

THE AMERICAS

Brazil

Police crimes

SAO PAULO

CAN Brazil punish its policemen when they commit crimes? That is the question which will be at issue over the next four months in a courtroom set up in a university hall in Belem, the capital of the Amazon state of Para. In the biggest criminal trial in Brazil's history, some 150 policemen are accused of murdering 19 protesters from the landless farmers' movement. The evidence seems strong: the slaughter was filmed, and shown on national television. But early on August 19th, in the trial's first verdict, three senior officers were acquitted.

The killings occurred when police opened fire during a violent protest in April 1996, as the landless farmers blocked a road at Eldorado de Carajas, in the lawless south of Para. The slaughter caused national outrage: it prompted President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government to embark on a huge programme of land distribution, and to announce a new human-rights plan, one of whose aims was to make it easier to punish cases of police violence.

But there are difficulties. In the Eldorado case, the defendants have been split into groups of five, each to face a separate seven-member jury. Most of the accused are still on active duty. The prosecution's case has been hampered by its failure to gather sufficient forensic evidence—such as testing for gunpowder on the policemen's hands—after the shootings. The trial was moved to Belem for fear that, if it were held near Eldorado, jurors would be vulnerable to intimidation by local landowners, some of whom were suspected of bribing the police to shoot the protesters. But a row between the court authorities and prosecutors over travel expenses meant that on the trial's first day, only two of the five witnesses that the prosecution wanted to call turned up.

The Eldorado case is not an isolated one: Brazilian police are often accused of murder, torture and other crimes. *Veja*, a weekly newspaper, reported this month that 15,000 police officers, or 3% of the national total, are currently charged with serious crime.

Even when ostensibly fighting crime rather than committing it, the police often shoot first and ask questions later. In Sao Paulo, the most populous state, the number of killings by the military police (who despite their name and weaponry, act as a general constabulary) hit a peak of 1,421 in 1992. A scheme in which officers involved in



A demand for land, and justice

shootings would be assigned to different duties and undergo psychological evaluations cut the numbers sharply at first, but they have since begun to rise again.

Granted, the police often face armed and violent criminals. But there is plenty of gratuitous police violence, and one big reason is that the perpetrators usually get away with it. Mr Cardoso's human-rights plan was supposed to change that. But it was not until another televised police shooting in 1997 that Congress was shamed into starting to give it legislative teeth, approving a measure defining torture as a crime. Another new law means that instead of being tried by a military tribunal (in which heavy sentences were rare), those accused of the Eldorado massacre are facing a civilian court. But this law is weaker than planned: it applies only to murder, not other crimes. A further proposal to give jurisdiction in human-rights cases to federal courts, less susceptible to pressure than local ones, has got nowhere.

Unless a fresh wave of public indignation forces lawmakers into action, progress on ending police brutality is likely to remain slow. The police have powerful allies in both Congress and the state legislatures. One such is Hildebrando Pascoal, a congressional deputy and former police colonel. His detractors allege that he ran a death squad linked to drugs trafficking, which is thought to have murdered at least 30 people in the remote Amazon state of Acre. He denies this, but a congressional committee has voted to start proceedings to strip Mr Pascoal of his parliamentary immunity, so that there will at least be a chance of the charges being tested in court. But, if he were indeed guilty, would he be convicted? That is another matter.

THE ECONOMIST AUGUST 21ST 1999

Questão 01

RESPONDA EM PORTUGUÊS

O artigo jornalístico "*Police Crimes*" trata da impunidade em relação aos crimes cometidos pela polícia brasileira.

Tomando o texto como base, apresente:

- A) uma prova contundente da participação da polícia no massacre citado;
- B) duas medidas governamentais tomadas após o massacre.

Questão 02

ANSWER IN ENGLISH

In the text, Brazilian policemen are being judged for the massacre at Eldorado de Carajas.

Departing from the text, write complete sentences that state the reasons for:

- A) the beginning of the massacre;
- B) the changing of place for the trial.

Questão 03

ANSWER IN ENGLISH

Read the two last paragraphs carefully and transcribe the sentences that express:

- A) another way police crimes can be judged;
- B) the condition for police violence to come quickly to a near end.

Texto II



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5th Sports Aerobics World Championships, Hannover June 1999



Interview with

Juanita Little
Australia

My name is Juanita Little, and I compete in the individual women's category and I am from Australia

When did you start competing in sports aerobics?

I started about five years ago just in the Australian Championships and then I went to international level.

You are not competing in this event – have you retired from international competition?

Well, I moved countries, from Australia to Switzerland, and I got married, so that took about a year to get adjusted but I might return either next year or the year after.

You have been Australian National Champion in 1996 and 1997, and also world champion – what has been the highlight of your career in sports aerobics?

Well I did my first International FIG event as an individual female in the Hague in 1996 and that was my first competition and I got a silver medal so I was really happy with that, and the next year in Perth I won the world championship. It was always my goal to be world champion, and I said I don't care how long it takes – but I'm going to do it. When you have that kind of drive you know you are going to succeed.



And how did it feel to win the world championships on home territory?

Um I was dazed when they said that I had won, I just couldn't believe it. That was my goal, and it was only my second year in international competition. I was hitting myself to make sure it was really true! It took me a day to really realise what had happened.

How has sports aerobics changed since you have been involved in the sport?

I have been at every competition the FIG has run – there have been a lot of major changes. It is going much more towards aerobics. In the beginning there were a lot of athletes just doing gymnastics routines like, skill, skill, skill..... And no aerobics. So now in this competition in the top eight the level is much higher, and countries are learning that they need to do more aerobics.

Is sports aerobics taking off in Australia?

What I know is that there is a junior level coming up. In a lot of countries you seem to see the same athletes competing and you think what is going to happen when they retire? Well in Australia it is different because we train them from a school age and we have about 5000 school children competing in the sport so there is always going to be a strong performance by Australia.

Patsy Tierney is in the final of individual women – what do you think her chance is of a medal?

I think she has done extremely well and I am hoping she will be in a medal position. I think that she will be in a bronze medal position.

http://gymnastics.worldsport.com/events/hannover99/interviews/little_j_0606.html

Questão 04

RESPONDA EM PORTUGUÊS

Na entrevista, a australiana Juanita Little fala sobre sua carreira e o crescente interesse em ginástica aeróbica como um esporte.

- Cite os momentos que Juanita Little destaca como mais significativos em sua carreira.
- Apresente a opinião da ginasta em relação à procura generalizada da aeróbica como esporte.

Questão 05

ANSWER IN ENGLISH

In the text we find some words that may emphasize ideas and others that may express hesitation or doubt.

Create a sentence in which you use:

- a different verb and an equivalent word to just as in "I just couldn't believe it.";
- a word or expression from the text that states hesitation.