

Ministry of Injustice vs. Indigenous Peoples Rule of Law & Democracy – Two Brazilian Euphemisms



The Brazilian media landscape has long been as monotonous as the real landscape of this geographic giant is becoming now. Atlantic and Amazon Rainforests, Cerrado and Pampas (Savannah and Natural Grassland), Caatinga (Dry Thorn Bush)..., everything fits the insatiable profit-hunger of agribusiness and the (their) serving political caste. No wonder therefore that I have been seeing rapidly expanding monocultures from horizon to horizon for the most part whenever I have been traveling over the last quarter of a century, commonly for a few thousand kilometers through one or more of the above-mentioned biotopes, in order to get to the pressured and threatened and attacked communities I work with.



Left: In Bahia state



Right: In Mato Grosso state

Eucalyptus, soya, cotton, sugar cane, corn. Mostly genetically modified. And always wrapped in tons of pesticides (also such so hazardous and harmful that they were forbidden in other countries years ago). And if it isn't vegetal monocultures you're traveling through, it is deforested areas with nothing but cattle on it.



Left: In Pernambuco state



Right: In Maranhão state

Agribusiness is strictly profit-oriented, not people, much less nature-oriented. Agribusiness doesn't even need people. Just machinery, infrastructure, logistics, the complicity of banks. And friendly or (preferably) controlled governments and judiciary. In order to be continuing what they have been doing in Brazil for the last two decades: destroying in gigantic proportions and with incredible speed the natural assets and diversity, turning the bigger part of Brazil, the (dwindling) water reservoir of the World, into a rapidly drying out land, and annihilating the survival basis of Indigenous Peoples and other extractivist communities and all future generations, apart from not creating jobs nor bringing food on Brazilian tables. (For more on this see: <http://www.ardaga.net/web-content/PDFS/fromusfoundrisingtobrazil.pdf> and <https://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2011/01/12/18668925.php>)

Our media has long been uniform. In the hands of a one-digit number of oligarchies. (<http://www.brasil247.com/pt/247/mundo/92535/Seis-fam%C3%ADlias-controlam-70-da-imprensa-no-Brasil.htm> and <http://www.edelman.com/post/what-do-you-know-about-the-media-in-brazil-part-i/>)

It can't be considered a surprise thus that most Brazilians have (incorporated) similar views.

One example of this media-fuelled thought uniformity is the Federal Police (Polícia Federal, mostly referred to simply as PF). Contrary to almost all other public organs and authorities the PF enjoys a good reputation. If you feed your search machine with the key words "polícia federal", "prender" (to arrest) and "ação" (action) you'll see, if you understand Portuguese of course, why.

The media focuses on the anti-corruption, anti-pedophile, anti-smuggling operations the PF carries out. And one has to admit it is not just because of the media uniformity that sculpts and narrows Brazilian thought, that the PF has its extraordinary reputation (compared to the "rest" of police forces and other authorities). In fact, they really work and achieve successes in the above-mentioned fields. And that is definitely an exception within Brazilian (authorities') reality.

However, the PF also has its other side. Kept meticulously in the dark. By the very same media. Which depends on agribusiness money to survive. And whose tycoons "normally" are big landowners too.

Like everything else that is "public" in our country, the PF too has become an instrument of the all-controlling agribusiness lobby. Sometimes, especially when international pressure occurs, they are sent to Indigenous Reserves in order to interrupt ("to end" would be a totally misplaced verb!) the genocidal and ecocidal activities of wrongdoing loggers, farmers, miners, poachers and their killing gangs in these "protected" areas. (A recent and internationally noticed example: <http://www.survivalinternational.org/news/9991>).



A routine picture: Indigenous Land in Maranhão state in flames - Children have to seek "shelter" on the road that leads through the Indigenous Territory

More often, though, especially when international attention is absent, they act on and for the other side. Support the anti-indigenous and anti-nature alliance either directly with arbitrary detentions and abductions of Indigenous leaders and family and/or by intimidating entire Indigenous villages with their sudden and heavily armed "appearances". Recently they even "transformed" an assassination of a Chief in the State of Amazonas into an accident. (See, for example: <http://www.cimi.org.br/site/pt-br/?system=news&action=read&id=7356> and <https://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2014/06/09/18757121.php>)

Or, more frequently, their support occurs indirectly, by simply not lifting a finger to reestablish the rule of law and the rule of human rights within the Indigenous Territories (all constitutionally in federal possession) and not arresting the killers and their clients, the invaders or to-be-invaders.

That is less of a surprise or shock when we consider that the PF is a branch of the federal Ministry of Justice.

Less a surprise?!

In Brazil, yes.

Since the true name of this ministry should be "Injustice" instead of the euphemism in use.

After all corruption is the deep-running aorta of all social and economic life in Brazil (Check, for example,

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/andersonantunes/2013/11/28/the-cost-of-corruption-in-brazil-could-be-up-to-53-billion-just-this-year-alone/> and

<http://www.economist.com/node/15580390>), so why and how would or could this ministry be a disconnected cultural antagonism from the "rest" of the country?



Everyday stolen Wood from Indigenous Reserves is transported without any efforts to hide it – (Clandestine) brick factory owners are among the diligent buyers

In the case of the ongoing genocidal efforts against our First Nations the (so-called) Ministry of Justice has adopted the strategy to sit back and do strictly nothing. And not only that. The minister José Eduardo Cardozo himself has reiterated various times in public that he has halted all demarcation processes of Indigenous Territories. "Processes" that were dragging on already for years and sometimes decades.



Minister Cardozo – A living nightmare for First Nations

What firstly means a great service for agribusiness, and secondly a flagrant breach of the law and also fanning the flames of chronic and endemic anti-indigenous violence as long as First Nations are not "protected" by a legal status and "safe" on the territory the Federation is obliged to grant them. (One has indeed to use quotes for the words protected and safe, since there is no

safe Indigenous Life in our country. And no protected Indigenous Territory, but on and in papers.)

This “worst minister” of the “most devastating government” (almost uniform judgment on minister Cardozo and president Dilma of all First Nation leaders I have recently met) since the dictatorship was superseded by an electoral democracy not only is a law-breaker when it comes to First Nations’ rights and International Rights but also a person who only agreed to meet with Indigenous Leaders when they started to chain themselves onto the flagpole in front of his ministry (after having asked for a meeting for years in vain) and thus aroused ephemeral media attention. (Check:

<http://mobilizaconacionalindigena.wordpress.com/2014/05/30/ministro-indica-que-mantera-suspensas-demarcacoes-de-terras-indigenas-e-insiste-em-mudar-procedimentos/> and <http://mobilizaconacionalindigena.wordpress.com/>)

Although “progressive” and from “the left” by label, the Dilma government and its minister of injustice are fulfilling the very same role that the military and later, interestingly on a lesser scale, the bourgeois governments have pursued against Nature and the Forest and/or Indigenous Peoples and Quilombola (descendents of former runaway slaves) communities. Entire populations that are categorized as something obsolete and in the way of “progress” (rather: personal profit of the already rich). They have to “adjust” or “go”. Mining, dams, monocultures instead. Total destruction and desertification. Full speed ahead – God Growth demands sacrificial lambs everyday!

As I work on this article as a contribution to independent grassroots information it has become Monday, 27th October. The day after the final ballot that narrowly decided another four years for Dilma, Cardozo and agribusiness in command of the country. Yet, the result didn’t cause much consternation. Since the “other” side a/o candidate, Aécio from the “Social-democratic Party” (PSDB, just another euphemist joke), doesn’t stand for anything substantially different. Rather for even more big-business-friendly neoliberal politricks.



“Rivals” Aécio and Dilma

For rivers, forests, pre-Brazilian Peoples and all future generations on the continent it doesn’t matter who (what “party” coalition) leads the ecocidal and

genocidal assault in Brazil. And so the only "positive" aspect to discern in these no-choice-"elections" is the ever-rising voters' absence, despite electoral duty.

Now, what does all this rather basic and theoretic information stand for in practice?

To illustrate that we can use the example of the Pycobcatejê people from center-west Maranhão (state), at the eastern edge of the Amazon area.



The bullet-ridden entrance sign to the Pycobcatejê Reserve "Governador" – Paradigmatic routine picture: The left side of the road is in big landowner's hands, the right and burnt down side is Indigenous Territory

Thanks to national and international attention (and thus pressure), the brave solitarian resistance of some Pycobcatejê against the decade-long plundering of the natural resources going on in "their" territory, the 416 km² "Governador Reservation" northeast of Amarante do Maranhão, finally managed to interrupt the official inertness of the Injustice Ministry and their PF branch. In January 2013 for the first time the PF appeared on the spot together with two other "normally" omitting federal organs, FUNAI (Brazil's Indigenous Affairs Department, branch of the Ministry of Justice) and IBAMA (Institute of the Environment and Natural Renewable Resources, branch of the Ministry of the Environment). AFTER a group of Pycobcatejê warriors had done what "competent" PF, FUNAI and IBAMA had never done throughout the years: to stop the illegal loggers and to confiscate one of their trucks loaded with trunks inside the Indigenous Territory.

So the PF, IBAMA, FUNAI suddenly where there. Which was indeed important. Since from local entrepreneurs and politricksters instigated lynch mobs a/o hired gunmen were ready to "teach the uppity Indians a bloody lesson". And gunmen occasionally indeed had entered the Indigenous villages at night firing various rounds of ammunition.

But the fairytale of organs fulfilling their constitutional obligations only lasted a few days. With relative security for the Indigenous people and the roads through the territory controlled by well-armed PF and the compulsory closing of at least some of the illegal sawmills in Amarante. Others, with (supposedly) legal papers yet still processing stolen wood from Indigenous Territories, were not "bothered" (there is no other place with noble wood left in the Amarante

region – three quarters or 110.000 km² of Maranhão's forests have been cleared so far, mostly illegally!).



Inert government and police and one immediate result: Sawmills Gomes (left) and Robson (right) processing stolen wood from Indigenous Land without any problems (September 2014)

The city Amarante do Maranhão, situated right at the entrance of two Indigenous Territories and partly already on Indigenous Territory, has become Maranhão's second-most important cattle breeding centre and its second-most important economic activity is wood processing. Both these activities, extensive cattle raising and wood processing, are diametral to the Indigenous culture and life. Since the latter need intact Nature in order to survive and the former strive for total transformation in order to achieve their individualistic moneymaking aims.



In Amarante all builders use stolen wood from the Indigenous Reserves – No problem

Amarante do Maranhão is also a swiftly growing city in numbers of inhabitants. Due to the increasing building of dams and hydroelectric power stations all over Amazonia, a pillar of Dilma's energy politics (<http://dissidentvoice.org/2013/11/brazils-true-order-and-progress-story/> and <http://de.indymedia.org/2012/05/330153.shtml>), and also the expansion of monocultures, especially eucalyptus in the region, thousands of displaced or officially "moved" persons have been arriving. These armies of unskilled have-nots find themselves in a place where everything is controlled by the big landowners (cattle raisers) and the gunmen

and politricksters on their payroll. A zone without any genuinely democratic or legal infrastructure. What can they possibly do to survive? To earn a little money in addition to paltry social welfare that some manage to receive? Either they are contracted directly by the big landowners (very few since for a herd of one thousand head of cattle just two cowboys are needed), or they have to try something illegal. Hustling in the city, or invading and exploiting-stealing from Indigenous Territory. Where there is still something left (game, soil, wood, minerals...) and are no gunmen on guard (contrary to the big landowners' estates).

Perfect socio-economic constellation for those who hold the power and control everything.

Their perfidious slogan "too much land for a few lazy Indians, while landless farmers willing to work must starve" falls on fertile human ground (of ignorance). The legions of have-nots are not informed enough, nor politically conscious, to understand that it are the proper big landowners and a government that doesn't work for "country democracy" but supports the status quo of land distribution, that are responsible for their misery. (Brazil's land distribution is the most unjust of the world together with Paraguay, a country de facto under Brazilian agribusiness occupation, check:

<http://www.ardaga.net/web-content/PDFS/Paraguayan%20Amerindians%20under%20genocidal%20pressure.pdf>)

Whenever, thus, it doesn't rain, fires are rampaging through the territory of the Pycobcatejê and many other First Nation peoples. Started by have-nots either on their own hate-initiative or by carrying out orders and gaining a little rotgut or an indigenous girl to rape.



Not considered humans, not protected by the government

In the local (Maranhão) media Indigenous People (of all Nations) don't even count as human beings, as locals!

The popular journalist João Rodrigues, for example, writes in his blog that "*the inhabitants of Amarante do Maranhão and Montes Altos are the most hurt if a new demarcation takes place*".

[\(http://www.blogsoestado.com/joaorodrigues/category/amarante-do-maranhao/\)](http://www.blogsoestado.com/joaorodrigues/category/amarante-do-maranhao/)

The new demarcation the journalist refers to is a right the Pycobcatejê (and many other First Nations too) have been pursuing for many years. Since the current size of the Governador Indigenous Reserve was designed for 200 First Nation individuals in the year 1976. Now they are approximately 1000. Plus the 450 Guajajara and a few dozen Timbira who in the past were allowed onto the territory since they had no place to go then.



Not considered humans, not protected by the government

So the thousands of Krikati, Guarajára, Pycobcatejê (...) will be “most hurt” if they finally will get back a little of what has been theirs for centuries before the Brazilian genocidal waves started to roll? Of course not. But in the minds of Brazilian agro-entrepreneurs and people with access to power in general (and their court poets) Indigenous people simply don't seem to qualify as (human) inhabitants. (I did write a brief note via e-mail to the journalist and also a commentary to his respective article. The first was never answered, the second never published.)



Not considered humans, not protected by the government

The current mayor of Amarante do Maranhão is Adriana Ribeiro. She is from the “Partido Verde” (PV), the Green Party. The executive power in Amarante is thus in green hands. And shows one of the worst records nationwide. In terms of devastations, both natural and cultural.

Her husband, Gildásio Chaves and of one of the richest and most influential families of the region, is a surgeon in the city's only public hospital and also an "adviser" (of the nepotistic kind) to his wife's government. Paid twice, thus, with taxpayers' money.

His contributions to the green municipal government?

Constant tries to blackmail Pycobcatejê leaders who need medical assistance. "If you continue to press for a new demarcation and I'll consequently would lose my cattle ranch..., who's going to operate you guys then?"

Some of the Pycobcatejê chiefs have a clear opinion on this green doctor's operating contributions. They affirm that since he started to "take care" of Indigenous births (at hospital) almost 100% of the Native women must undergo (without any prior information or consent which stands once more for a breach of law) a Caesarean and many supposedly are sterilized (without knowing). The chiefs observe a high infertility rate among the women who have delivered "assisted" by the mayor's husband.

Don't be shocked or disbelieving: e-v-e-r-y-thing horrendous, even nazi-style, indeed goes against Indigenous people in Brazil. Almost always without any criminal prosecution. Impunity traditionally guaranteed.

One of the "strongest men" in Amarante do Maranhão is a politrickster who runs his "political" career under the name of "Sergeant Sena". He is a member of the "Democratas" (DEM). Principal partner-party of the PSDB whose presidential candidate Aécio just lost do Dilma (of the "Workers Party", PT) in the runoff.



Green Party Mayor and the Town Hall of Amarante

This genuine or imagined (retired) sergeant plays the boss of the anti-indigenous and anti-nature league in Amarante do Maranhão. (Yet, the *real* big bosses are not so loud.) Frequently he prides himself in public of having beaten up "dozens of Indians" and to "keep these savages in their place". He is not only an elected city councilor but also an entrepreneur in the local timber business. He has been making his fortune by stealing and destroying what is not his and then uses his economic muscle to build his political power (and

immunity). An archetype of Brazilian realpolitricks. Paradigmatic still today. Almost 15 years into the 21st century.

Only a few weeks ago "Sergeant Sena" threatened Chief Ubirajara and three other Pycobcatejê because they had stopped a truck of his loaded with trunks of noble wood and were asking the driver to reveal from where those trees were taken from. The cellular phone of one of the Natives with which he was taking pictures of the truck was forcefully taken by one of the armed henchmen of "Sergeant Sena". Subsequently the four Pycobcatejê were humiliated and challenged to react. What thanks to the chief's calm and wisdom did not occur since that had seemed to be the objective of city councilor Sena and his men. To get rid "in legal self-defense" of another four savages. No media reported it. Only CIMI (Indigenous Missionary Council), made it public (<http://www.cimi.org.br/site/pt-br/?system=news&action=read&id=7724>).



Commercial addresses of two of Amarante's anti-indigenous big bosses: Evangelical minister and vice-mayor Jônatas (left) and veterinarian and big landowner Mauro (right)

The life of Chief Ubirajara and the life of all other leaders who engage in resistance and defense of what is rightfully theirs are under serious threat. The Pycobcatejê know that. The other side – logically! – knows that, everybody in Maranhão knows that.

But where is the PF? Where are FUNAI and IBAMA?

They are not interested, it appears, and rather hang out in big city Imperatriz, only 120 km to the west, where they have their regional and air-conditioned headquarters. They have "no time". And "no men" available. Much less a directive from above (Minister of Injustice Cardozo, President Dilma). And last not least, no splendid media coverage guaranteed. (Rather the contrary.) Plus, at least in the case of the latter two authorities, there are another two factors too: a) fear and b) methodic infiltration of their ranks by agribusiness service women and men. To make sure nothing constructive or "in favor" of The First Nations happens and probably also to divert federal funds for Indigenous projects, health or students to non-indigenous beneficiaries. (The latter, though, still has to be proven. We're working on that.)

So here are the Pycobcatejê and other First Nations of the center-west region of Maranhão. All on their own.

Struggling for survival against the economic powerful of Brazil and the region, against the political rulers (and the "opposition") of the Federation, the State of Maranhão and the municipality, against mass media, against the local lumpenproletariat (who form just another kicked-around ball in the cynical game of the rich destroyers), against the corrupting cultural contributions of Euro-Brazilian civilization like alcohol and other drugs, consumerism, junk food, consequent diseases, egoism and many more. Abandoned and brutalized by a country (and its organs) that ornaments itself with labels such as "lawful" and "rule of law" and "democratic".



Abandoned by so-called "rule of law" and their life under constant threat: Pycobcatejê Chiefs (left) and warriors (right) registering 'just' another illegal invasion and devastation

Brazil's current (and now prolonged) government under PT-leadership has already suffered strong criticism by international organizations like the International Labour Organisation and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

(<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/05/2012515144822206262.html>), yet that didn't contribute anything to a change for the better. Rather the contrary. The government ignores the condemnations and present themselves as victims of foreign conspiracies. And the "opposition" applauds...



Brazil's real Order & Progress

And when we examine the one-world-scale we unfortunately can't discover much difference. If one takes a closer and mass-media-free look at Chile, Paraguay, Belize, Canada, Cameroon, Nigeria, Papua-New Guinea, India, China (...) and the treatment of Indigenous Peoples caught and brutalized in these state yokes.

I wonder when Wall Street, Thiamin Square, Taksim Gezi Park, Tahrir Square, Baseler Platz, Avenida Paulista (...) will become occupied in support of brave Indigenous defenders of Cultural Diversity and a life-style in harmony with Nature and, last not least, the very air all people and Peoples of this One World breathe, the very water all people and Peoples drink. Only when it's too late?



Pycobcatejê – A people and culture still alive, but for how long?