
Report from Rio

Parliamentarism to legalize casinos

by Silvia Palacios

The government of Brazil's new President Sarney is immobilized. More than the hoped-for government actions for change which the Brazilians expected with the new civil government of Tancredo Neves, who died before he could take office, what sticks out is ministerial infighting, which only helps the plans of the Justice Minister, Fernando Lyra. He is trying to weaken the President to impose a British-style parliamentary system, which will facilitate the plans of the financial oligarchy to turn the whole of Brazil into a center for laundering dirty money, with all the corruption that goes with it.

Ever since he came into office in the Justice Ministry, Lyra has attempted, sometimes successfully, to obsessively take control of the political process. His efforts are dedicated to turn the process of amending the Constitution—the Constituent Assembly—into a battle in favor of the old British colonial idea, parliamentarism, against the U.S.-modeled republican presidential system which is so necessary for Brazil's technological development. On May 10, he stated that the majority of the Congress favors parliamentarism: "The parliamentarians have taken a liking to power in these recent days."

British longings govern the political motivations of a powerful faction of Sao Paulo, headed by the governor, Franco Montoro, who is oh-such-a-good-friend of Henry Kissinger, as well as of the Spanish Nazi philosopher Ortega y Gasset, who says that man is a manipulable being, "man is his circumstances."

Montoro's program is reduced to the "small is beautiful" theory pushed by, among others, the Club of Rome. On May 24 on a television program, the Sao Paulo governor unloaded his fury against the Brazilian nuclear energy program as an "ostentatious project"; and he added that the constitutional model adopted by the country with the birth of the republic in the last century was unacceptable and obsolete, since it imitated the precepts of the "North American Constitution." Among the modifications he announced should be made in the Constitution, one clause stands out—to "respect the ecology."

There's more to it than phrases from ecological utopianism. According to the book, *O complô que elegeu Tancredo*, Montoro's man inside the cabinet, Industry Minister Roberto Gusmão, was the recipient of the confidences of the specu-

lator Mario Garnero, who has been indicted by Brazilian authorities for financial fraud. In the critical moment when the change to the civilian government was being effected, Garnero visited Gusmão, then Montoro's interior secretary, and told him that it would be best to adopt a parliamentary system and that President-elect "Tancredo can stay on as Prime Minister."

Who knows—the parliamentary inclinations of Garnero may have perhaps helped him to get the Justice Ministry to block and foot-drag on the action of justice to put said financier in the place he belongs—jail.

On March 28, while Finance Minister Francisco Dornelles was putting on the pressure to preventively detain Garnero, a ministerial source stated that Dornelles was hopping mad "because of the delay of the Justice Ministry in moving on the consideration of preventive detention." As a result, Garnero had the time to orchestrate his defense.

Justice in samba rhythm

It was on May 8, that the real colors of the minister started to show. Lyra spoke of the projects he has in his ministry. After presiding over a meeting with the Security Secretaries of the entire country, he declared himself in favor of legalization of *bicho* games (which are illegal but tolerated), a betting operation controlled by the drug trafficking mafia, which also finances the degrading samba schools.

On May 14 on television, answering a question on whether it was not a contradiction to fight drug trafficking and on the other hand to legalize *bicho* which "always carries something more with it" (drugs), Lyra argued, "Yes, but if society wants it (as it seems to), we are going to legalize it." Exactly like Milton Friedman, he said that everybody "has the right to commit suicide as he pleases."

He also threw into the ring another argument, identical to that of the mafias which demand that governments prostitute themselves by legalizing dope production: If *bicho* is legal, the state can share in the profits which now go only to private entities.

But the mafia is the mafia, and Minister Lyra knows it. In an interview on March 25, Ivo Noal, one of the biggest *bicho* controllers in Sao Paulo, stated that the profits will not be shared. If the state tries to cut in on the take, he said, we will have an underground organization of the game "parallel to the legal one."

The archliberal Fernando Lyra, friend of the ultraleftists, agrees with the IMF plan of making Brazil into a fiscal paradise for dirty money and flourishing casinos and prostitution much worse than Hong Kong. As federal deputy Israel Dias Novaes revealed, there is a lobby acting in Congress "financed by international economic groups which exploit gambling" whose immediate objective is to "pass a bill which will reopen casinos in tourist cities."

This demand has been insistently proposed by a "business" group of Petropolis, the city controlled by the Bragança royal family.