



MARIA LALLA CY ACHÉ
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To a New Normal, for God's Sake!

Life is breath

In memory of Rui Pereira

Two of the countries most afflicted by the corona virus pandemic, and where the infection and the mortality rates are disproportionately higher between black people, the United States and Brazil, have been stages to a wave of protests, in the last few days. The current crisis surfaced the class abyss in these two nations. It is not just a matter of polarization, between rich and poor, whites and blacks, but it is also a matter of life and death, not only related to police violence, but also related to the new corona virus pandemic.

The black and poor population in Rio de Janeiro lives as hostages of armed militias, police violence and criminal factions, in debasing life conditions: without basic sanitation, healthcare and education. The shootouts at the slums, which kills young black people and children at schools, are part of the city's normality. Who has a right to live? The councillor Marielle Franco, resident at Maré, was executed and, to this day, we do not know who ordered it. She dared to give voice and fight for Humans Rights for all. The case goes unsolved for more than 800 days, with signs of the involvement of famous militias, close to Bolsonaro (President of Brazil) and his sons.

Before going to work with the women of the Maré Community, I look at the newspaper to know if there will be police operations and many times, there will be. These days, our classes are suspended because of the high risks. It is hard to bring some peace and project development there, in normal conditions. The normal are shots, is death. The assurance to public security always was the blood and the sweat of the black people, alive or dead. The lack of alternative, conformism and the acceptance of reality, collaborates with the neoliberal economy and guarantee the cheap work force to do the heavy and dirty work to the wealthy, at the south zone of the city. Actually, everything is a grand business, which involves drugs and weapons, whose owners inhabit luxury apartments at the south zone of the city, as we all know. So what? As Bolsonaro would say. During the daily police operations at the city's slums, more innocents die, than drug dealers are arrested. Here, in Rio de Janeiro, there was a lot of corruption in emergency purchases without a license.

The corona virus arrived surprising the public authorities and the public healthcare system where, almost everywhere, taken red-handed. Forty years of neoliberalism at the Americas and in Europe, revealed our total incapacity to face a public health crisis of this scale. Thousands of people are dying; all of us had to isolate ourselves with fear of being contaminated and, not even with this, racism, fascism and "God Money", gave us respite and we saw poor people going to work, facing crowded transports, agglomerations etc. However, the black poor faces death every day. It is normal. So what? As Bolsonaro says.

Normalized everyday violence peaked with the recording of the murder of George Floyd, by a white and perverse police officer following the protocol, by smothering him with the knee. At Maré, in 2019, the children drew the helicopter that shoot at them. In this year's April, the police killed 177 people, most of them black, only at Rio de Janeiro. Our dead, which caused outrage this time, was called João Miguel, who was shot in the back, inside his own house. He was 14 years old. The protests in the US were like a breath, a comfort for the entire world. We are alive! We realized we could not keep ourselves isolated, quiet and complicit. We need to breathe, even if using masks, go to the streets, even running the risk of being contaminated. Protests against fascism, in defence of democracy happened here too. No one can take Bolsonaro's genocidal "ungovernment", which has as an idol, not by chance, President Trump.



The pandemic demonstrated that the death toll at the subhuman conditions in which the poor, black and native peoples in Brazil live, would be gigantic, as we are seeing now. Beyond the racist matter - though that is not a detail, we were the last country in Latin America to abolish slavery - we were all affected by the neglect with the life conditions, the irresponsible public health politics and the prioritization of the economy over the life of people, by this genocidal "ungovernment".

The pharmaceutical industry has little interest in investing at the prevention of crisis at the public health. They love drawing cures. The more we are sick, the more they profit. It is no accident that, in Brazil, we have four pharmacies in each block. The Brazilian president recommends chloroquine as a panacea to the evils of the corona virus. And here in Rio de Janeiro, there was a lot of corruption in emergency purchases without bidding.

There is an attempt in treating what Brazil or the United States are going through as normal. As if there were only anomalies which can be resolved during the electoral process, under the watch of strong institutions. As if what is happening was part of democracy. There is not, however, anything normal in what is happening today in Brazil or the United States. Thousands are dying, without being able to defend themselves: with record in unemployment and without a public healthcare system at the US and here in Brazil, with corruption, violence, deforestation, hunger, thirst and all sort of inequities. We definitely do

not want to return to this normality without a soul and love. We want a new normal, but I'm not talking about masks or regular social distances.

The shout of women, the cry of mothers, must be heard.



We are the nigger of the world. We want to take care and protect our children. We need to stop worshiping God Money, above everything and all. We want a new normal, where we can live with more simplicity, but safe from the perversions and evils of this capitalist world, fortunately decadent. We want lucidity and justice. Emanate the ray of feminine fearlessness among us, so that we can peacefully love diversity in unity, as One Being, as sons and daughters of Mother Earth.

We need to breathe.

Maria Lalla Cy Aché

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Translated to English by Gabriel M. Bronze