compreendê-la buscou-se analisar a relação entre juventude, desigualdade, raça e racismo na conformação da situação de extermínio da juventude negra. O texto apresenta e discute dados estatísticos sobre homicídios da juventude negra e os interpreta à luz das discussões sobre a branquitude e o racismo. Compreendendo a

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violência como um fenômeno multicausal discute ainda o racismo como a macrocausa dessa situação, fruto da ideia de raça que se construiu desde os tempos coloniais no Brasil. Raça e racismo se tornaram ideias e práticas ainda mais complexas após a abolição da escravatura possibilitando a política de branqueamento. Elas fazem parte da estrutura de desigualdade vivida pela população negra brasileira. A análise também aponta o protagonismo da juventude negra na denúncia da situação de violência por ela vivida, indo além da ideia de extermínio e politizando-a como genocídio.

Palavras-chave: Juventude negra. Racismo. Extermínio. Educação. Violência.

INTRODUCTION

(...) On the other hand, truculence is the only guarantee of control over territories and bodies, and control of bodies as territories; on the other hand, the pedagogy of cruelty is the strategy of reproduction of the system (SEGATO, 2014).

The right to life is the main human right. A democratic state must protect the right to life of its citizens. Therefore, any attempt to break with democratic institutionalism must be strongly combatted, for that would infringe the right to life of the population as a whole, especially the segments in situations of greater inequality and vulnerability.

In popular culture, the right to life is the primary right. The right to work is the right to live. The state must guarantee the right to life. The right to health is also the right to life. People are aware that “If they have the right to live, they are citizens, they are human beings.”

However, in face of the aggravation of inequality in the world and in Brazil, it is up to us to ask: is the right to life being guaranteed? Regrettably, we know that it is not. It is one of the most denied rights. The data from the Juvenile Vulnerability Indices and the Atlas and Maps of Violence show us this grim reality. Social movements, collective actions, and progressive cultural groups have widely denounced how much our present wellbeing has been threatened by violence in political forums, marches, conferences, meetings, and social media. Violence is the denial of the right to life.

When space, work, health, land, food, or education is denied, the right to life is also denied. Life should be the right around which all other rights are structured, for it is a fundamental human right.

This article discusses and analyzes a time-space cycle that is crucial to the continuity of our life in society: Youth. To violate the right to the life of our young people is to sentence our future to the death penalty.

Among the broad range of approaches to the right to the life of the Brazilian young people, I will take the interrelationship between youth and race as the focus of the analysis. Thus, the reflections below will focus on young black people.

What is the relationship between the guaranteed right to life and black youth? How has this right been affected by racism? Instead of being protected, are the lives of our young black people being criminalized? Is there an extermination of the life of these young black people? A genocide? Who fights to guarantee the right to life of our young black people? Does education care about these issues?

THE EXTERMINATION OF YOUNG BLACK PEOPLE: WHAT DO THE STATISTICAL DATA TELL US?

Data and statistics on the denial of the right to life of young black people are alarming. All of them reveal high fatality rates besetting our youth in general, especially young blacks.

Considering such frightening data, we ask: What can society expect when society exposes its young people to an alarming degree of violence? What exterminates its youth? Moreover, when this extermination is characterized by the fact that most of these young people are men and black people, is this a refinement of cruelty? Will the criminal sciences help us decriminalize these young people and counter their extermination? Can the justice system actually do justice? Does education care about this issue?

Will justice be able to condemn the perpetrators of this extermination? Will human rights be able to protect these young people? Will the state take responsibility for protecting the lives of young black people and condemn their extermination? Will schools, especially public ones, understand their role of protecting life, not only of teaching mathematics and Portuguese, of preparing for the Brazilian Nacional High School Exam (ENEM), or preparing for upward social mobility? How do you discuss upward social mobility in school contexts in which classrooms start the year with a certain number of living youngsters, and finish it with half the class dead due to several acts of violence?

In one of my meetings with young black organizations, a young woman told me something, a very lucid and painful statement from a person aged only 20 years. According to her, “The life of a young black person has no value. Anyone can kill us. We are a nuisance to this society. We are supposed to be exterminated in the eyes of the police, the drug dealers, the middle class. We cannot circulate in the city without being looked at with fear and disapproval. This is not a way of life.”

This statement is present in our social and educational imagery. Our society is capable of producing a number of mechanisms that cover up and guarantee impunity for violent people and aggressors. And they accuse young black people, even if they are not guilty of it. The darker the color of the skin, the more it becomes a mark that stigmatizes. The periphery and the favela as housing sites are sufficient for the extermination to be decreed.

In our daily lives, it is common to hear things like: “A good criminal is a dead criminal;” “Human Rights only serve to protect criminals.” “The Human Rights only serves to protect the criminal and violent adolescents, so it is necessary to lower the age of criminal responsibility.” “A black person loitering about is suspicious; a black man running about is the prime suspect.”

The stereotype of prime suspect and the image that frightens the middle classes is of a black youngster from a favela with something in his hand that will always be interpreted as either a weapon or drugs by the police, even if it is only a small bag of popcorn. As a young black militant once told me, “In Brazil, black is the color of fear.”

But how do these subjects, young blacks who are criminalized and exterminated, react, resist, and try to emancipate themselves from this situation? Young blacks have been discussing their violence situation openly. This complaint has reached different forums and political actors championing youth issues, such as the National Union of Students (NUN), the National Union of Young Blacks (NUYB), the (partisan or non-partisan) black collectives, militants, whether belonging to the Black Movement or not, and researchers in the theme of youth. The agenda of the extermination of young black people has changing from a complaint into a fight for rights.

Currently, the hip-hop cultural universe (rappers, graffiti artists, DJ's, and MCs) and the black youth movement and young *quilombolas*², who used to be virtually isolated protagonists levelling this complaint, are no longer alone. The human rights movement, public defenders, public prosecutors, the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry of the House of Representatives that investigated the murder of young blacks, and the PCI of the Senate investigating the killing of young people, all acknowledge the perverse situation of the extermination of young black people in Brazil. Some of them face this situation squarely and echo what young black people say, denouncing a situation that is more than an extermination. The number of murders suggests a genocidal situation.

The term genocide, created and politicized by black militants and young black people, is not a concept of the current moment.

It has been re-signified and expanded, but it was already present in an analysis by Nascimento (1978), in which he discussed and denounced the history of violence inflicted on black men and women during and after slavery.

This term was adopted by the Federal Senate in the final report of the PCI on Murder of Young People. According to Farias (2016):

This PCI, in line with the concerns of the Black Movement, as well as the conclusions of scholars and experts of the theme, SF/16203.78871-55 34, takes the phrase BLACK POPULATION GENOCIDE in this study as the most adequate to describe the current reality in our country, as to the murdering of young black people. Brazil cannot live with such a vicious and ignominious everyday life. Annually, thousands of lives are taken, thousands of families are shattered, thousands of mothers lose their reason to live. It is time to rethink the actions of the state, especially the police and legal apparatuses, as a way of tackling this issue. This must be done so that in the near future, we shall have a fairer and more egalitarian nation where families, mothers, and brothers do not have to cry for the death of these young people anymore (p. 33).

The 2015 PCI report of the House of Representatives, which investigated violence against young black people and the poor, also ratified the idea of genocide. This document cites a sociological analysis conducted by Florestan Fernandes (1978) that took into consideration the situation of blacks under the effects of slavery and the institutional racism established in Brazil after slavery.

There is an institutionalized, systematic, but silent genocide. This is no figure of rhetoric or political game. (...) Abolition itself did not end the genocide; rather, it worsened it. Its aggravation occurred in the economically vital areas where slave labor was still useful. After that, blacks were condemned to the periphery of the class society, as if they had no place in the legal order. This exposed them to a moral and cultural extermination, which has had economic and demographic consequences (p. 21).

The sociological analysis of the 1970s enabled Fernandes to investigate the situation of the black population as a genocide. We can only imagine what the author would say if he could see how this picture has worsened over time, having a profound impact on young black people.

Cerqueira, Lima, Bueno *et al.* (2017) created the Violence Atlas (2017), which states that “of 100 people who are murdered in Brazil, 71 are blacks. Young black males continue to be murdered every year as if they lived in a war situation” (p. 30).

The data analysis reveals the reality denounced by the young black people movements in Brazil: Not only is the death of young blacks caused because most of them are poor and live in a situation of greater

vulnerability, but it strongly overlaps with race. That is to say, being black is a determining factor for violence to occur more strongly in this part of the population. This finding is nothing more than the affirmation of racism, even though it has been considered as a non-bailable and imprescriptible crime since the Federal Constitution of 1988.

Analyzing the evolution of murder rates according to whether an individual is black or not, we found two completely different scenarios between 2005 and 2015. While there was a growth of 18.2% in the black murder rates, the mortality of non-black individuals decreased 12.2%. That is to say, we have a sad historical legacy of discrimination by the color of the skin of an individual. From a lethal violence perspective, we have an open wound that has been worsening in recent years (CERQUEIRA, LIMA, BUEON *et al.*, 2017, p. 30).

The Violence Atlas studies (2017) also found a conclusion that was previously (and yet today) considered by some sectors as “ideological” and not a real datum: Despite the improvement of the living conditions of the population due to the policies enacted in the period from 2005 to 2015, there were more occurrences of lethal violence in the black segment of the population. This finding is very serious, since it allows us to reflect on how much affirmative action policies for the black population have not been internalized within the so-called universal policies. That is to say, to overcome racism and racial inequality, social policies must necessarily consider race/color data. When these are formulated, they must be applied with the intention of correcting racial inequalities that make the poverty, vulnerability, hunger, and violence of the black Brazilian population even more precarious.

There is a little investigated issue: Young black women and violence. The 2017 Youth Vulnerability to Violence Index³ (BRASIL, 2017) included gender for the first time. It reveals that young black women aged 15 to 29 years are 2.19 times more likely to be murdered in Brazil than whites in the same age group. Along the same lines, the Violence Atlas (2017) showed that between 2005 and 2015, the murder rates of white women declined by 7.4%, while the murder rates of black women increased 22%.

The gender perspective helps us to view the distribution of violence occurring with black women, especially young ones, enabling us to investigate the incidence of young black femicide in the data collected. This is a question that still needs to be properly investigated by further research and the feminist movement.

On the top of the list of inequalities between murder rates are the state of Rio Grande do Norte, where young black people die 8.11 times more frequently than

young white women do, and the state of Amazonas, whose relative risk is 6.97 (the relative risk is the variable analyzing mortality differences between white and black people).

Thirdly, the state of Paraíba appears, where the chance of a young black woman's being murdered is 5.65 times greater than that of a young white woman. The Federal District takes the fourth position, with a relative risk of 4.72.

In the states of Alagoas and Roraima, it was not possible to calculate the ratio between these rates, since no black woman was murdered in this age group (15 to 29 years) in 2015. Nevertheless, the mortality rates among young black women in these states were high: 10.7 and 9.5 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, respectively (BRASIL, 2017, p. 40).

The inequalities found by the Youth Vulnerability to Violence Index highlight a perverse relationship between social vulnerability, regional inequality, racism, gender, and race.

Black men and women people suffer huge disparities in several aspects of social life. In a market study, recent data disseminated by IBGE show that black men earn 59% what white men do (FLORES, 2018). Moreover, they account for 70% of the population living in extreme poverty, and show greater illiteracy rates than white people — 11% among blacks and 5% among whites (PNAD, 2016). Furthermore, they comprise more than 61% of the incarcerated population (DEPEN, 2014), despite accounting for 54% of the population (BRASIL, 2016). That is, disparities and violence go beyond the youth cycle. They are present throughout the lives of the black population. What is more, youth is a major stage in the social and identity trajectory of our society. The perverse relationship between racism and social vulnerability imposed on this part of the population is a death sentence. Above all, they should be cared for by the society, the state, and the adult world.

However, the conclusion of the Youth Vulnerability to Violence Index is frustrating. It only signals the need of affirmative action policies. It does not indicate a possible path to overcome this picture, and does not hold the state responsible in view of the alarming situation of violence affecting young black men and women.

The data exposed here may not be surprising news, except for the joint approach of race and gender. Nonetheless, they are present new empirical evidence of the cumulative disadvantages to which the Brazilian black population is exposed. To acknowledge that lethal violence is strongly linked to the black population and that this aspect is related to many socioeconomic inequalities, is the first step towards developing specific public policies and affirmative action capable of reducing these inequalities. (BRASIL, 2017, p. 47).⁴

This weak argumentation surrounding the gravity of the situation reinforces the thesis supported by several youth movements denouncing the fact that we face something greater than extermination. This strengthens the thesis of the genocide of young black people. This thesis has the power to call into question the state and its euphemistic view in light of such a serious picture. To acknowledge the seriousness of what is happening urges the state, the justice system, and other institutions involved, to go beyond the need for public policies of affirmative action. They must be followed by practical actions. It is important to acknowledge that affirmative action policies may be effective under certain conditions: Enough governmental funding, inter-ministerial and interinstitutional agreements, and ending the impunity of violent acts against young black people by politics, militias, drug dealers, and the self-titled upstanding citizens, who feel entitled to kill young black people without evidence, based on the mere suspicion of a delinquent act. There must be an urgent liaison between the federal government, the states, the municipalities, and the DF, a review of the national public security policy, the demilitarization of the police, and a democratization of the justice system and the National Congress.

Another factor must be considered. Until now, we have not yet been able to proceed on a major issue intrinsically related to the deaths of the population, especially of the poor, black, and young: Resistance followed by death. In the case of resisting arrest, the Penal Proceedings Code authorizes the use of any means for a policeman to defend himself or to overcome this resistance. It also determines that an act be published and signed by two witnesses — resistance followed by death. Oftentimes, these records conceal executions under “confrontations” that never happened, but the police officer claims to have shot to defend himself.

There is a historic movement of some parliamentarians in the House of Representatives, defenders of human rights, and social movement entities to defend the biased and racist character underlying resistance followed by death. When one wants to shift the focus of the issue, which is done constantly, the debate on security and the lives of policemen takes center stage. Yet the fact that in a democratic state, the existence of a military police is a legacy of the dictatorship in Brazil is not questioned. Theoretically, the military police exist to provide citizens with security. However, their practices (denounced by citizens, victims’ relatives, and eyewitnesses, and recorded in the act by security cameras or by residents and in complaints to the Justice Department)

have shown us that the police are more likely to threaten them with death and execute them in the name of alleged public security.⁵

A study by the Brazilian Public Security Forum (BSPF) suggests that in the period between 2009 and 2013, the Brazilian police killed 11,197 people in cases listed as resistance followed by death — an average of six deaths a day, given that the total number is under-reported, for some states did not send data to the BSPF.

The final report of the Senate PCI on the Murder of Young People (Farias, 2016) mentions a survey by sociologist and teacher of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Michel Misse, conducted in 2005 in Rio de Janeiro. This study suggests that of the police investigations concerning resistance followed by death, 99.2% of them were either dismissed or never reached the complaint stage. Young black people are found within this picture.

SOME INITIATIVES TO CONFRONT THE PROBLEM

The extermination of young black people has become such a serious social issue that governments are urged to present measures and policies to overcome this picture. On a federal level, in the period between 2014 and 2015, there was a program called the Living Youth Plan, coordinated by the National Youth Secretariat (NYS) and by the Secretariat for Racial Equality Promotion Policies. The Plan collected preventive actions to reduce the vulnerability of young black people subjected to physical and symbolic violence, based on the creation of social inclusion opportunities and autonomy for young people aged 15 to 29 years.

This plan prioritized 142 Brazilian municipalities, distributed across 26 states and in the Federal District, in which 70% of the murders of young black people were concentrated in 2010. The list comprised the capitals of all Brazilian states. There were 11 ministries involved. Together, they articulated actions of 44 programs in 96 municipalities, all of them focused on reducing the vulnerability of young people in situations of physical and symbolic violence, based on the creation of social inclusion opportunities and autonomy; the offer of equipment, public services, and coexistence areas in territories where high murder rates are concentrated; and the improvement of the state's performance by addressing institutional racism and the raising awareness of public agents of the problem.⁶

This action and others taken by the government at the federal, state, municipal, and district levels have always triggered discussions

of what the causes and consequences of the violence situation besetting young black people would be. However, they have never reached a common conclusion.

International organizations have positioned themselves to face this situation, as have some personalities in the arts. On November 7th, the United Nations (UN) launched the Black lives campaign in Brazil to end violence against young black people.

This initiative involved the 26 bodies of Country Teams of the UN, and it joined the International Decade of Afro-Descendants to raise awareness among society, public administrators, the justice system, the private sector, and social movements of the importance of policies to prevent and address racial discrimination.

By launching the campaign, the UN signals it considers racism one of the main historical causes of the violence and lethality to which the black population is subjected. To support the UN's position, data from the Violence Map were presented.

Despite the stance of international entities, the actions at the state level in Brazil remain timid. Social and political conscience, the publication of data on violence and vulnerability focused on race and skin color by research institutes, and complaints from the most diverse movements and collective actions by young black people can be found on Facebook pages and YouTube channels made by young black men and women containing their own analysis and statements to inform and educate young people and the general population about the worsening violence situation.

There are several forms of stimulation and affirmation of the young black identity through either national meetings or debates, such as the National Youth Meeting (NYM), self-organized events like the Afro Hair Pride March and the Encrespa Movement, and women's movements in several places in the country, in which young people denounce the situation of black people, always calling it genocide

In recent years, it is possible to say that political awareness of the extermination of young black people has increased. Apart from the complaint, the political and legal actions of some sectors to learn the causes of this extermination have been awakened. The most mentioned causes are urban violence, poverty and social vulnerability, drug trafficking, and the absence of a democratic security policy. Apart from those, there is the whole situation of lack of access to school education, the absence of public leisure equipment in poor neighborhoods and shanty towns, little or low participation in the job market in a dignified way, little access to cultural goods, and disputes among the young resulting in death by firearms.

In addition, other mentioned causes are: The fragile public security system in Brazil, constitutional impediments to the federal government acting more strongly alongside the states to implement effective public security actions based on discussions with the community, resistance followed by death, and police and drug dealers' impunity.

These causes may be grouped as follows: Social, educational, cultural, institutional, inequality, and poverty-related. Yet the question remains: Are these the causes of the extermination of young black people? Are there any causes that the society and the state continue to omit?

AFTER ALL, WHAT ARE CAUSES OF THE EXTERMINATION OF YOUNG BLACK PEOPLE?

All the previously mentioned causes contribute to the extermination of young black people. It is a multi-causal phenomenon. Indeed, there is a macro-cause that causes all violence against these young people that has not been discussed in public policies or deeply analyzed by the social and human sciences, especially in the education field: Racism.

According to the PCI report of the House of Representatives (2015) that investigated violence against young black people and the poor: "The shameful number of Afro-descendants is the most acute symptom of a social pathology that makes Brazilian dignity bleed — racism. Like the myth of cordiality, the idea that our country lives in a racial democracy cannot withstand serious analysis" (House of Representatives, 2015, p. 18).

The campaign named Black Lives: For the end of violence against young black people in Brazil (UN/BR) has publicly stated that racism is the macro-cause of the extermination of young black people. Regarding the situation of young black people enlisted in the official data, this campaign purports the following: "These deaths must be avoided; to this end, the state and society must commit to the end of racism — a key element in the violence victim profile."

According to the UN, a study conducted by the Special Secretariat of Racial Equality Promotion Policies and the Federal Senate that 56% of the Brazilian population agrees that "the violent death of a young black person is less shocking to society than that of a young white person." This suggests how indifferent the Brazilian people have been to a problem that all should care about.

According to the UN/BR, Brazil is among the 193 countries that have committed to the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, deciding not to leave anyone behind. "If racism has left young black people behind, it must be dealt with," the campaign advocates. "Black

Lives” is more than a campaign, according to the UN/BR. It aims to invite Brazilian men and women to join this debate and promote and support actions against racial violence. Nationally-renowned black men and women were invited to shoot advertising videos, and the organization website features guidance, data, videos, and discussions on this theme. The advertising pieces were aired in the conventional and social media. It was a major moment in raising the awareness of the population of the problem of the violence besetting young people. It was also a complaint about racism, which intensifies violence against young black people to the point of extermination.

THE MACRO-CAUSE OF THE EXTERMINATION OF YOUNG BLACK PEOPLE

The extermination of young black people involves a perverse cause that permeates all the others here discussed, namely the racism that has persisted in our society since the colonial times. This perversity hides in its alleged invisibility, for one of the schemes of racism in Brazil is to hide itself. It may be hiding behind the class issue, the state, the vulnerability, or poverty. A kind of racism that is structural, structuring and ambiguous. Its main characteristic is its ability to affirm itself through its own denial.

According to Borges Pereira (1996):

(...) These are many other characteristics of the Brazilian racial model – characteristics that define it and do not allow it to be compared to others that the world knows – and ambiguity is one of them. It must be combatted. Stigmatizing it is useless. It cannot be ignored, either. The ambiguity is the datum of a challenging and fickle reality, full of nuances, and as a datum, it must be analyzed (p. 75).

The ambiguity of Brazilian racism blurs our vision. We must focus on other phenomena, e.g., the causes of the unequal, criminal, and violent treatment of the black people that prevents them from exercising rights and social justice. Our eyes are diverted from racism as the macro-cause of a great majority of our social problems. For this reason, the solutions presented do not actually work on the real problem.

Racism is not a mere consequence of the violence besetting young Brazilian black people. It is neither an epiphenomenon of the class issue, nor simply a state matter. Racism is violent and causes violence. It is violence that affects certain subjects who feature specific diacritical signs, the fruits of black, African ancestry. In socioracial imagery, the carriers of these signs receive all the negativity produced by racist violence in a context of relations of power, class struggle, and gender and sexual inequality.

In Munanga's words, "In its strategy, Brazilian racism acts without demonstrating its rigors, it won't come to light; it is ambiguous, sticky, viscous, but highly efficient in its objectives" (1996, p. 215).

Historically imbricated in relations of power, re-edited and aggravated by the capitalist system, racism benefits from the psychological effects it can produce, especially in the elites and the middle class. One of them is fear. The classes that hold economic and political power induce the large mass of the society by means of mass communication, the fundamentalist churches, their representatives in the National Congress, to feel themselves the victims of certain diverse social collectives, in other words, the ones they were taught to fear: Blacks, the poor, the LGBT population, the homeless, the Landless Workers Movement, and so many others. All kinds of crime, violence, and distortion are imputed to these collectives, justifying the very acts of violence and injustice directed against them. In this collective neurosis, a part of the large Brazilian population projects onto the other, their equals, a feeling of fear that is actually the fear of itself.

As Bento (2002) argues:

Thus, fear and projection may be in the genesis of processes of stigmatization of groups that aim to legitimize the perpetuation of inequalities, the development of institutional exclusion policies and even genocide. Adorno and Horkheimer (1985) highlight that the most powerful empires always considered the weakest neighbor as an intolerable threat before falling upon them. They say that the obstinate desire to kill creates the victim; thus, it becomes the stalker who forces legitimate defense (p. 35).

White privilege associated with racism, social inequalities, and relations of power potentially fuel the aggravation of racist violence. According to Schucman and Cardoso (2014):

White privilege means ethnic-racial belongingness attributed to white people. We can understand it as the highest place of the racial hierarchy, the power to classify others as non-white, therefore meaning less than they themselves are. Being white is expressed in its embodiment, that is, whiteness goes beyond the phenotype. Being white is about owning symbolic and material privileges of race (p. 5).

Young black people who are poor, living in the favelas, with their color, their clothes, their language, their fearlessness, their possibility of circulating in urban spaces (even with the persistent attempts at racial segregation in the territories) are configured in this historical production of fear as threatening. But they also bravely confront violence. One of the theaters of confrontation has been the universe of culture, music, and art, for example, Hip-Hop Culture.

Souza (2016), studying the Hip-Hop movement in Florianópolis, states that:

A large part of these populations are found in urban areas of large cities, and in these spaces they express themselves. These are renegade or forgotten urban spaces in the city, despite their producing forms of visibility that are not always accepted and often marginalized. In this urban conurbation, I find one of the many Hip Hop paradoxes. It is in the city neighborhoods and spaces with the most extreme violence and poverty where artistic manifestations within the Hip-Hop Culture emerge to change the city where these spaces are. Not only do these spaces become visible, but they change the way they are viewed (p. 103).

The analysis of this author can be expanded to interpret movement, the forms of questioning and the youth and black circulation in other Brazilian urban contexts. In addition, we could cite many other expressions of resistance of this young people: Funk, charme,⁷ pagode⁸ and black parties that have been gradually taking place in a re-signified way.

If black people are generally viewed by the powers that be, installed and tarnished with white privilege, as a threat, exterminating them may also mean the continuity of a whole generation and a race considered inferior. Black Movement Activists have warned about the new forms that 21st-century eugenics takes, since the population-whitening project of the post-abolition period did not succeed, and the European immigration of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century failed to bring to fruition the project of a white nation desired by the post-abolition political, intellectual, and economic elites.

According to Pereira (2008):

(...) The statistics express in numbers and percentages a concern felt by the politicians and intellectuals of the time: There was a “dangerous” balance between the white and the non-white contingent in the Brazilian population. To let this imbalance be broken down in favor of the white segment by the natural reproduction of the population was to await a long historical-biological process of unpredictable results, perhaps unwanted. Theses to favor the immigration of ideal white, Latin, and Catholic people, who would quickly make the scale tilt to the side of the white people, pervaded all the rhetoric of the season (p. 278).

At one event, a black woman who was a militant in the movement of the peoples and traditional communities told the public: “Being the mother of a young black person is a high-risk operation today. While the middle-class white mother tells her child to take a coat when he goes out on a Saturday night, we, women and black mothers, tell our children: Beware of the police; if you are stopped, don’t be rude, always have your ID on you, don’t walk alone.”

At this same event, another black woman and mother said: “The extermination of young black people is a new form of eugenics. They kill young black people, black men, poor black people, then they prevent more black people from being born.”

To understand the extermination of young black people, taking into account the processes of domination, the whitening policy, and the race-mixing policy that have been established in Brazil in the post-abolition period, is a study to be conducted with greater depth. Additionally, how the myth of racial democracy, in its perverse way of fixing itself in hearts and minds, can even weaken the cruelty of this situation widely attested by official research and denounced by social movements must be investigated. This becomes even more complex in the context of socioeconomic inequalities and the aggravation of capitalism, causing even more violence and fear. Such a reality deserves much more profound analyses than those commonly carried out in the field of education when it comes to youth and the Education of Young People and Adults (EYPA).

Arroyo (2017) poses questions on the failure to deepen the discussion of young people and the popular and black EYPA in the theoretical educational production. Focusing on young people and adults in urban peripheries from a critical perspective, the author questions to what extent we study the condition of being young, culture, inequality, incarcerations, and data on the extermination of young black people are living in times of a new social-racial segregation. Such segregation especially affects popular youth. Moreover, the author questions to what extent this type of analysis has concluded that we face a generation of fear. According to him, the collectives of popular educators and students must guarantee space-times in the knowledge areas or study themes to understand not only what the statistics say. We are also faced with a perverse situation — the production of a more radical fear affecting our youth:

To lose life because one is young, because one is black, poor, from the periphery of the city is the most radical fear. The color of fear is black. The first human right, the right to life, is threatened. It will be convenient to expand the picture of a generation of fear. Not only exterminations, but the right to live, the right to life threatened by unemployment, underemployment, instability, and the weakening of their work, the weakening of their living spaces: Homeless, without transport, landless, without public health and education services. To live such a precarious life without a horizon, is to be forced to live in insecurity, in fear (ARROYO, 2017, p. 236-237).

To understand the “generation of fear,” as the author states, requires the understanding of the relationship between the historical,

social and racial aspects of the life of young black people. This is the only way we will understand the radicality of a categorical statement made by a young black militant during a debate triggered after a conference. He said in a tone of indignation and pain. “In Brazil, the color of fear is black.”

According to Bento (2002), this feeling of fear associated with the black population comes from afar. It has a close relationship with the processes of white privilege and racism.

This fear constrains Brazil in the period near the Abolition of Slavery. A huge mass of freed black people invades the streets of the country, and they both knew that the miserable condition of that mass of black people was the result of indebted appropriation (to be elegant), physical and symbolic violence for almost four centuries, from this elite. It is possible to imagine the panic and terror of the elite that invests, then, in European immigration policies, the total exclusion of this mass from the emerging industrialization process, and in the psychiatric confinement and incarceration of the black people (p. 35-36).

In *Black Wave, White Fear* (1987), Célia Marinho de Azevedo explains how the ideal of whitening is born of fear and how this feeling lies in the essence of prejudice and the representation made of the black population. It is precisely this fear that has strengthened the European immigration policy of the Brazilian State, a way discovered by the white elite at that time to solve the problem of a particularly non-white country.

It is therefore important to understand that the violence suffered by young black people has deeper historical roots. The more unequal the subjects found in social life, the greater the fear of the other, of the different one that is produced in those and by those at the top of the relations of power. The more one fights for social justice and equality, and the more the discriminated segments attain some social mobility and improvement of economic and life conditions, the more the elites are afraid of them coming closer. Moreover, the elites fear that they desire and compete for the places from which they were historically excluded.

Perhaps here is one of the possible explanations of the increase of violence against black people, especially the young: The gradual population change in a situation of multidimensional inequality that the black population experienced in the period from 2002 to 2015 that afforded them access and opportunities. However, as highlighted by Cerqueira, Lima, Bueon *et al.* (2017):

The most recent data of lethal violence suggest a picture that is not new, yet deserves to be highlighted: despite the advances in the socioeconomic indicators and the improvement of the living conditions of the population between 2005 and 2015, we continue to be a very unequal nation that cannot guarantee a living for significant segments of the population, especially the black population. (p. 33).

This period should be analyzed in the light of the issues posed by Bento (2002), that is, the psychosocial dimensions of racism in the context of whiteness and whitening. The racial equality policies developed by the federal government from 2003 to 2016 and the affirmative action considered constitutional in 2012 by the Federal Court (STF) caused an inflection point in the access of the black population to the sectors they did not occupy before: Universities and civil service exams. Moreover, the climate of affirmative action explains the tensions in the different interpretations of race, of who is black and who is white in Brazil, contributing to the visibility of the *quilombola* struggle for their territories, made the question of the right to the regulation of the *quilombola* territories through Decree 4887/03, published the acts of intolerance/religious violence committed against the traditional communities and *povos de terreiro*, that is, the mythic-religious, Afro-Brazilian universe.

It was in this context in which black men and women and their demands gained greater public and political visibility. Young black people began to circulate in spaces that had previously been closed to them, and the racial and peripheral consciousness has taken on new contours and a more inquiring, complaining profile. The bodies of young black people started occupying spaces with an affirmative aesthetics⁹ of pride in their curly hair and the presence of an aesthetics of the periphery that is increasingly cherished. The establishment and the white privilege have been challenged. The economic, political, media and fundamentalist religious elites in power felt terribly threatened.

Young black people have started to circulate in spaces considered by the elites and white middle classes as part of their private property (airports, shopping malls, stores, bookstores, shows, and cultural spaces). For a society that still cultivates an imagery of slavery, LGBTphobia, sexism, and capitalism, this kind of coexistence has become unbearable, even if it occurred in unequal conditions.

From a psychosocial point of view, the fear and the projection mentioned by Bento (2002) have escalated, and violence increased. In the Brazilian social and racial imagery, it is still forbidden for the subjects considered suspect number one, “dangerous individuals,” to leave their place and invade other territories.

State institutions, whose high ranks historically have been occupied by a fearful middle class and elite, have released and authorized violence through the force of the main arm of the state, the police. Moreover, a part of the justice system does not stand for young black people as victims, but as villains. In the federal sphere,

even though the PCI was conducting an investigation of the murder of young black people, the legislative branch mostly represents the conservative, the capitalist, the military, the rural bench, and fundamentalist sectors that justify the use of violence based on a discourse defending the guarantee of the public security of the population, the “upstanding citizens.”¹⁰

The poor and especially black population (black and brown) is found trapped by inequality, militia, police, drug dealing, and racism. The weapons reach the peripheries at the same speed as the drugs arrive. Stray bullets multiply.

This effervescence only produces more violence and death. As a result, young black and poor people become the main victims. The statistical data presented at the beginning of this article cannot be denied. The situation is dramatic: They are exterminated by the state and the different groups of power in the asphalt and on the hill. This situation leads a number of this young people to also kill each other. They are victims killing each other. Self-extinction is one of the products of the situation of a perverse relationship between inequality, racism, and structural violence that they did not invent.

But the young black people are attentive to their own situation. They can interpret the complexity and the perverse articulation between race and class that builds the socio-racial inequalities that deepen their extermination. They understand how young black people are seen in the context of racism and capitalism. They understand that along with the idea of their being considered a dangerous and suspicious people inspiring fear and revulsion, young black people, especially men, are regarded as useless and disposable by the logic of capital. The sum of this negative, stereotyped, and racist point of view results in only one thing: Extermination. In the interpretation of the youth movements of the black movement, a genocide. As highlighted by Goes (2008), a historian and member of the Active Force Cultural Nucleus:

The city is now “manufacturizing” itself (Ferrari, 2005) and a number of young people who are not within the production process must be exterminated, according to the point of view of capital. We are seen from the perspective of capital as useless and superfluous, and this also materializes via the state. Thus, they destroy us by selling drugs, decimating our population, arguing that they are fighting drug trafficking; they exterminate us through hunger and disease and resort to the Lombrosian scientisms of Nina Rodrigues (Benedito, 2005). They are reproduced on television shows saying that we are ill-natured; consequently, they promote ideologies stating that we are part of a population group called the “sub-race,” that we do not have a history, among other arguments used to justify

the destruction of those who are worthless to capital. This is one of the issues that we must address: The state is decimating us. In our current position, after the changes of the world of work, that is, with the advance of capitalism, the people of the entire world have become useless. That is why the dominant class creates these genocidal policies (p. 24).

OVERCOMING RACISM: OUR MAIN CHALLENGE

Racism structures the capitalist patterns of appropriation/expropriation of work, land and knowledge. It must be overcome. It is found in personal relations in institutions, it is rooted in our imagery, practices, and social structures.

The large leap is in understanding that racism must be understood as the main cause of the extermination of young black people. If the violence against these young people is multi-causal, then we restate that racism is the macro-cause of this violence. It is violent in itself. It evokes other forms of violence, but it does not originate from socioeconomic violence or the state. As discussed in this article, it precedes them. In Brazil, its roots stem from the process of colonial invasion in the 16th century, with the invention of the idea of race in the Americas (GOMES, 2012).

According to Quijano (2005), the idea of race in its modern sense was not known before the Discovery of America. It might have emerged as a reference to the phenotypic differences between the conquerors and the conquered, but from an early stage it was built with reference to alleged differences in biological structures between these groups. The formation of social relations founded on the idea of race produced new social identities in the Americas — Indians, blacks, mestizos — as well as redefining others. What was also deemed identity based on geographical origin or country of origin, such as Spanish, Portuguese, and later European, also took on racial connotations in relation to these new identities. As the social relations that were being configured denoted relations of domination, these identities were associated with the corresponding hierarchy, places, and social roles, as if they integrated them; consequently, they were composing a pattern of domination that was being imposed.

According to this author, the subsequent constitution of Europe with a new identity after its contact with the Americas and the expansion of European colonialism to the rest of the world enabled the establishment of a Eurocentric perspective of knowledge. In addition, the idea of race as a naturalization of these colonial relations between Europeans and non-European peoples was developed.

Historically, this meant the re-development and legitimation of the old forms, notions and practices of superiority and inferiority that already existed between the dominant and the dominated, even before the colonial exploitation of America.

The idea of race has passed through this complex process and become a powerful instrument of universal social domination, since another equally universal, older idea now depends on it: Gender. Phenotypic features were associated with cultural, mental, and sexual issues. Indeed, “race has become the first fundamental criterion for the distribution of the world population at the levels, places, and roles in the power structure of the new society. In other words, in the basic mode of universal social classification of the world population” (QUIJANO, 2005, p. 230).

The campaign of the Black Women Network of Bahia stood against the extermination of young black people by adopting the motto “Stop killing us!” This call does not mean stop killing us because we are poor. And it does not mean stop killing us because we live in the villages and favelas. The complaint is: — Stop killing us because we are young blacks.

What does this mean? This means that young black people embody the characteristics of a race still regarded as inferior, violent, dangerous. If they are walking or stopped holding anything in their hands, whether a can of oil or a pipe to fix a car, if they are coming back from university or a funk party, if they are driving their own car or carrying their child, the fruit of an interracial marriage, in a supermarket, they will always be considered in the current violent social and racist imagery the number one suspect. And they will be victims of a violent police approach, they will have their civil rights denied, and they run the risk of being murdered. They have the color of fear.

We can ask ourselves: What do young black people expect from justice? What about school? They hope they will be recognized, considered, and treated as citizens who have rights. Young black people expect justice to actually be rendered to their complaints and causes, overcoming so many historical injustices that segregate them and segregated our ancestors.

FINAL REMARKS

What are the political perspectives to free young black people from this structural, structuring and exterminating racism? They come from the young black people themselves.

There is a new movement in the scene where these young people live. Race, used and seen as a source of extermination by society, is transformed and re-signified by them as a symbol of affirmation, struggle, and emancipation. *The curly hair, the African-originated religions, the world of culture, music, their entering universities through affirmative actions, black and young entrepreneurship, especially in the world of communication and design* are some of the spaces that have been taken today by young black people. In all of these spaces, they lead to a complaint: Stop killing us. Stop killing us whether we are middle class or poor black people. Stop killing us with socio-educational measures that un-educate us. Stop killing us with the excuse that the state must watch out for the upstanding people. A new black pride is emerging, aware and resilient. And it is found in the institutions of Basic Education and Higher Education.

Despite being victims of extermination, young black people refuse to accept this place. The place of the victim is the place of death, and death has been the executioner of the black and poor population in Brazil, as it has been of young black people. They want to live. Death has always been close to the black population since childhood. Death and racism. Death and violence. Young black people seek an ethical meaning in our society. Thus, they create living alternatives.

Young black people talk to us in many ways. Music is a space of speech and shout, of complaint and announcement. Their hard music lyrics are a toast to life, as they describe so many death threats and their will to live so realistically. For example, let us compare the lyrics of rap music of young black people nowadays with the lyrics of the songs by young white middle class leftists who fought against the military dictatorship in the 1960s. This is another metrics, another verse, another poetics. Another political reading.

Young black people re-educate us to look at them and understand their struggles for life and emancipation. They call us to participate in their struggle for survival and existence. What do we have to tell you?

We, the adult conscious world, especially those who integrate the struggles for emancipation and against inequality, must wonder if we are really making an effort to change this picture of extermination. To achieve a fairer society, one must counter the structural and structuring racism that kills our young black people. The way racism is underlying in between many arguments, causes and consequences to the point of taking a secondary place in the analysis on extermination and violence conducted by several sectors of society and the state is an issue to be investigated.

Young black people challenge us. They re-politicize the idea of extermination and introduce the concept of genocide, contradicting the rules and international human rights conventions and the UN itself, taking inspiration in complaints and the precise analyses of Nascimento (1978). This courage could only come from those who have seen death so close, yet insist on continuing to live and exist ever since they were children. It is this young people who warn us:

Reflect the black light in the phony face
Of the strategically-whitened country
Occupy blank pages
With some necessary darkening

Draw other horizons
In my eyes, tired
Of the standardized monotony
Of the distorted vision
Provoked by television

Black on white
Seek the inclusion of other shades
Given the hegemony of stereotypes
Challenge the myth of racial democracy

Black on white
Occupy blank pages
With black words
To reflect our light.

(“Black on White,” Cristiane Sobral)

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NOTES

¹The title of this article is a free translation of a Spanish-written article by Rita Laura Segato. *Las nuevas formas de la guerra y el cuerpo de las mujeres*. 1ª. edición Puebla: Pez em el árbol, 2014.

²The descendants of Africans that was slaveried in Brazil and escaped to looking for freedom.

³This index presents data from 2015 and was produced by UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), the National Young People Secretariat of the Republic, and the Brazilian Forum of Public Security.

⁴A cooperation project between the federal government and federal entities would be a democratic solution to this and other violence situations. This proposal is very different from an intervention by the army, as happened in the State of Rio de Janeiro. This may be deemed an authoritarian measure, despite its being backed by the Federal Constitution. The Temer administration, together with the National Congress, decided in February 2018 to conduct a public safety intervention in the State of Rio de Janeiro until December 31st of the same year. For this reason, the responsibility for managing this area, which belongs to the state, is now in the hands of the federal government, represented by an intervenor, namely, an army general. The Secretary of Public Security of Rio de Janeiro had to resign from the position at the time.

⁵The Plenary of the House of Representatives approved by 356 votes to 61 the fast-tracking of Bill 4471/12 by congressman Paulo Teixeira (PT-SP) and others, which

details procedures for investigating cases of violent deaths involving police actions, ending the so-called resistance followed by death. This is intended to avoid excessive violence in police action not being investigated under the argument of compliance with their duties. However, while this article was being written, this project was still pending. It was requested by congressman Ivan Valente (PSOL) on February 27th, 2018, that this bill be included in the priority agenda of legislative propositions to address the crisis in public safety. On March 22nd, 2018, the document was found at the Presiding Table of the House of Representatives (MESA) with the following note: “in compliance with the decision on Petition No. 8128/2018, per the following content: ‘to be added to the records of Constitutional Amendment Proposal no. 446/2009 and Bill no. 4471/2012. To be published.’” (www.camara.gov.br/proposiçõesWeb). Accessed on April 18th, 2018.

⁶ At present, we do not have exact information on the continuity of the Program, except for the information available on the official website of the Secretariat for Racial Equality Policies of the Federal government, listing several actions towards restarting the Living Youth Plan on August 11th, 2017. This program was conceived and put into practice during the first and second tenures of the legitimately-elected president Dilma Rousseff (www.seppir.gov.br). Accessed on April 18th, 2018.

⁷ <http://mapadecultura.rj.gov.br/headline/charme-dance>

⁸ <https://www.culturalbrazil.org/6-music-styles-originated-brazil>

⁹ According to Campelo and Gentili (2017), the period between 2002 and 2015 represents a period of time when a number of political decisions in the social and economic spheres aimed to reduce poverty and inequality in Brazil (p. 16). The authors highlight the fact that in this period, the expansion of income, investments in infrastructure, and universal access and solutions to inequalities were crucial aspects of reducing inequality in the country (CAMPELO & GENTILI, 2017, p. 16)

¹⁰ The so-called BBB bench, i.e., the Bull, the Bible, and the Bullet.

Submission: 02/05/2018

Approbation: 02/07/2018

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