

Hope drives, fuels, moves and strengthens utopia

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DOI: 10.1590/0103-11042020127001

THIS EDITORIAL, WHICH CLOSSES OUR 2020 ACTIVITIES, could not have a tone other than sadness and indignation. We are close to 200 thousand deaths due to Covid-19, with a marked increase in the number of cases and deaths since October and a dramatic increase forecast for the first months of the coming year due to agglomerations over the holidays. The Brazilian people remain left to their own devices and to the virus without appropriate and timely measures by the federal government being adopted to save lives. The editorial¹ of the journal ‘The Lancet’, in May 2020, warned about the health risks to the country resulting from the poor conduct of the crisis attributed to the federal government, allowing the virus to circulate freely and gain national territory. This editorial, entitled ‘So What?’, repeats a phrase uttered by the president, who, when asked about the death tolls and the pandemic, responded, shocking the world: *So what?*

In that same vein, the editorial² of the journal ‘Saúde em Debate’, of June 2020, warns of the absence of a national plan to confront the pandemic, forcing states and municipalities to act without coordination and support from the federal government. Rational proposals and strategies, based on scientific knowledge, were disregarded, being replaced by ideological discourse which promoted negationism, with negative repercussions on preventive measures such as the use of masks and social distancing, in addition to ‘prescribing’ and disseminating false therapeutic illusions about which the harm has not yet been measured in the course of the pandemic and the disease.

The abundant scientific production that Brazil has been publicizing about the pandemic and its circumstances of confrontation indicate that a large part of the deaths could have been avoided if we had the political will and adopted the consequent and effective measures. Unfortunately, this pandemic found the Republic of Brazil chaired by a person unprepared for the position, without any empathy and insensitive to the pain of the thousands of people who lost their loved ones, friends, co-workers and companions. In addition to this profile of the president, his administration as a whole has been taking advantage of the people’s suffering to apply perverse measures of an economic policy that depletes the chances of a sovereign state with social justice. Moreover, this government and its alliances promote the most damaging environmental policy and the choice of an isolated path in international relations, especially at this time of extreme need and dependence on technologies and inputs for the control of the new coronavirus. The government is not only incompetent in managing the country during the worst health crisis in our history. It actually works against the interests of Brazilians, leaving

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the dead behind along the way, lying and neglecting suffering and deepening the conditions of poverty, with an austeric economic policy that reduces public investment, considered a rough, outdated and ineffective policy model proven worldwide, even among conservative theorists.

The president who was elected promising 'new politics' acts in the most retrograde way in collusion with the 'big center,' at the expense of powerful transactions and the public money he says he does not have to fight the virus and extend emergency aid.

At the end of the year, we highlight the work carried out by the Brazilian Center for Health Studies (Cebes) at this very challenging moment, especially for entities fighting for Health Reform. In the midst of various public mobilizations and positions, the Cebes articulated with dozens of entities in the health field to form the Frente pela Vida (Front for Life) which, in view of the visible absence of a plan to fight the pandemic, mobilized scholars from all areas of knowledge to elaborate the Covid-19 National Pandemic Confrontation Plan³, offering it to the federal government and to the governments of the subnational bodies as a contribution from the entities of the Health Reform.

In the editorial plan, we published, in addition to the regular issues, several special issues of the journal 'Saúde em Debate', one of which is dedicated to the topic of the pandemic. In the political field, the Cebes has acted in the National Congress to guarantee adequate financing for the Unified Health System (SUS), fighting the EC-95 that froze public investment for 20 years, which means the final nail in the coffin of the SUS-Constitutional project, that is: universal, comprehensive, and resolute. Our concerns now turn not only to the worsening of the pandemic, but also to the lack of sufficient vaccine guarantees to immunize our population.

In this whirlwind of activism and formulation of proposals, we have moved even further by creating the Cebes Debate, a channel with programs on topics that are important to the conjuncture and to health, aimed at the entire public, in addition to internal debate programs between regional or thematic areas that are part of the Cebes. Our entire struggle this year converges to fighting the pandemic and strengthening the SUS, which, despite being heavily underfunded, is making a difference and saving lives.

Immersed in this political and administrative chaos of a genocidal nature, we cannot fail to celebrate the resistance, with whom we count on to get out of this abyssal crisis. More than ever, it is essential to reaffirm and value that we are not alone in naming and honoring those who fight and work for life and for the values of human solidarity.

We salute our scientists who work day and night to find a vaccine that can protect the population and stop the transmission of the virus;

We pay tribute to our millions of health workers who, despite being tired and exhausted by the long hours and the stress they suffer daily, remain at the frontline of this war against the virus, even knowing it may cost them their lives;

We celebrate our researchers who in their areas seek to study and understand the Brazilian reality and offer solutions to our problems;

We express our respect for the thousands of professionals and civil servants who are dedicated to serving the population in public services – in health, in assistance, in education, in pensions –, despite the government's contempt for their work;

Our admiration and solidarity for the thousands of teachers who are dedicated to making children and young people suffer a little less from social distancing;

We celebrate the solidarity among families that come together to face suffering from losses and financial difficulties in the face of unemployment and lack of government support;

Our hopes are reborn with the associations, social movements, neighborhood movements, which have played a crucial role in the concrete support to families and communities, in the

organization of resistance to the misfortunes of the federal government and rulers who are absent in meeting the demands of the population;

The presence of art in humanity is essential, and artistic production operates as a subjective record revealing feelings in the face of reality. In the words of Adorno⁴⁽¹⁵⁴⁾, “the content of truth in works of art is merged with its critical content”, a content that is not “outside history, but constitutes its crystallization in the works”.

In the diversity of artistic manifestations, artists of all arts have been recording the times of withdrawal and quarantine caused by the pandemic worldwide. In an effort to illuminate our resistance and the optimism of the will needed to temper the high pessimism of the reason of these times, we bring poets who represented in verse and prose this moment of humanity’s pain and suffering, also caring for the hope of justice that we shall conquer.

Moraes Moreira⁵, a thought-provoking songwriter and excellent lyricist who we lost in the year 2020, published his last work, the cordel ‘Quarentena’ which, besides expressing about the fear of the virus, criticizes and denounces other past and present ailments in Brazil.

I fear coronavirus and zeal for my life, but I am afraid of stray bullets likewise... I say no to sexism and misogyny, there are others I do not accept, the so-called prejudice and the shadows of...

May the poets’ messages contaminate and strengthen us in this new year that will certainly require struggle and resistance from all of us; after all, in times of crisis, of anger, of hatred, and of intolerance, courage, action, and utopia are essential.

We conclude this editorial with a heart full of hope that the civilizing process will take the course of building a better world, quoting the poem ‘Esperanza’ by Cuban writer Alexis Valdés⁶, written during the pandemic.

Cuando la tormenta pase
Y se amansen los caminos
y seamos sobrevivientes
de un naufragio colectivo.

Con el corazón lloroso
y el destino bendecido
nos sentiremos dichosos
tan sólo por estar vivos.

Y le daremos un abrazo
al primer desconocido
y alabaremos la suerte
de conservar un amigo.

Y entonces recordaremos
todo aquello que perdimos
y de una vez aprenderemos
todo lo que no aprendimos.

Ya no tendremos envidia
pues todos habrán sufrido.

Ya no tendremos desidia
Seremos más compasivos.

Valdrá más lo que es de todos
Que lo jamas conseguido
Seremos más generosos
Y mucho más comprometidos

Entenderemos lo frágil
que significa estar vivos
Sudaremos empatía
por quien está y quien se ha ido.

Extrañaremos al viejo
que pedía un peso en el mercado,
que no supimos su nombre
y siempre estuvo a tu lado.

Y quizás el viejo pobre
era tu Dios disfrazado.
Nunca preguntaste el nombre
porque estabas apurado.

Y todo será un milagro
Y todo será un legado
Y se respetará la vida,
la vida que hemos ganado.

Cuando la tormenta pase
te pido Dios, apenado,
que nos devuelvas mejores,
como nos habías soñado.

Collaborators

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