



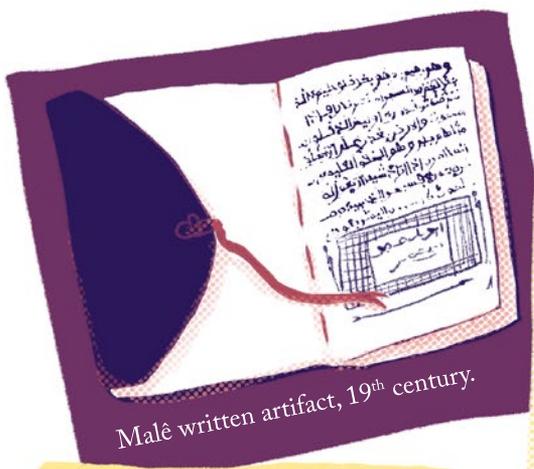
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Throughout history, the Brazilian Armed Forces have looked inwards towards their own territory and peoples. They are centred around the construction of an ‘internal enemy’ to justify its tactics, strategies, and accumulation of forces. The art for this dossier highlights emblematic ‘internal enemies’ constructed throughout history. These portraits, placed alongside other historical artifacts, rekindle a collective memory. They are, in fact, portraits of ourselves – the people, the poor, and the dispossessed – in the act of resistance.

THE RETURN OF THE MILITARY TO BRAZIL'S POLITICS



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Malé written artifact, 19th century.

The Revolt of the Malês (1835) took place during the imperial period in the midst of the struggle for religious freedom and the liberation of black people of Islamic origin from the Nago and Hausa ethnic groups. Among them was Luíza Mahin, who belonged to the Mahi tribe of the Nago nation and was the mother of the poet Luís Gama, one of Brazil's most important abolitionists.

LUÍZA MAHIN
1812-



Malé surgeon healing with bloodletting and herbs, 19th century.

Introduction

Brazil is in danger of becoming a country whose political economy is rooted in militarism, diverting precious social wealth to the military and police as it imposes a military ethic onto public life. To construct peace, on the other hand, would mean to eradicate hunger and illiteracy, to increase the social and productive capacity of the people, and to improve the infrastructure for social life and commerce – indicators that all saw tremendous improvements under the Workers' Party (PT) government from 2003 until the 2016 coup against then President Dilma Rousseff. Since the 2016 coup, Brazil has experienced a rollback of these social gains as well as a military presence increased to the highest level since the 1964–1985 dictatorship.

The agenda of President Jair Bolsonaro (who is not affiliated with any political party) has been marked not only by his radical discourse, but also by his increased participation in military ceremonies – as was clear on 7 September 2021, Brazil's Independence Day, when he called upon his supporters to take to the streets and protest Congress and the courts following weeks engulfed with tension and speculation over a possible coup. Proud of having emerged from the military's ranks, the former captain knows that the armed forces have been decisive in his gaining and remaining in power.

Three years before the demonstrations invoked by Bolsonaro, his ascendance to power was challenged by former President Luiz

Inácio Lula da Silva (PT), who was leading in the opinion polls for the upcoming presidential election. However, Lula's candidacy was put to an end when he was convicted on false fraud charges, prevented from taking part in the elections, and subsequently imprisoned for 580 days, only to be exonerated in March 2021. On the eve of the court's judgement to rule on Lula's appeal for habeus corpus in 2019 – and minutes before the country's main TV news programme went on the air – then-commander of the Brazilian army, General Eduardo Villas Bôas, posted a note on Twitter that had been drafted with the mutual consent of the Army High Command in which he subtly threatened the court, stating that the military “repudiates impunity”. The habeus corpus petition was denied by a narrow vote (6 to 5) and Lula was imprisoned a few days later. During the electoral campaign, two justices of that same Supreme Court were advised by the court's president at the time not to take harsher measures against then-presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro's campaign for its massive and illegal spreading of misinformation and fake news so as not to displease the military. During his certification ceremony as president-elect, Bolsonaro directly addressed General Villas Bôas, who was present at the event, and thanked him for having ‘influenced the fate of the nation’, commenting that he was ‘responsible’ for his election. Well before Bolsonaro's election, the Brazilian Armed Forces were already acting as a genuine ‘Military Party’ – a unified grouping representing the military's interests and ideology in politics.

Today, Brazil has the second largest military force in the Americas – second only to the United States. The country has the most military personnel of any country in Latin America and the Southern

Hemisphere, with 334,500 active forces – an average of 18 service members for every 10,000 Brazilians. Yet, Brazil is not a global military power, lacking nuclear capabilities and the ability to launch ballistic missiles.

The leading role that the Brazilian Armed Forces has played within the country in recent years is a key component to understanding the current neofascist wave as well as the setback in social rights that had been won in the 2000s. Sectors of the Brazilian military, which secretly conspired in the coup against President Dilma Rousseff (PT), are political and organisational pillars of the military-financial-neo-Pentecostal coalition that brought Jair Bolsonaro to power. The military's increasing presence and interference in recent years marks an end to the period of almost three decades during which it was absent from the national political spotlight following the end of the military dictatorship (1964–1985). Three decades is a small passage of time for an entity that has otherwise had a permanent presence in Brazil's political life.

The military and its current expression through the federal government are shaped by a conservative and liberal ideology which is characterised by five core components:

1. **Corporatism**, in which military personnel's sense of belonging to the military apparatus surpasses any other, including even national sentiment. Soldiers perceive themselves to be superior to civilians, while the military apparatus considers itself to be the true essence of the nation; its 'manifest destiny' is its 'mission to save the nation'.

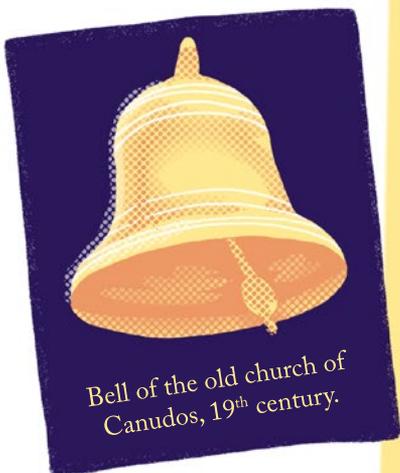
2. **A vision of a state apparatus that is weakened when it comes to private commercial interests**, but which is strengthened when it comes to areas of the military and police.
3. **Conservative Christian-humanist values**, laden with notions of individualism, an ethic of success, and the idea that only the strong should prosper. The military considers identity-based struggles – such as combatting racism, sexism, and homophobia – to be divisive.
4. **Conservative liberalism**, which sees democracy as the business of elites, with the masses only responsible for voting – and not necessarily through a universal franchise.
5. **Anti-communism**, which sees communism as the military's historic enemy in Brazil and as contrary to the Western order.

Through these ideological frameworks, we can better understand the Brazilian Armed Forces' behaviour. The military and its organisations – bureaucratic, political, and social – have risen to the surface of politics to openly contest the future of Brazilian society. This is visible across a number of areas, including the privatisation of public enterprises, the country's subservience to the United States, the military's political management of the pandemic and massive occupation of public offices, the increased privileges accorded to higher ranks and their material distance from the lower ranks, the reclaiming of the military's political role, the reorganisation of the

military's instruments of hegemony in the state and their alignment with obscurantism, and the myth of 'cultural Marxism' (that growing cultural liberalism is a subversive leftist plot).

In this dossier, we analyse the composition of Brazil's armed forces, their relationship to US imperialism, and the militarisation of public sector. To understand current matters, we must first examine the historical development of the military and its functions.





Bell of the old church of Canudos, 19th century.

ANTÔNIO
CONSELHEIRO
1830-1897



A community in Belo Monte building a house, 19th century.



Canudos was the first mass peasant movement at the end of the 19th century that opposed the privatisation of land. The massacre of Canudos – the largest military campaign after the Paraguayan War – exposed the Brazilian army’s professional fragility as well as the state terrorism that it perpetrated. Three separate military expeditions were defeated by poor peasants. The land force required a fourth expedition to kill 25,000 of their compatriots, losing 5,000 troops along the way.

A Brief Historical Overview

In terms of foreign relations, Brazil has historically been a peaceful nation guided by diplomacy and by political and commercial pragmatism. It has generally not involved itself in conventional conflicts with other countries, except as an auxiliary force to Britain and the United States during World Wars I and II.

In contrast to other South American countries, Brazil's independence was not achieved through military conflicts but through negotiations with Portugal. It consolidated most of its territory through diplomatic accords, with the exceptions of the Cisplatine War (1825–1828), in which Brazil lost what is now Uruguay, and the Paraguayan War (1864–1870). It was in this latter conflict – which was responsible for the greatest number of war-related deaths of Brazilians in the country's history and for practically decimating the entire adult male population of Paraguay – that Brazil sought to professionalise its military organisation and professionalise its military organisation and its armed forces for the first time.¹

However, domestically, the history of Brazil's military is one of continual political involvement with the explicit purpose of repressing conflicts between social classes and political organisations.² During the colonial period (1500–1815), there were over 30 armed conflicts that pitted native people, African slaves, Portuguese colonisers, Luso-Brazilian (mixed Brazilian/Portuguese) colonisers, and colonisers of other nationalities (particularly the Dutch and the

French) against each other. During the imperial period (1822–1889), the armed forces worked to repress social movements and uphold the monarchical, oligarchic, and slave-owning regime, crushing dozens of popular revolts including the insurrections of Cabanada (1832–1835), Carrancas (1833), Cabanagem (1835–1840), Malês (1835), Sabinada (1837–1838), and Balaiada (1838–1841). At the same time, while lower-ranking soldiers were subjected to discipline – including torture as a form of punishment – high-ranking officers became part of the monarchical elite, occupying positions in the state and in parliament. The Republic itself was established through a military coup led by army generals allied with regional oligarchs, an alliance that was cemented through the repression of the liberal revolts and popular insurrections of Canudos (1896–1897) and Contestado (1912–1916).

After World War I, a diverse movement of lower-ranking officers known as *tenentismo* (from *tenente*, the word for lieutenant in Portuguese) allied itself with liberals and oligarchs from the opposition along with the incipient workers' movement with the aim of taking down the oligarchic regime and modernising the nation. What is referred to as the Revolution of 1930, led by Getúlio Vargas and officers who had emerged from *tenentismo*, pushed forward the centralisation of state power, broad social reforms – notably workers' rights and the organisation of labour unions – and the growing political repression of the regime's opponents. Following the initial push for industrialisation and the opening up of the regime, the country went through a period of governments that were elected through limited popular participation.

After World War II, Vargas was deposed through popular pressure with the backing of the armed forces and was succeeded by the election of General Eurico Gaspar Dutra. Vargas returned to the presidency in 1950 in the context of the Cold War and a confrontation between two different projects. On the one hand, there was Vargas's top-down national developmentalism, a state policy that prioritised the development of the country's infrastructure over foreign interests. This stood in conflict with, on the other hand, the country's unconditional political, military, and economic subordination to the United States, which was promoted by military officials and the business oligarchy. The confrontation between these two projects also suggested contrasting visions of how much popular participation there should be in the country. This conflict resulted not only in Vargas's suicide in 1954, but also in a series of coup attempts against elected presidents in 1955, 1961, and finally, in the business-military coup of 1964, which was politically and materially supported by the US.

The dictatorship would be the model and source of support for other dictatorships that were subsequently installed in South and Central America, acting directly to install dictators in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Guatemala. During this period in Brazil, army generals in power led a series of state and societal reforms that aimed to neutralise labour organisations and decimate revolutionary organisations – focusing in particular on those guerrillas that resisted the dictatorship from 1965–1974. Additionally, the 1964 coup deepened Brazil's dependence on the US – especially ideologically and economically – and led to a monumental increase in external debt, severe wage repression, growing poverty, and hyperinflation.³

The dictatorship came to an end after twenty-one years in power, spurred both by popular mobilisation demanding direct elections as well as by the economic crisis. However, the transition was overseen by the military, which guaranteed not only that their civilian ally José Sarney (1985–1989) would hold the presidency, but also that the army’s institutional autonomy would be preserved, notably in terms of the military’s budget and its legal, educational, and intelligence structures; its bureaucratic privileges; in the impunity of its leadership with respect to the state terrorism for which it had been responsible; and in its immunity to the democratic mechanisms of the new Constitution of 1988. The military continued to exercise permanent guardianship over political institutions by retaining its ability to intervene in domestic affairs – to guarantee law and order – and by preserving the military police, an auxiliary force of the army that is responsible for overt policing in each federal state. In moments of crisis – such as the impending threat of a coup in the lead up to demonstrations of Bolsonaro supporters on Brazil’s Independence Day in 2021 – the behaviour of military police personnel can be decisive in determining how coup threats or attempts unfold. As we have seen, the Brazilian Armed Forces have always directed their interventions towards the domestic arena, considering popular organisations and forces to be internal enemies needing to be permanently ‘neutralised’ should they have the ability to execute political action.⁴

OLGA BENÁRIO
PRESTES
1908-1942

LUIZ CARLOS
PRESTES
1898-1990



Prestes featured on medals of the
Communist Party of Brazil, 1954.

Olga Benário Prestes was a German communist militant of Jewish origin who arrived in Brazil in 1934. Together with Luiz Carlos Prestes, she participated in the insurrection of 1935, which sought to take down the Vargas dictatorship and has since been used to bolster deep anticommunism within the Armed Forces.



Olga stamps from
the DDR, 1959.

The 2016 Coup and the Military's Return to the Political Scene

Civil-military relations saw a period of relative stability during the Workers' Party government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–2011). The armed forces restricted their political participation to only those areas that they deemed to be a threat to national security, such as public safety, the demarcation of indigenous lands, and defence policy. As part of a pact that aimed to achieve peaceful coexistence, Lula did not adopt any measures that might have threatened the military apparatus, nor did the armed forces challenge their subordination to civil authority.

Civil-military relations gradually deteriorated under the government of Dilma Rousseff (2011–2016). The mere fact of having a commander-in-chief, Dilma, who was not only a woman but also a former guerrilla who had fought against the 1964 dictatorship was understood as an affront to the military's values. Beyond its commitment to machismo and anti-communism, the military was also motivated by its opposition to the government's creation of the National Truth Commission, which sought to hold the armed forces accountable for the crimes committed they during the dictatorship. This process strengthened the military's discursive coherence around a common enemy: the left. This was a decisive moment in shaping the political-cultural identity of the armed forces, as it represented an opportunity to hold it to account for a past that had been glorified for decades. Moreover, in many democracies, such

truth commissions had been the prelude to organisational reforms to military institutions. Other factors also contributed to the armed forces' political reorganisation and cohesion such as the military's participation in MINUSTAH (the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti, 2004–2017); the expansion of its military presence in Amazonia; the Guarantee of Law and Order operations;⁵ and the role played in sporting megaevents in Brazil such as the World Cup and the Olympics.

The 2016 coup against Dilma Rousseff was led by a combination of business, parliamentary, and judicial forces. Publicly, the military was discreet, but behind the scenes it expressed support for the coup's conspirators. The armed forces kept a watchful eye over the government of Michel Temer (2016–2018) that took power after President Dilma's ousting, continually pressuring state institutions such as the judiciary, as noted at the outset. Bolsonaro's election in 2018 was a product of the confluence of political, social, and economic crises that opened a window of opportunity for the far right. Sectors of the military ran Bolsonaro's campaign and have had a visible presence from the start of the transition from the Temer to Bolsonaro administrations, presenting themselves as the government's technocratic wing – in reality, the 'military wing' – able to moderate the president's outbursts.

From an ideological perspective, there are no substantial tensions between the military and neo-Pentecostal sectors that support the government: both consider themselves to be representatives of the so-called traditional Brazilian family as they have defined the term. The same holds for neoliberal sectors of the government. In contrast

to the apparent belief of a section of the Brazilian left, which attributes a supposed economic nationalism to the military, there has been no military opposition whatsoever to the government's privatisation efforts. Tensions with physiological groups⁶ of the political centre about how to divvy up the spoils of the Brazilian state have been dealt with pragmatically, without any moral outcry.

Brazil today does not have a government made up of military officers, since the officers occupying political positions do not do so as individuals but rather as a part of a single apparatus, separate from the rest of society. Unlike during the 1964 dictatorship, the armed forces do not choose their civil representatives based on principles of efficiency and discipline. Rather, there is a hybrid: a militarised government, in which a 'Military Party' – a political grouping rooted in former military officers and steeped in military culture – shapes the current bloc in power. This 'party' moulded Bolsonaro over the span of decades; it has a long-term project of power and intends to remain active on the Brazilian political scene.

The military's political advance has led to the militarisation of both the Brazilian state and society, which takes place in multiple ways:⁷

6. The military's growing occupation of political offices, whether through elections or by appointment. This creates a channel through which military interests are transmitted to the entire political system. Most recently, Bolsonaro's former minister of defence, Army General Azevedo e Silva – who is associated with a group of military officers who participated in the 2016 coup – was nominated to be

director-general of the federal court responsible for overseeing the electoral process across the country. Additionally, the armed forces were assigned as election observers to enforce the integrity of electronic voting machines, despite the fact that Bolsonaro has repeatedly accused this technology of being fraudulent.

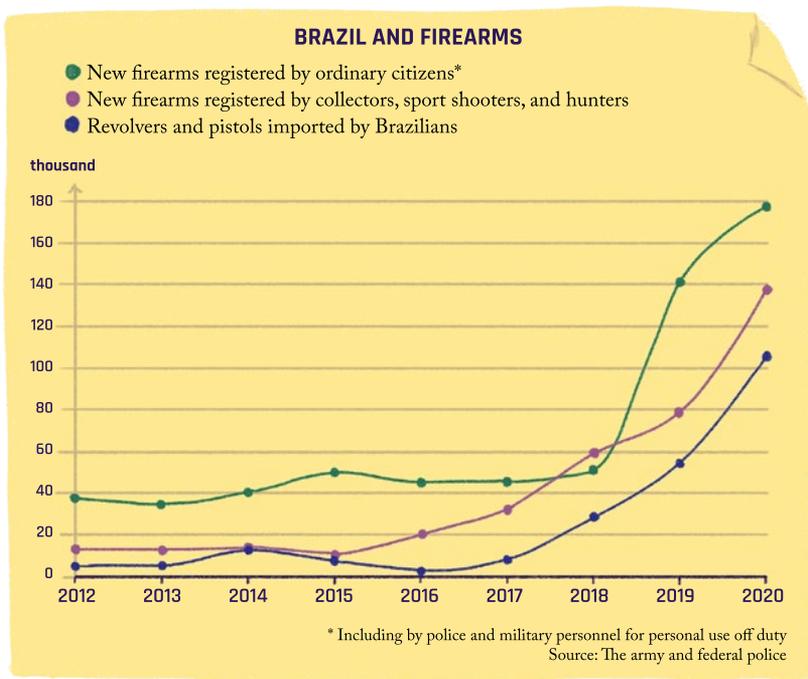
7. The imposition of military doctrines drafted with war in mind onto other arenas through government policy. This has historically occurred in matters of public security, where doctrines aimed at combating the ‘internal enemy’ have guided the military police, who are responsible for overt and preventative policing; these doctrines have in turn been extended to civil public security institutions. A more punitive approach has been adopted toward the poor, resulting in increases in the prison population, electronic surveillance, summary executions, arbitrary arrests, and other serious violations of human rights that are extensions of war by other means inside the city.
8. The transfer of military values onto public administration, such as through proposals to militarise schools by introducing conservative behaviours, customs, orders, and associated ideas as key values, prioritising hard sciences over the humanities and excluding those considered to be ‘less able’.
9. The militarisation of any and all problems, such as the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is not a matter of war-making but rather of public health.

10. The militarisation of the state budget. This not only involves funding defence industries and maintaining the working conditions of the armed forces (whose personnel received a wage increase during the pandemic while other public servants had their wages frozen);⁸ the military also controls 16 of Brazil's 46 state-owned enterprises including Petrobras and Eletrobras, which, if one takes into account subsidiaries (49 and 69, respectively), means that the military controls 61% of companies directly or indirectly connected to the state, a rate ten times higher than during the preceding government of Michel Temer.⁹

It should be made clear that militarisation is not only taking place at the executive level but also in the legislature and the judiciary. Between 2010 and 2020 alone, over 25,000 military and police personnel ran for office; 87% of them belonged to right-wing parties, and 1,860 of them were elected.¹⁰ The influx of military personnel into political offices led to the passing of the Anti-Terrorism Bill, which criminalises popular struggle, among other consequences.¹¹

Militarisation is not only taking place within the structures of the state; Brazil is a shining example of a country that wages war at home while maintaining a peaceful attitude abroad. The country is home to 17 of the 50 most violent cities in the world, or 34%,¹² not to mention the historic violence inflicted upon rural areas and indigenous populations or the fact that violence, in the form of slavery, is the determining feature of Brazil's social formation. Today, Brazil is the second most dangerous place in the world for human rights advocates.¹³

The most visible aspect of militarisation is the intense physical presence of security forces in the streets, such as the armed forces, civil and military police, municipal guards, along with the enormous network of private security forces. The Bolsonaro government's policies incentivising gun ownership have doubled the number of registered firearms in circulation from 637,000 in 2017 to 1.2 million in 2021, according to the federal police registry. Meanwhile, among clubs of collectors, sport shooters, and hunters (CACs), which are regulated by the Brazilian army, the number of registered firearms more than doubled from 225,000 in 2019 to 496,000 in 2020 nationwide. In Brasília, the nation's capital, the total number of registered firearms in circulation increased by over 500%, from 25,000 in 2017 to 227,000 in 2020.¹⁴



Source: Federal Senate¹⁵

In this context of heightened militarisation, there are strong links between President Bolsonaro and his family and paramilitary groups or *milícias*. These paramilitary groups are associated with death squads that are mostly made up of public security agents operating in criminal markets which dominate areas in the state of Rio de Janeiro – the Bolsonaro family’s political cradle. Sectors within Bolsonaro’s base are armed and eager to mount a coup d’état, even if they lack the conditions necessary to execute it.

The most insidious aspect of militarisation can be seen in the promotion of military values, attitudes, and identity markers in the culture and customs of society at large. This shift can also be felt in the centralisation of authority and hierarchisation as well as an expansion of xenophobia (disguised as the cultivation of patriotic symbols), aggression, loyalty to peers, social Darwinism (the idea that only the strong survive), etc.

CARLOS
LAMARCA
1937-1971



Carlos Lamarca became a major icon within the organised resistance to the military dictatorship of 1964. He deserted from the army, taking with him weapons and supporters willing to militarily resist the regime's terrorism. For this reason, he is remembered until today by the military as a so-called traitor.



Logo of the Popular
Revolutionary
Vanguard.

CARLOS
MARIGHELLA
1911-1969



*Manual of the
Urban Guerrilla,*
1969.



Carlos Marighella was both a great political leader and an excellent military strategist. Several military schools around the world continue to include him in their studies today and consider him to be one of the major points of reference for insurgent warfare.

Imperialism and Its Vassals

There is an international and hierarchical division of labour in the area of defence. The armed forces of core countries intervene in the main global geopolitical standoff, currently shaped by the rivalry between the United States and China. Meanwhile, the armed forces of peripheral countries are responsible for intervening in their countries' domestic spheres, where – as it was during the Cold War – their role is to guarantee social order, repressing the 'internal enemy' and social opposition or carrying out policing functions such as combatting narcotraffic at the borders.¹⁶ In the case of semi-peripheral countries allied with the United States, such as Brazil, the armed forces also carry out international security endeavours, such as so-called peacekeeping missions.

Most of the world adopts the same defence strategies, which leads to a homogenisation of armed forces and a deepening dependency on the part of Global South countries. Even having lost all of its recent wars – such as in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria – the US has successfully sold a 'recipe of success', namely that huge amounts of weaponry and ever more advanced technologies win wars. However, this type of weaponry demands huge capital investment, something that is not available to countries of the Global South, which face a plethora of urgent needs related to their populations' quality of life.¹⁷ The problem is that when a country does not have the resources to develop its own equipment but is instead strategically dependent, it seeks out producers from whom to purchase these weapons systems.

It ends up having to buy into the doctrine on how and against whom to use these armaments alongside the weaponry needed to implement it. As a result, the country's enemies and allies are defined externally by US imperialism, which has a de facto monopoly on weaponry.

There is a paradox here: though weaponry is meant to guarantee sovereignty and autonomous decision-making, it ends up compromising it. Similarly, though the military is held to be the active subject of strategic freedom, it ends up being an agent of strategic subordination because of its dependency in matters of materiel and doctrine.¹⁸ Threats are psychologically constructed based on our experience of the world, and dependent countries come to see threats constructed by core countries as threats to themselves.¹⁹ For example, the torture techniques of the 1964 dictatorship were inspired by French doctrines developed to intervene in national liberation wars in the fight for decolonisation in Africa. Today, the same logic applies when Brazil, a country that is made up of migrants, has come to see migration from other peripheral countries as a possible new threat (despite Brazil's own history as a peripheral country).

The armed forces in Brazil and elsewhere in South America are torn between two different stances. On the one hand, the doctrine advanced by the Organisation of American States (OAS) identifies new domestic 'threats' such as migration, corruption, organised crime, terrorism, and narcotrafficking. In these cases, military forces act as police forces, combatting the 'internal enemy' in a way that is not dissimilar to the national security doctrines of the 1960s dictatorships in the Southern Cone. In Brazil's case, this doctrine

continues to exist and be adapted for use by the limited democratic governments that followed the political transition in 1985. The doctrine's perpetuation is a direct result of the absence of reforms and lack of accountability of Brazil's armed forces – something that in turn structures the military's behaviour.²⁰ This internally focused doctrine has overshadowed other military concepts such as cooperative deterrence, which points to the need to build a regional policy of cooperation with other Latin American countries to dissuade potential invasion from outside the continent, especially when it comes to defending natural resources.²¹ In Brazil, this is especially the case in the 'Green Amazon' and the 'Blue Amazon' (the long stretch of coastline where Brazil's oil exploration is located, for example). The reality is that this kind of cooperation is not put into practice – despite its appearance in Brazil's defence documents.

Since the coup against President Dilma Rousseff in 2016, the United States' strategic influence over the Brazilian Armed Forces has turned into strategic subordination. Instead of taking advantage of the global turbulence provoked by the decline of the US as a hegemonic power, Brazil has clung onto the declining superpower and served US interests in the region, restricting the country's capacity to be a global player – a dynamic that impacts the entire region.²² In one of many demonstrations of this, in 2019, a Brazilian general was nominated as the interoperability subcommander of the US Southern Command, the military unit responsible for defending US strategic interests in South America, Central America, and the Caribbean and the military unit most likely to be involved in US military aggression against countries such as Cuba or Venezuela. The Southern Command is also a central piece of the

United States' strategy to restrict the influence of the Chinese in the South Atlantic. There is currently a Brazilian general in a position of double subordination: to the Brazilian and United States armies.

Another example of this subordination is the agreement between Brazil and the US concerning the Alcântara Space Centre. Alcântara is a Brazilian military base close to the mouth of the Amazon that forced the removal of *quilombolas* – communities created by fugitive slaves that remain home to their descendants – in that region. The base is strategically located to carry out long-range rocket launches, potentially to space. Brazil does not yet have the capacity to launch satellites by itself, which limits the country's sovereignty in controlling Brazilians' information and communications, for example. The Alcântara agreement does not provide for any transfer of technology to Brazil (a common stipulation imposed in agreements with the US); to the contrary, it sets limits on the countries that Brazil can negotiate with to use the Alcântara base. For example, China – which is not a signatory to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) – is prohibited from signing an agreement with Brazil, which is a signatory to the MTCR, that would allow it to use the base. This prohibition also applies to any country sanctioned by any member of the UN Security Council (such as Iran). The Alcântara agreement also allows for the creation of restricted areas to be used exclusively by those authorised by the US, which would control the entry of both people and goods into these areas.²³ In some ways, the Alcântara base is an enclave of the United States on Brazilian soil.

Doctrines aimed at combatting the ‘internal enemy’ continue due to the unfinished transition to democracy, which was responsible for guaranteeing ample immunity to the Armed Forces and the military police from democratising reforms. These doctrines have been reshaped into a war on crime – especially a war on drugs – affecting entire populations in Brazil’s urban peripheries.

Hip-hop artists such as MV Bill bring attention to the daily silencing of the black populations in urban peripheries.



The Hutúz Prize (2000–2009), Brazil’s main hip-hop award.



MV Bill's discography.



MV BILL
1974–

Ramifications and Solutions in Brazil

The demonstrations by Bolsonaro's social base on 7 September 2021 were large, though smaller than predicted. Importantly, and contrary to expectations, military personnel did not turn up at the demonstrations or speak out in support of them, forcing Bolsonaro to retreat from his intentions to mount a coup – for now. However, this does not mean that he was abandoned or betrayed by the military; it means that though he belongs to the Military Party, the Military Party does not belong to him, and that the military project is searching for alternatives to remain in power independently of whoever occupies the presidency.

Brazil's increasing militarisation has a number of ramifications across different sectors of society. For one, armed violence – taking on an increasingly bellicose character and backed by popular support for the unfettered right to bear arms – has come to be seen as a normal way to resolve conflict. This normalisation, especially when backed by popular support, impacts both Brazil's domestic and foreign affairs; the former because security forces are more likely to respond with repression when questioned, identifying fellow citizens as enemies, and the latter because it encourages the use of force.

Militarisation also reinforces patriarchy, and the bellicose nature of armed violence carries over to other arenas such as the increasing fatality of gender-based violence. A militarised society tends to support measures contrary to the international human rights agenda,

such as policies aimed at racial or gender inclusion. Between 2009 and 2019, murders of indigenous people increased by 21.6%; since 2018, violence against homosexuals and bisexuals have increased by 9.8% and homicides of women inside the home have increased by 6.1%. This increased violence disproportionately impacts racial minorities; as of 2019, 77% of homicide victims in Brazil were black, 70% of which were committed with firearms.²⁴

Culture is yet another arena shaped by militarisation. This takes place not only through large military parades or the commemoration of symbolic dates and figures, but rather in many arenas: literature and fashion, cinema and warlike games, daily life and colloquialisms. Social consent to militarisation is built through language, which serves as a vehicle for propaganda. In a world with so much information available and where social media predominates,²⁵ hegemony built on ideology is more efficient and cheaper than that based narrowly on force. At their core, military structures generate unified and totalising identities that leave no space for dissent and are defined by the identification of ‘the other’ as the enemy.

This process will be difficult to reverse, at least in the short to medium term, even if Bolsonaro and the military are removed from the country’s executive leadership. The military has clearly returned to power in Brazil, and there is no indication that the 2022 elections will put an end to that. In the context of the 2022 presidential elections, politicised military personnel are unified against Lula (PT) but divided between two right-wing candidacies – whether to support Bolsonaro’s re-election or the election of Sérgio Moro, the

former judge responsible for Operation Car Wash that led to Lula's unjust imprisonment.

The military is well positioned to issue assessments about the fairness of the elections – or to interfere in them – given that it is now among the parties responsible for overseeing the integrity of the elections. If armed sectors of the population were to provoke intense social destabilisation before or after the elections – which is a possible scenario if Bolsonaro loses – the military can act by simply doing nothing and then present themselves as the new guarantors of national stability, similar to what occurred in Bolivia following the 2019 coup.

Multilateralism has long oriented Brazil's foreign policy, especially during the PT governments that deepened South-South cooperation, above all in Latin America. Even a part of Brazil's elite sees China as the country's main geopolitical partner and has for some time due to the economic benefits that this partnership offers. Counter to the global trend of increasing multipolarity, sectors of the military are deepening their dependence on the declining US empire. At some point, these conflicting readings of the world will come home to roost with grave consequences.

In this context, popular movements face a number of challenges. Among them are electing Lula as the country's president and then redefining Brazil's position in the world, what defence policy is capable of sustaining this new national project, and only then what sort of armed forces are needed. The military police must be

subordinated to a national project that is strictly under popular control. This national project must take into account how to engage Brazil in a programme that presents solutions to the crises we face today and that puts the benefit of humankind over the interests of profit, such as *A Plan to Save the Planet*, a roadmap drafted by an international network of research institutes to confront the dilemmas of our time.

In order to create this new national project, the people must have control over the state's instruments of force. This includes control over the armed forces, the militarised police, and the firearms in circulation. Defence and security are part of an agenda of power, which must be part of a popular education programme and dialogue with the people in order to move forward.

Our past is also a key part of our future; without settling scores with a past marked by slavery and dictatorship, it will not be possible to build a democratic future in which the armed forces are wholly subordinated to the sovereignty of the people and their institutions and are exclusively destined for external defence and no longer used against their own people. This requires confronting the crimes committed during the 1964 dictatorship as well as its authoritarian legacy, which has shaped the state and the political culture up to the present day. Giving new meaning to patriotic symbols, such as the Brazilian flag, should be part of this process.

Lastly, we must resist the idea that preparing for war is necessary for building peace. To the contrary: in order to build peace, the

priority must be placed on a programme that centres the wellbeing of humankind and the planet by eliminating hunger, guaranteeing safe and secure housing as well as universal, quality health care, and defending the right to a dignified quality of life.

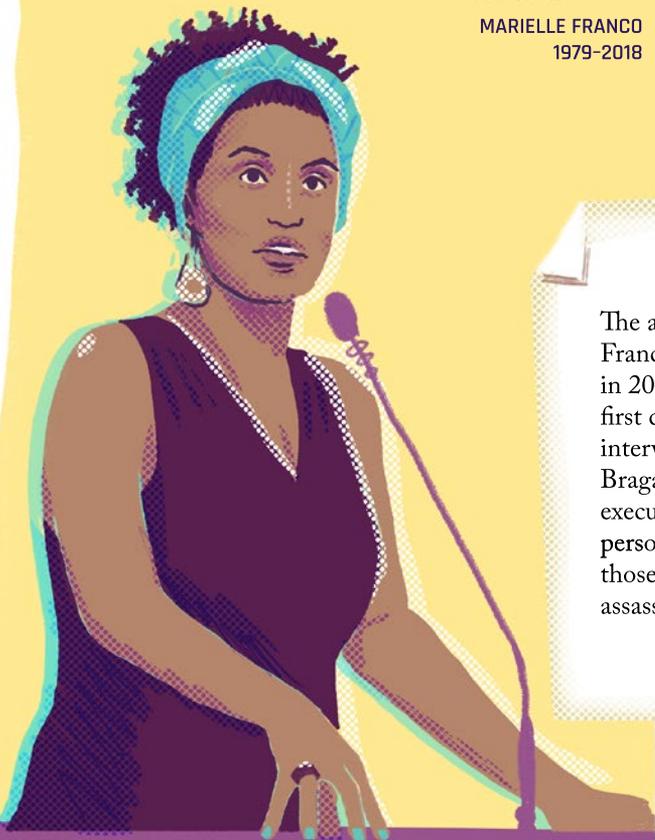




Marielle Franco
Street sign.



MARIELLE FRANCO
1979-2018



The assassination of Marielle Franco and Anderson Gomes in 2018 took place during the first days of the federal military intervention led by General Braga Netto. They were executed by two state military personnel, but the identity of those who ordered the political assassination remains unknown.

Endnotes

- 1 Leandro Gonçalves, 'Tática do Exército Brasileiro na Guerra do Paraguai, entre 1866 e 1868' (Master's diss., Universidade Estadual Paulista, 2009).
- 2 Nelson W. Sodré, *História Militar do Brasil* (São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2010).
- 3 Mario Rapoport and Ruben Laufer, 'Os Estados Unidos diante do Brasil e da Argentina: os golpes militares da década de 1960', *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, 43, no.1, (June 2000).
- 4 Lentz, Rodrigo, *República de segurança nacional – militares e política no Brasil* (São Paulo: Expressão Popular; Fundação Rosa Luxemburgo, 2022).
- 5 **Translator's note:** Guarantee of Law and Order operations are legal instruments that enable the armed forces to act in public security scenarios, such as when the Army intervened in Rio de Janeiro in 2018.
- 6 Physiologism is a relationship of power in which political actions and decisions are made in exchange for favours and other benefits to private interest. It is a phenomenon that often occurs in parliament and is closely associated with 'centrist' political parties, since they support any government regardless of its ideological current or programme and only want to obtain concessions and benefits from the government through negotiations.

- 7 Ana Penido and Suzeley Mathias Kalil, 'O Partido Militar no Sistema Político Brasileiro', *Revista E-legis*, (Câmara dos Deputados, 2021).
- 8 Ana Penido and Suzeley Kalil Mathias, 'A carreira militar em tempos de paz: vantagens e desvantagens', Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research, 4 June 2021, <https://thetricontinental.org/pt-pt/brasil/a-carreira-militar-em-tempos-de-paz-vantagens-e-desvantagens/>
- 9 This data from July 2020 was taken from information provided by the Ministry of Defence and presented at the Personnel Statistical Panel of the Secretariat for Personnel Management of the Economy Ministry following articles by Ranier Bragon and Camila Mattoso, *Folha de S. Paulo* (18 Jul 2020), Tânia Monteiro and Adriana Fernandes, *Estadão* (31 May 2020), Leonardo Cavalcanti and Nathan Victor, *Poder360* (17 Jul 2020), Cátia Seabra, and Diego Garcia, *Folha de S. Paulo* (6 March 2021).
- 10 All figures were extracted from the Brazilian Public Security Forum's *Brazilian Public Security Yearbook* (2020).
- 11 Ana Penido and Hector Saint-Pierre, 'Quem é o Terrorista?', *Piauí*, 14 April 2021, <https://piaui.folha.uol.com.br/quem-e-o-terrorista/>
- 12 2018 data from Seguridad, Justicia y Paz, see: Martell, Carlos. 'Estudio: Las 50 ciudades más violentas del mundo 2018' [Study: the 50 most violent cities in the world, 2018]. Seguridad, Justicia y Paz, 12 March 2019. <http://www.seguridadjusticiapaz.org.mx/seguridad/1567-estudio-las-50-ciudades-mas-violentas-del-mundo-2018>.

- 13 2021 data compiled from the report ‘Começo do Fim?’, Terra de Direitos and Justicia Global, December 2021, <https://terradedireitos.org.br/uploads/arquivos/Relatorio---Comeco-do-Fim.pdf>
- 14 All figures were extracted from the Brazilian Public Security Forum’s *Brazilian Public Security Yearbook* (2020) according to data from the National Weapons System (Sinarm/Federal Police), Military Arms Management System (Sigma/Army), and the Superior Electoral Tribunal.
- 15 Richard Westin, ‘Especialistas veem perigo em armar cidadãos. Atiradores esperam mais incentivos do governo’, Agência Senado, 18 March 2021, <https://www12.senado.leg.br/noticias/infomaterias/2021/03/especialistas-veem-perigo-em-armar-cidadaos-e-atiradores-esperam-mais-incentivos-do-governo>
- 16 Ana Penido, Natalia Araújo, and Suzeley Kalil Mathias, ‘Notas exploratórias sobre as contribuições do marxismo para o pensamento em defesa brasileiro’, *Revista de Estudos do Sul Global*, vol.1, no.1 (2021).
- 17 A. Wendt and M. Barnett, ‘Dependent state formation and Third World militarization’, *Review of International Studies*, no. 19, (1993), p. 321–347; Ana Penido and Miguel Stédile, *Ninguém regula a América*, (São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2021).
- 18 Hector Saint-Pierre interviewed in João R. Martins Filho, *Os militares e a crise brasileira*, (São Paulo: Alameda, 2021).

- 19 H. L. Saint-Pierre, “‘Defesa’ ou ‘Segurança’? Reflexões em torno de conceitos e ideologias’, *Contexto Internacional*, Brasília, vol. 33, no. 2 (2011), p. 407–433.
- 20 Rodrigo Lentz, ‘Pensamento político dos militares no Brasil: mudanças e permanências na doutrina da ESG (1976–2016)’, (Doctoral thesis, UNB, 2021).
- 21 This concept was adopted by the South American Defence Council, a multilateral organisation linked to the Union of South American Nations (USAN), without the United States’ participation.
- 22 Hector Saint-Pierre, interviewed in João R. Martins Filho, *Os militares e a crise brasileira*, (São Paulo: Alameda, 2021).
- 23 Frederico Samora, ‘Entrega da base de Alcântara destrói tecnologia aeroespacial brasileira’, *Jornal Brasil de Fato*. Special Edition – National Sovereignty, December 2019.
- 24 Daniel Cerqueira, *Atlas da violência no Brasil* (2021), <https://www.ipea.gov.br/atlasviolencia/arquivos/artigos/1375-atlasdaviolencia2021completo.pdf>
- 25 Research on the growth of militarism on TikTok was released last year and is available at: Sérgio Spagnuolo et al., ‘Militarismo é nova onda no Tiktok’, *Ponte*, 13 August 2021, <https://ponte.org/militarismo-e-nova-onda-no-tiktok/>

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