Candomblé, intolerance, and racism in Bolsonaro's days: History repeats itself?

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Abstract

The followers of the Afro-Brazilian candomblé cult feel today more than ever threatened by various dangers, in particular by the aggressiveness of the evangelical churches. The contribution poses some questions and formulates some hypotheses to be explored. Is it legitimate to call into question, for the current situation, the emergence of new forms of racism? Brazilian racism, this is the research hypothesis, due to its fluid and ubiquitous character, interconnected with other mechanisms of oppression, also takes on the aspect of religious racism? If it is true then that the candomblé has changed from an ethnic religion to a universal religion, should one oppose or not the repeated perception that a binding relationship between religion and ethnicity can be identified? And, again, what role do the current socio-political contingencies play, due to the bond – never officially declared – of President Jair Bolsonaro and his family to evangelical fundamentalism, which presents itself as a great rival and persecutor of the Afro-Brazilian cult? Without going into the merits of the political debate, for which we do not have the interpretative tools, I will therefore try to illustrate, during the report, on which lines of research I am working on and on which questions, formulating some hypotheses just sketched that I would like to share and therefore elaborate on.

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