

CLEAN VOTE

***"I also want to return to nature.
But this does not mean going back, but forward"
Friedrich Nietzsche***

Although visible all the ways in which electoral propaganda is done, goes unnoticed to most people the daily routine, throughout the country, of cars, trucks and other vehicles discharging tons of electoral propaganda seized or collected for not complying with the standards and forms established by the electoral law. Rooms, patios and sheds of the Electoral Justice are no longer enough to accommodate all that stuff, whose destruction at the end of the electoral process, presents itself as predictable.

The Brazilian social process of democratic choice of their representatives has undeniable advances, especially in the category "cleaning", because both the approval of a bill of popular initiative, known as Clean Record Law, and the Electoral Justice institutional campaigns for choosing the candidates by a "clean vote". However, with the focus on the ethical behavior of the candidates, little or nothing has been done about the environmental impact of electioneering.

If, on one hand, the electoral rules guarantee electoral propaganda as an instrument of the political message proposed by those who present themselves as candidates for any public representative function, on the other hand, the Constitution of the Federal Republic (art. 225) guarantees to the citizens an ecologically balanced environment as a good of common use and essential to quality of life, being a duty of the Government and the community its preservation.

Regarding the electoral propaganda, and according to the publication of the 3rd partial campaign accounts to TSE (www.tse.jus.br), it has been already spent more than \$ 1 billion and is expected a total of more than twice this amount at the end of the period of elections.

With the partial amount, counting only the numbers spent on advertising in newspapers and magazines, one reaches R\$ 718,826,602.51. That means more than 20 billion A4 sheets, or more than 40 million notebooks or schoolbooks of 50 sheets each, or 603,814 trees cut. With the declared value, it would still be possible to produce more than 57 billion of "saints"¹ (measuring

¹ "Santinhos" or, literally, little saints, are the small flyers with the candidate's photo and number.

10cmx7cm on 75g/m² paper), which, if lined up, would take 143 laps around the planet, with an estimated weight of 30,000 tons in paper. Remember that to manufacture only one kilogram of paper are expended 540 liters of water, plus chlorine and sulfur. Only for the production of paper regarding the "santinhos" would spend approximately 3 billion liters of water, enough to fill almost 75,000 pools (of 50,000 liters). And all of that simply goes to waste after the electoral process.

Another example refers to the fuel, lubricants and vehicle expenses in the amount of R\$ 315,181,836.87, which equals 110,590,118,20 liters of gasoline, or 84,666,667 liters of ethanol, enough to run over 5 million kilometers, or make more than 44,153 laps around the planet, with enough reserve for another ride inside the planet contributing at the end with the addition of about 60 tons of CO₂ to global warming.

There is also the famous sound cars spending R\$ 45,754,220.00, whose only result, besides the spending with the fuel and the driver, is the annoying noise compulsorily imposed on everyone and clearly higher than the allowed by law (which is 80 decibels at 7 km away from the sound car – Resolution 204, article 1, CNT).

With signs, banners and bands have already been spent R\$ 95,950,202.00. Such materials bring the aggravating circumstance of being produced from highly flammable material, which produces toxic smoke and is not biodegradable. Thus, one can easily see that our propaganda will be able to go through millennia. With the additional risk of harming people, what can be caused by trestles and objects placed on public streets, easily carried by strong winds common at this time, by the obstacles to traffic or for the distraction to drivers, or even become injurious weapons in passionate confrontations and conflicts in exalted rallies all over the Country. All the waste produced and released irresponsibly in the public roads can clog the drainage of water and contribute to flooding in urban areas.

Incidentally, in that sense, has already happened the tragic death of an elderly woman in the city of Bauru / SP, who slipped on the floor full of "saints" when she was going to her polling place to vote, exercising her right of citizenship. Finally, the news that would have been collected almost 330 tons of campaign garbage only in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

After each election, it is sad to notice the total lack of commitment to cleaning the walls and paintings and the removal of signs and other paraphernalia that continue to haunt the population year after year, in an offensive visual pollution.

Not everything, however, is hopelessness. The breakthrough already brought to the ways of making election propaganda by the laws 11.300/2006 and 12.034/2009 sums up to the efforts of those who are environmentally conscious. In this sense, one can mention decisions that determined the campaign material recycling, agreements between parties and candidates, terms of behavior adjusting to rationalize the use of materials harmful to the environment, or simply stop using sound cars.

There are no news that the electoral propaganda has hampered or restricted, or has hindered candidates somewhere where these measures were adopted.

From the presented data, it is clear that the form of election propaganda is overvalued to the detriment of its purpose. Unfortunately, little attention has deserved the consequences of its irresponsible misuse in relation to the environment and people.

Any election propaganda must be educational and healthy.

Clean in every sense.

Paulo de Tarso Tamburini – Auxiliary Judge to the Presidency of the Superior Electoral Court, member of the National Council of Justice (CNJ – 2009/2011)

José Albucacys Manso de Castro Júnior – Superior Officer of the Military Fire Brigade from the State of Rio de Janeiro (CBMERJ), specialist in environmental management.