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The Brazilian Black Front and the Newspaper *A Voz da Raça*: Strategies for Political and Social Mobilization in 1930s Brazil

Abstract

This article examines the role of the Frente Negra Brasileira (FNB) and its newspaper, *A Voz da Raça*, in challenging the racialized structure of Brazil's social contract during the 1930s. Historically, the Brazilian social contract was built on the exclusion and subjugation of the Black population, perpetuating a system of racial and social domination. The FNB, founded in 1931, marked a turning point by promoting affirmative actions aimed at social, economic, and political inclusion. Through *A Voz da Raça*, the organization articulated a counter-hegemonic narrative that sought to empower and mobilize Black communities against systemic oppression. Drawing on primary sources and critical race theory, the study adopts a methodological approach combining archival analysis and interpretive discourse analysis. It also refutes claims that the FNB aligned with integralist ideology, highlighting the organization's internal progressive faction and cultural and political strategies. The article explores the deracialization of Brazil's social contract, laying the groundwork for further research on systemic transformation and the enduring struggle for racial justice and inclusion in Brazilian society.

Keywords: Brazilian politics; Black politics; racial contract; racism; social mobilization

Resumo

Este artigo examina o papel da Frente Negra Brasileira (FNB) e de seu jornal, *A Voz da Raça*, na contestação da estrutura racializada do contrato social brasileiro durante a década de 1930. Historicamente, o contrato social no Brasil foi construído com base na exclusão e subjugação da população negra, perpetuando um sistema de dominação racial e social. Fundada em 1931, a FNB representou um ponto de inflexão ao promover ações afirmativas voltadas à inclusão social, econômica e política. Por meio de *A Voz da Raça*, a organização articulou uma narrativa contra-hegemônica que buscava empoderar e mobilizar as comunidades negras contra a opressão sistêmica. Com base na análise de fontes primárias e no uso de categorias da teoria crítica da raça, o estudo adota uma abordagem metodológica que combina análise documental e análise interpretativa do discurso. O artigo também refuta alegações de que a FNB teria se alinhado à ideologia integralista, destacando a atuação de sua ala progressista interna e suas estratégias culturais e políticas. Explora-se, assim, o processo de desracialização do contrato social brasileiro, abrindo caminho para pesquisas futuras sobre transformação sistêmica e a contínua luta por justiça racial e inclusão na sociedade brasileira.

Palavras-chave: política brasileira; política negra; contrato racial; racismo; mobilização social

Introduction

The Brazilian social contract was historically built on the exclusion and subjugation of the Black population, a structure of ethnic and social domination that persisted from the slavery period through the post-abolition era. In this context, the first initiatives aimed at breaking this dynamic emerged during the slavery regime. Still, in the republican period, political and social actions gained greater prominence, particularly through the work of the Brazilian Black Front (FNB). Founded in 1931, the FNB marked a milestone in the struggle for the emancipation of the Black population, promoting affirmative actions aimed at the social, economic, and political inclusion of this segment of society.

In this article, I analyze how the FNB, through *A Voz da Raça*, challenged the structures of racial exclusion underpinning the Brazilian social contract. Drawing on primary sources—archival materials from the FNB, including editions of *A Voz da Raça*—and secondary literature (Barbosa, 2012; Cavalcanti & Ramos, 1978; Domingues, 2004; Moura, 1992), I argue that the actions of the FNB initiated a process of deracializing this social contract, fostering the mobilization and organization of the Black population within a context of institutionalized exclusion. Methodologically, the article combines archival analysis of the newspaper with critical race theory and discourse analysis to interpret how the FNB articulated a counter-hegemonic political project. This study represents the beginning of a broader research agenda on the deracialization of the Brazilian social contract, which will be further explored in future works.

The article also makes an important historiographical contribution by examining the internal composition of the FNB and challenging its characterization as "integralist," a reference to the far-right Brazilian movement inspired by fascist ideals in the 1930s. This challenge is based on two main points. First, the FNB exhibited significant internal fragmentation stemming from the political polarization among its leadership. This analysis highlights the existence of a progressive faction within the organization, closely connected to Black grassroots communities in São Paulo and other regions of Brazil, which distanced itself from the conservative ideologies associated with integralism. Second, the confusion arises from the similarity between the colors used by the integralist movement, whose members wore green uniforms, and those of the Barra Funda Carnival Group, associated with the FNB and known as the "*Cordão Carnavalesco Camisa Verde*." To avoid wrongful association, the carnival group changed its name to "*Cordão Camisa Verde e Branco*," emphasizing its non-political, non-institutional nature and distancing itself from erroneous interpretations.

The article is organized as follows. The first section analyzes the racialization of the Brazilian social contract, tracing its origins back to the pre-republican period. The second section outlines the methodological approach used in this study, which combines archival analysis with critical discourse and race theory. The third section revisits the history of the FNB, clarifying why it cannot be associated with integralism. The fourth section examines the role of the newspaper *A Voz da Raça*, both as an instrument for the internal coordination of the FNB and as a vehicle for societal impact in Brazil. Finally, the last section presents the conclusions and suggests directions for future research.

The Racialization of the Brazilian Social Contract

Records regarding the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in Brazil are scarce and imprecise. The most widely accepted theory suggests that, in 1538, Jorge Lopes Bixorda, a trader leasing the rights to Brazilwood, trafficked the first enslaved Africans to Bahia. The trafficking of people between Africa and Brazil quickly became an extremely profitable activity. Between 1701 and 1810, approximately 1.8 million Africans were disembarked at Brazilian colonial ports. Despite the scale of this system, the country's first Constitution, enacted in 1824, made no direct mention of the terms "slaves" or "slavery."

Before the abolition of slavery, the Brazilian state was already implementing exclusionary policies targeting the enslaved population. In 1830, the first Brazilian Penal Code criminalized insurrections and revolts, aiming to suppress resistance. Five years later, in response to the Carrancas and Malês Revolts, Law No. 4 of June 10, 1835, imposed severe punishments on enslaved individuals who killed, injured, or committed any type of physical aggression against their masters. In 1837, Law No. 1 of January 14 prohibited "enslaved and African Black people, even if free or freed," from attending public schools, further entrenching educational segregation. By 1850, Law No. 601 of September 18 barred Black people from owning land or accumulating wealth—a measure designed, with abolition already on the horizon, to prevent the Black population from competing economically with landowners.

In 1888, Brazil became the last Western country to abolish slavery. The following year, the Proclamation of the Republic established a State that continued and deepened exclusionary policies targeting the Black population. An analysis of the laws that imposed barriers to the inclusion of Black people in society reveals the origins of structural and systemic racism, meticulously engineered by the ruling class and perpetuated by the republican State, particularly in the post-abolition period.

An emblematic example is the 1890 Penal Code, which criminalized *capoeira*, a cultural and resistance practice created by enslaved Africans in Brazil. *Capoeira* combines bodily movements, music, and elements of combat, serving as a means of cultural preservation and a strategy for self-defense against oppressors. The new legislation imposed penalties of 2 to 6 months in prison for those who "wandered" the streets without work or a fixed residence, practicing *capoeira* in streets or public squares. These measures sought to marginalize Black individuals further and prevent them from preserving their traditions and solidarity networks. The text states:

> Article 399. Failing to practice a profession, trade, or any means of earning a living without possessing means of subsistence and a fixed residence; subsisting through an occupation prohibited by law or manifestly offensive to morality and good customs […]
> Article 402. Performing in streets and public squares exercises of agility and physical skill known as *capoeiragem*; engaging in running with weapons or instruments capable of causing bodily harm, provoking disturbances or disorders, threatening a specific or unspecified person, or instilling fear of some harm:
> Penalty – imprisonment from two to six months.
> Sole paragraph. Belonging to a gang or group is considered an aggravating circumstance for the *capoeirista*. (Brasil, 1890)

Decree No. 145 of 1893 authorized the deportation of "vagrants, vagabonds, and *capoeiras*" to penal colonies, while Decree No. 3745 of 1899 denied bail to defendants considered "vagrants" or without a fixed residence, enabling police raids without judicial oversight. The legal frame-

work explicitly aimed to prevent the newly freed population from occupying public spaces while denying them any opportunity for social integration. This exclusion aligned with the whitening policy that dominated political debates of the time, promoted by the elites to reshape Brazilian society toward a European model. In this context, the Black population was quickly marginalized, transitioning from a condition of being free to being incarcerated, perpetuating a cycle of exclusion and institutionalized social control.

Throughout the republican period, no system of public policies was implemented to integrate freed slaves and their descendants into society in a dignified and equitable manner. This population was deprived of fundamental rights, such as adequate housing, healthcare, food, formal education, and job opportunities. Without any State support, the newly freed were forced to occupy marginalized areas, often remote and lacking basic infrastructure. In the Southeast region, for example, they began living on hillsides and other spaces that were unwanted by the urban elites. Under these precarious conditions, without access to basic services, these communities gave rise to favelas, a reflection of the social exclusion and structural racism that characterized post-abolition Brazil.

Without access to basic resources such as employment, housing, or any prospect of change, the lives of formerly enslaved people in Brazil between the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century were marked by poverty and neglect. The marginalization of the Black population in Brazil stretches from the period of enslavement through the post-abolition era. Enslaved labor was systematically exploited and highly valued by the elites, but with the advance of urbanization and the formal end of slavery, the Black population was pushed further to the margins of society. Oligarchic elites, who historically controlled the State, actively devised political strategies to block the social, intellectual, and economic advancement of Black Brazilians (Moura, 1977).

In addition to legal mechanisms and whitening policies, the ideological construction of Brazilian national identity reinforced racial exclusion. Emerging in the early 20th century, the myth of racial democracy (Freyre, 1933) gained intellectual legitimacy by portraying Brazil as a harmonious society born of miscegenation and cultural fusion. This narrative, while celebrated as a sign of tolerance, effectively erased structural racial inequalities by denying the existence of racism (Guimarães, 1999; Hasenbalg, 1979). It functioned as a powerful ideological tool that invalidated collective mobilization against racial injustice, suggesting that race no longer mattered in post-abolition Brazil. As a result, racial hierarchies were perpetuated through silence, and demands for reparative justice were dismissed as unnecessary or divisive.

This reality of exclusion and marginalization, perpetuated by the oligarchic elites, led the Black population to seek forms of organization and resistance in the face of the absence of inclusive public policies. In this context, the need for collective mobilization emerged, exemplified by the formation of the first entity dedicated to the struggle for the rights of the Black population during the Brazilian republican period: the Brazilian Black Front (*Frente Negra Brasileira*).

Methodology

This article draws on a qualitative, interpretive methodology that combines archival research with critical discourse analysis. The primary sources analyzed are editions of *A Voz da Raça*, published by the Frente Negra Brasileira (FNB) between 1933 and 1937. These materials were accessed through digitized and physical archives, with particular attention paid to editorials,

event announcements, denunciations, and opinion columns. The content of the newspaper was read not only for its explicit messages but also for its rhetorical strategies, political framing, and mobilization efforts.

In addition, the study engages with secondary literature on the FNB and Brazilian racial politics, including works by Barbosa (2012), Domingues (2004, 2008), Moura (1977, 1992, 2014), and others. These sources provided historical and analytical context to interpret the FNB's actions within the broader trajectory of Black mobilization and resistance in 20th-century Brazil. The article also draws from theories of the racial contract (Mills, 1997) and from critiques of Brazilian racial ideology (Freyre, 1933; Guimarães, 1999; Hasenbalg, 1979) to frame the structural dimensions of racial exclusion that the FNB sought to challenge.

By combining close reading of press sources with theoretical insights from political philosophy and critical race studies, the article seeks to situate *A Voz da Raça* as a political instrument that both reflected and shaped Black political consciousness during a period of state repression and ideological contestation.

The Brazilian Black Front (FNB)

The 1930s, during which the Brazilian Black Front (*Frente Negra Brasileira*) was founded, were marked by profound political and social transformations in Brazil, driven by Getúlio Vargas's rise to power in 1930. The 1930 Revolution, born out of dissatisfaction with the oligarchic system, led to the ousting of President Washington Luís and ushered in the Vargas Era, characterized by a combination of populism and authoritarianism, particularly between 1937 and 1945.

In this context of State centralization, political instability, and social exclusion, the FNB was founded on September 16, 1931, in São Paulo as an organized response by the Black population to historical inequalities and structural racism. The FNB established a comprehensive social organization model, including schools, soccer teams, theater groups, legal assistance, medical and dental services, political training courses, and arts and crafts programs. It also published the newspaper *A Voz da Raça*, solidifying its role as a landmark in the struggle for emancipation and representation of the Black population (Domingues, 2004, 2008).

The FNB articulated a national project in which the Black population would play a central role and occupy positions of power. To achieve this, it invested in young people's education and political training, aiming to develop Black leaders capable of transforming society. The organization also provided social assistance in the areas of education and healthcare while promoting large social events with a predominance of Afro-Brazilian culture as a counterpoint to the racial segregation imposed on the Black population within Brazil's social structure. In São Paulo, this segregation was particularly evident, with the subtle but systematic exclusion of Black individuals from events held by the white bourgeoisie.

The *Rosas Negras* group, composed of Black women, played a central role in organizing the cultural, musical, and social activities of the FNB. Through dances, meetings, and events, they mobilized the Black community in various neighborhoods, strengthening support networks and expanding the organization's influence. The grand dances held at Avenida Liberdade No. 602 headquarters attracted a diverse audience, including members and leaders from other regions, connecting the capital, the coast, and the interior of São Paulo. Cities like Campinas, Sorocaba, Santos, and Cubatão became key regional hubs, enabling the FNB to expand its activities to other states, such as Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco. This network consolidated the FNB as

the main Black political and social nucleus in Brazil, serving as a model of organization and resistance in the fight for representation and the rights of the Black population.

The FNB quickly expanded its influence, inspiring the formation of groups with the same name in several states, including Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Sul, and Bahia. With its remarkable activities, the organization became a true mass movement, gathering approximately 20,000 members distributed across 60 delegations. The FNB's political power was evident, as reported in newspapers of the time, which even highlighted President Getúlio Vargas receiving the organization's leaders with prominence to incorporate them into his alliance network. While some leaders aligned with Vargas, most chose an independent path, leading to the emergence of transforming the organization into a political party. This progression culminated in 1936 with the founding of the *Partido da Frente Negra* (Black Front Party), the first and only Black political party in Brazil, solidifying the FNB as a highly relevant political and social force.

When the actions of the Black Front Party (*Partido da Frente Negra*) were about to be implemented, Getúlio Vargas dissolved the party, along with the Brazilian Integralist Action (*Ação Integralista Brasileira*, AIB) and the Brazilian Communist Party. The justification for the dissolution was the alleged threat of political coups, such as the attempt led by Luís Carlos Prestes in 1935 and, later, by the integralists of Plínio Salgado. After the party was outlawed, former members tried to keep the movement alive, but the country's political context made unity difficult. Many feared being labeled as opponents of Vargas and ending up in the regime's political prisons. Among the most notable leaders was Francisco Lucrécio, a former combatant in the 1932 Constitutional Revolution, who fought to preserve the organization. However, he was defeated by the political circumstances and the new reality in Brazil, which fragmented the Black Movement across various emerging political parties.

One of the objectives of this article is to clarify the confusion regarding the supposed affinity between the FNB and integralism, a far-right movement led by Plínio Salgado in the 1930s and heavily influenced by fascist ideals. This interpretation arises from two main factors. The first is the internal division within the FNB (Cavalcanti & Ramos, 1978), resulting from differing political currents among its leaders. On one side, Arlindo Veiga dos Santos aligned himself with the nationalist-oriented integralist movement associated with the AIB party. On the other, José Correia Leite and Francisco Lucrécio leaned toward the organization's progressive wing, advocating more strongly for the fight for rights and social justice.

The then-president of the FNB, Arlindo Veiga dos Santos, was an enthusiast of a nationalist movement, as he believed it would be the means to integrate the Black population into the broader project of structuring Brazilian society. The political landscape of the time, marked by intense disputes over power, narratives, and ideologies, fostered the emergence of conservative ideas, even within spaces of sociability composed of individuals excluded from Brazil's social structure. Veiga was one of the main architects of a political project aimed at the independent inclusion of the Black population in spaces of power. However, this proposal also had inherent ambiguity: while the FNB advocated for including Black people in economic, political, and educational spheres, its positions under Veiga's leadership displayed elements aligned with integralist thought, seeking through an ethnic-racial discourse to express a white, elitist, and conservative interiority (Moura, 2014).

On the other hand, the FNB also included intellectuals with a more progressive perspective, which was essential for expanding its reach into spaces where the Black community organized around social niches. In these spaces, preserving cultural, social, symbolic, and communal values was crucial to ensuring this population's physical survival and collective identity. One of the FNB's leading progressive intellectuals was Francisco Lucrécio, who maintained a keen focus on community leadership and sought to connect the social organization experiences of peripheral areas with the progressive actions promoted by the FNB.

Among the social niches with which Lucrécio frequently engaged were samba schools and carnival groups, which played a central role in the cultural life of Black communities. The FNB's approach to these carnival entities aimed primarily to use these spaces to raise awareness and enhance the knowledge of the Black population participating. Creating storylines that narrated Black people's history and struggles was a key strategy for fostering a critical perspective on social and racial realities. This collaboration reflects the FNB's commitment to engaging in the social life of the Black population through actions that integrated culture and politics, with many of its leaders directly involved in these initiatives (Barbosa, 2012).

José Correia Leite, commonly known as Correia Leite, was one of the leading intellectuals in the FNB's leadership and a staunch advocate of progressive ideas. He openly criticized the influence of *patrianovismo*, which he argued distorted the organization's ideals to secure the support of the Black community. Correia Leite noted that one of the factors fueling ideological conflicts within the FNB was the political stance of its newspaper, *O Clarim da Alvorada*, which often confronted the conservative factions led by figures such as Arlindo Veiga dos Santos.

Moreover, other members also expressed dissatisfaction with the direction of the Frente, leading to the establishment of the Socialist Black Front (*Frente Negra Socialista*) during an ideological rupture. At the time, it was noted that many believed only *O Clarim* represented a dissenting voice, but there were others. One group, identifying with leftist ideals, left the organization when right-wing ideas began to prevail and went on to form the Socialist Black Front (Barbosa, 2012).

The second source of confusion stems from the similarity between the names of the radical AIB group, known as "Os Camisas Verdes" (The Green Shirts)—whose members wore green uniforms—and the *Camisa Verde* Carnival Group, associated with former FNB members and popularly called the "*Cordão Carnavalesco Camisa Verde*." The cultural and social impact of the *Cordão Camisa Verde* was significant for the Black community living in the Barra Funda neighborhood of São Paulo, quickly making the group well-known. However, with the government of Getúlio Vargas cracking down on the integralist movement and due to the association of the green shirts with integralism, the police forced the *Cordão* to change its name to emphasize its cultural, non-political nature. Thus, the group officially became known as the "*Cordão Camisa Verde e Branco*," incorporating white into its name to avoid misunderstanding.

The analysis of progressive currents of thought within the FNB is essential to avoid a narrow interpretation focused solely on the political practices suggested by the conservative faction, whose Black political project often neglected ethnic-racial issues as a central axis of the debate. Examining the proposals and actions led by figures such as José Correia Leite and Francisco Lucrécio provides a broader and more critical perspective on the crucial role of the FNB in developing initiatives that directly impacted the lives of thousands of Black families across Brazil. This approach allows us to understand the FNB as a pluralistic space marked by ideological

disputes and a movement that played a significant role in the struggle for justice and social inclusion. The next section will address one of the FNB's main strategies for mobilizing the Black population: the newspaper *A Voz da Raça*.

The Black Press and the Newspaper *A Voz da Raça*

As discussed in the previous section, the Brazilian Black Front (*Frente Negra Brasileira*, FNB) played a fundamental role in promoting activities to foster sociability among the Black population in São Paulo, influencing and impacting Black communities in various regions. This model of social organization represented an important milestone for social inclusion, the valorization of Black culture, and the construction of a new critical perspective, especially through education, which redefined the role and identity of this population within Brazilian society.

Among the strategic activities developed by the FNB, one stood out as essential for "*aquilombar*" (unify and empower) the Black population around the affirmative actions promoted by the organization: the creation of its newspaper, *A Voz da Raça*. The newspaper had a relatively short lifespan. Initially published biweekly from 1933 to April 28, 1934, it transitioned to a monthly publication in May 1934. Its circulation continued until November 1937, when the FNB was forced to cease its activities due to the political restrictions imposed by Getúlio Vargas's dictatorship.

Black activists and intellectuals faced a monumental task in ensuring the circulation of the newspapers. Despite numerous obstacles that, combined, could have rendered their publication unfeasible, the strategies adopted by the activists proved effective. Thanks to these assertive actions, the editors overcame the challenges. They kept the newspapers circulating, reaffirming their commitment to the fight for representation and disseminating information for the Black community. In the first edition of the newspaper (Figure 1), they write:

Figure 1

Newspaper A Voz da Raça, *Issue 1* (*1933*)



Note. Image supplied by the author.

> This newspaper emerges at a time when it is necessary to make public, today, tomorrow, and always, the interests and shared ideas of the race because the other publications, albeit veteran ones, due to political grudges, have failed to do so. However, this does not matter; as the saying goes, "It is pain that teaches one to cry out!…" And if it weren't for the pain, this newspaper would

> not exist, and we would continue standing still, being the target of the continuous actions of São Paulo's dailies, which, quietly, discard the manuscripts that, in the present moment, address the morality and political unity of Black people. (*A Voz da Raça*, 18 March 1933, p. 1)

In issue no. 67 of the newspaper *A Voz da Raça*, published in July 1937 (Figure 2), a tribute is paid to the poet Ciro Costa, a writer, member of the São Paulo Academy of Letters, and fervent advocate for Black causes. This edition exemplifies the newspaper's central role as a vehicle for dialogue and engagement with the Black community, offering information and perspectives ignored by the hegemonic press. This commitment to representation gave the newspaper significant credibility, politically and socially connecting São Paulo's Black population and encouraging their participation in the organizational strategies promoted by the FNB.

Figure 2

Newspaper A Voz da Raça*, Issue 67 (1937)*



A VOZ DA RAÇA

Orgam da "GENTE NEGRA BRASILEIRA"

MENSARIO INDEPENDENTE

DEUS PATRIA RAÇA e FAMILIA

Ano IV | SÃO PAULO, JULHO DE 1937 | Num. 67

CONGRAÇAR..

RAJOVIA

A FRENTE NEGRA BRASILEIRA PRESTA UMA HOMENAGEM A' MEMORIA DO POETA CIRO COSTA

Note. Image supplied by the author.

This role of fostering engagement was evident from the very first edition of the newspaper (Figure 1), published in 1933, which featured the headline: "The color prejudice in Brazil can only be truly felt by us, Black people." This statement not only denounced the systemic racism of the period but also initiated a political and social debate that reinforced the awakening of consciousness among the Black population. Throughout its issues, *A Voz da Raça* established itself as a space of resistance, strengthening community mobilization and fighting against the erasure perpetuated by São Paulo's elite.

In addition to addressing racism directly and constructively, the newspaper *A Voz da Raça* also included advertisements that reflected the FNB's political stance, emphasizing themes such as God, patriotism, race, and family, aligned with the political climate of the time. Other advertisements highlighted activities promoted by the FNB, such as dance parties and initiatives that valued Black entrepreneurship, featuring beauty salons, law offices, and other local businesses. The newspaper also publicized social, cultural, and sporting events organized by the FNB, including music festivals featuring carnival groups, the creation of a dedicated library, and sports festivals. Additionally, events like family outings to tourist resorts underscored the importance of community integration, solidifying the FNB's role as a space for mobilization and celebrating Black identity across various aspects of social life.

One of the advertisements published in the newspaper *A Voz da Raça* highlighted the farewell to the organization's first headquarters, already anticipating the beginning of activities at its new

location. Aiming to attract as many members of the Black community as possible, the newspaper described the event as follows:

> The festival is sponsored by the "Festivities Committee" of the F.N.B. on the 25th of this month, at 9 PM, in the spacious hall of the *Classes Laboriosas*, located at Rua do Carmo, 25. This festival will be the last of the first series, and as such, it has been organized with great care by the "Festivities Committee," which will close this series on a high note. The second series of festivals, also sponsored by the same committee, led by the dedicated *frentenegrino* Dr. J. S. Camargo, will begin next May, possibly on the 13th, and will feature exclusively original and unpublished works by *frentenegrino* authors. (*A Voz da Raça*, 18 March 1933, p. 4)

Also, in its first edition, in addition to highlighting the actions of the FNB itself, the newspaper's editors used the platform to denounce abuses committed by the State's repressive apparatus, recognizing the vehicle's impact on other segments of society. One initiative was publishing a letter of complaint addressed to the police chief, demanding action regarding a case of abuse of authority. As criticisms of the State's public policies became more frequent, it became increasingly evident how these policies were part of a repressive system that perpetuated the exclusion and oppression of the Black population:

> On the night of the 12th of this month, the Theatrical Group of the F.N.B. was at headquarters rehearsing pieces from its repertoire for an upcoming performance planned for the near future. At midnight, as the rehearsal ended, several young women were leaving for home accompanied by young men when, upon reaching Rua Conde de São Joaquim, they were approached by security inspectors. One of the inspectors asked the young men where they were coming from. They responded that they had all come from the *Frente Negra Brasileira*. Without any justifiable reason, the inspector immediately ordered their arrest and instructed them to get into the police car. This did not happen due to the protests of those present, as there was no reason for such a measure; everyone behaved respectfully, and the young men had accompanied the young women to ensure their safe return home given the late hour. The Chief of Police must take action to curb such abuses by his subordinates. The *Frente Negra* is not a suspicious or clandestine organization and should deserve respect; its members should not be detained or humiliated when leaving its headquarters. Thus, we present our rightful complaint to His Excellency so that such incidents do not happen again. (*A Voz da Raça*, 18 March 1933, p. 1)

The creation of the newspaper *A Voz da Raça* was a strategic initiative by the FNB to cultivate a critical mass capable of occupying positions of power in a society marked by class inequality. The project was part of the broader movement of the Brazilian Black press, which, by the 1930s, was already playing a prominent role in challenging the centralizing system of the hegemonic media and providing a platform for the fight for rights and recognition of the Black population.

The FNB used the newspaper to construct a narrative to foster Black intellectualism in Brazil. The concept of a Black intellectual involves the ability to develop a decolonized social thought grounded in the anti-racist organizational experiences of a significant portion of the population who, historically excluded from the structuring of Brazilian society, began transforming their cognitive capacity into an instrument for mobilization and resistance (Moura, 2014). Black intellectuals, still bearing the marks of a post-slavery context characterized by disarray, anxiety, and exclusion, found in the press space to counteract centuries of invisibility and exclusion from the formation of national political thought.

Recognizing the absence of public policies addressing racial inequalities, the FNB organized itself in the private sphere, using the newspaper as a counter-hegemonic and emancipatory tool. *A Voz da Raça* became an important political engagement instrument crafted by Black intellectuals to confront racism and social exclusion. Despite the alignment of its founder, Arlindo Veiga dos Santos, with integralist ideologies, the newspaper was crucial in fostering political discussions about racism, historical marginalization, and its "*aquilombador*" role in mobilizing dozens of Black families and leaders around strategies of organization and resistance.

In alignment with other Black Press publications, *A Voz da Raça* established a model of action that became a common denominator across Afro-Brazilian media. The newspaper consistently brought critical issues affecting the Black community to the forefront, creating a space for in-depth debates on racism, segregation, and structural inequality. Its circulation extended beyond São Paulo, reaching a network of Black organizations that relied on the publication to unify their communities around strategies for political empowerment and social inclusion within Brazil's racially stratified urban fabric.

This model was not entirely unprecedented; it drew inspiration from earlier publications such as *O Clarim da Alvorada*, which had also challenged the invisibility and marginalization imposed by dominant media outlets. What distinguished *A Voz da Raça*, however, was its dual function as both the official voice of an organized political movement and an autonomous space of intellectual and cultural production. While many of its articles echoed the ideological tensions within the FNB, the newspaper also addressed broader publics, building a shared political vocabulary that facilitated cross-regional mobilization. In doing so, it reinforced a sense of collective identity among Afro-Brazilians during a period marked by political repression, censorship, and social surveillance.

Conclusion

This article began by analyzing the Brazilian social contract, which has historically positioned the Black population in a state of antagonism and subordination, both during the pre-republican and post-republican periods. I argued that the first ruptures enabling the emancipation of the Black population from this social antagonism began during the slavery period. However, the most impactful political and social actions in the post-abolition period were promoted by the *Frente Negra Brasileira* (FNB). This organization played a fundamental role in constructing a narrative that challenged the structure of the State by advocating for the inclusion of the Black population in social, economic, and political spheres. In the 1930s, the FNB emerged as the leading force against racism in Brazil. Among its main mobilization tools was the newspaper *A Voz da Raça*, analyzed in the previous section, which consolidated the fight for emancipation and racial justice.

The Brazilian social contract follows a structure that perpetuates ethnic and social domination, with the core of this dynamic rooted in the process of racializing the contract. The racial contract is a system of domination where its creators occupy the dominant position, while other social groups are relegated to subordinate roles (Mills, 1997). Analyzing this stratification through the lens of gender and race reveals a structural problem that persists to this day: the systematic exclusion of certain groups from access to power and privilege.

This contract of domination creates a barrier that hinders the Black population's rise to the higher strata of society, as it is argued that it was not designed for the Brazilian social context. To

build a fully democratic and inclusive society capable of equitably integrating ethnicities and genders, it is essential to question and revise the social contract model that underpinned the creation of the Brazilian State. This contract reproduces patterns of domination rooted in white European nations, whose social realities do not face the same challenges of ethnic diversity and inequality that characterize Brazil's social structure.

Thus, it is possible to analyze the significant political role the *Frente Negra Brasileira* played through its strategic use of the newspaper *A Voz da Raça*. The *Frente* was a pioneering social and political organization that, through affirmative actions aimed at empowering the Black population, took the first steps toward the deracialization of the social contract imposed as the model for organizing Brazil's State. This process of deracialization requires the deconstruction of a structure that has historically failed to meet the demands of different social groups, particularly the Black population, which is an integral part of the collective of subjects that form Brazilian society. This article serves as the starting point for a broader research agenda on the deracialization of the social contract, which I intend to explore and deepen in future studies.

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