

## EDITORIAL

## VIOLENCE, HEALTH, AND SOCIAL CLASSES

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[...] João Alberto Silveira Freitas, 40, being punched and kicked by two men wearing black clothes. Beside them, a woman filming the beating. Then, with blood already running across the floor, other people appear around the man, while the two attackers try to immobilize him. A team from the Mobile Emergency Care Service (SAMU) tried to revive the man after he was beaten, but he died on the spot (CARTA CAPITAL, 2020).

These short editorial lines opening this issue of *Revista Katályses*, entitled: Violence, Health, and Social Classes, recap the murder of João Alberto, a 40-year-old black man, who “was beaten and killed by two security guards at a unit of the Carrefour supermarket chain, in Porto Alegre” (CARTA CAPITAL, 2020). The homicide was carried out by two suspects, one of whom was a military policeman and the other a security guard at the store. Such savagery occurred on the eve of the Brazilian Black Awareness Day, November 20, and it was not veiled violence. The unfortunate event was filmed by onlookers and shared on social media, later going viral.

Is this event an isolated fact in Brazilian society? Violence, driven by social, gender, ethnic-racial, and regional inequality, includes crimes, especially against women, LGTQI + population, black, and indigenous populations, with a strong connection between capitalism and racism.

João Alberto’s murder is not an isolated event. It is also not coincidental that he was a black man. Callinicos (1993) evidenced that although Brazilian society is constituted mostly by the black and pardo populations, the positions of prestige, command, and power in society tend to be occupied by white people. Black and pardo people are subjected to social and economic insertions with lower social and salary status, are also the preferred victims of police violence and death squads, which can be evidenced in the incarceration and homicide data, as the articles in this issue will discuss. Substantially, the world’s violence and, especially in Brazil, has ethnic-racial, sexual, and regional peculiarities. Although its manifestation generally occurs in immediate and particular relationships and contexts, violence reaches a complex and distinctive form of capitalism; racial slavery itself is at the origin of capitalism. Therefore, more than a behavioral and moral manifestation, violence results from a particular mode of production and the respective relationships.

Callinicos (1993) shows that racism, from compulsory labor in the Americas, becomes part of the economic and world capitalist system. Therefore, even after abolishing slavery, the wage process maintained the division and fragmentation of the working class, including the division based on racial prejudice. In addition to low wages, this situation promotes the distancing of the class issue when facing social ills and exploitation of work imposed by capital, because “[...] color prejudice in Brazil is the ideology through which racism manifests itself in its various degrees and creates the image of the bad black citizen” (MOURA, 1977, p. 47, our translation). Clóvis Moura explains that the created image of a bad citizen is a negative rationalization, which repeatedly aims to prevent their success. It



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must also be considered that in Brazil, the spread of the fallacious “racial democracy” serves to sediment the inflamed speeches of a certain political class that when talking about “Brazilian people” wants to eliminate, at the level of the discourse, social inequality issues crossed by socioeconomic, gender, race, and region issues. This narrative implies that everyone has the same opportunities, which goes against some social achievements, such as quotas to access higher education and public employment positions.

In this context, the COVID-19 pandemic poses an extraordinary challenge to Brazil and the world. From 2020 to 2021, the disease has claimed the lives of 272,889 Brazilians – according to official data collected on March 12 (BRASIL, 2020). However, the many difficulties in carrying out COVID-19 testing and registering cases and deaths suggest that this number may be even higher; and the most impoverished population living in peripheral neighborhoods are the most affected (VILHENA, 2021). This population is, to a large extent, engaged in informal work, depending on daily gains to survive, and performing precarious, insecure, and unhealthy tasks, which Abílio (2019) calls “viração” (or *gig economy*). With the COVID-19 pandemic, these people are incapable of following the recommended safety measures of social distancing and isolation and face the most difficulties to access benefits such as the emergency aid program (VILHENA, 2021).

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the measures to increase social distancing, and other conditions related to this major health issue, the *Forum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública* (FBSP, 2020) (Brazilian Public Security Forum) found a 7.1% growth of intentional violent deaths (IVD) in the country in the first semester of 2020. The vast majority of the people affected being young and black or pardo Brazilians (FBSP, 2020).

The profile of victims of IVD in Brazil is 91.2% men, of which 75.6% are black or pardo (FBSP, 2020). The most affected are young people aged 20 to 24 years old, but 13.6% of victims are between 15 and 19 years old at the time of death (FBSP, 2020). João Pedro, 14 years old, was playing in his backyard when police officers jumped over the wall firing guns, killing him; Mizael Fernandes, 13 years old, was hit by bullets from police who invaded his house and shot him while he slept; Rogério Ferreira, on his 19th birthday, was killed by the police, Rogério was unarmed and had obeyed the police when he was asked to freeze. These are just some of the examples of young people killed by the police without any confrontation. They were killed in their homes (FBSP, 2020). It is important to mention these sad examples, so the victims do not risk becoming empty numbers and faceless statistics that no one cares or protests about (MBEMBE, 2018). It is disgusting to see how human life, especially that of young people, is discarded in Brazil, reflecting the disposal process long before the homicides themselves. The state abandoned this population and acts in line with capital interests, disregarding social and labor rights and neglecting investments in urban infrastructure and housing, among others.

Police violence gained strong expression worldwide in 2020, when a black man, George Floyd, 40, was asphyxiated in the USA by a white police officer who put his knee on Floyd’s neck. Even though he shouted, “I can’t breathe,” the police officer continued to apply pressure for more than eight minutes until Floyd was unconscious and later died (BBC NEWS, 2020). This fact generated strong reactions and demonstrations in several countries, denouncing police violence.

In Brazil, deaths caused by police intervention have increased. From 2018 to 2019, the number of deaths caused by police went from 6,175 to 6,357, a 2.9% increase (FBSP, 2020). The proportion of deaths caused by police intervention in the total of IVD in Brazil reached 13.3%, i.e., for every 100 IVD in the country in 2019, 13 were committed by police officers (FBSP, 2020).

The socio-historical feature of Brazil’s social, economic, and political formation is perceptible in several economic and social indicators that are intertwined with violence data, in its various manifestations, ranging from the authoritarian state to social rights. In our conception, the themes: violence, health, and social class are strongly associated.

This issue of *Revista Katálises* meets a historical need to discuss the antagonisms of Brazilian society manifested in its title: *Violence, Health, and Social Classes*, addressed under different nuances in the sixteen articles that make up the issue. It starts with the analysis of the situation, indicating the character of the necropolitics present in Brazil and, subsequently, the theme of health is touched upon in the aspects of abortion, of how life may be considered disposable and death is disregarded, of institutional racism in the area of health, with emphasis on the challenges for the implementation of the National Policy for Integral Health to the Black Population (PNSIPN), racism, and gender. The themes of *labor* and *health* appear in the approach of the *psychodynamics of work* as an area of knowledge and education, with the debate on teaching work in

higher education, gender relations, and health. There is also an article about repressive education and human emancipation. The other articles cover domestic violence against women in Argentina, the struggle for the right to health in Spain, gender violence and structural racism, structural violence, fascism, and imperialism.

The articles recognize the violence intertwined or crossed by issues of class, sex, race, and region. It is urgent to strengthen the working class, from which all races fight together against this mode of production, exploitation, and oppression (CALLINICOS, 1993). Therefore, there is a pressing need for critical social awareness to focus on these issues related to social totality.

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