

Matjaž Krivic: On the paths of deforestation in Bolivia

Borut Krajnc: 31 years of st(r)ain

15 June–28 July 2023

KIBLA PORTAL

What do »our« Erased have with the problem of deforestation in Bolivia? On one side is politics, on the other corporations. The connection between politics with domestic and foreign companies here and in Bolivia is causing human and natural catastrophes and is the basic definition of fascism.

Such a duet of two ways and aesthetics directly shows us the holistic picture that in Slovenia as well as Bolivia there rule politicians who care not for nature, nor for people, but are connected with capital and miscellaneous, also green agendas in the name of this-or-that, and are establishing a totalitarian authority and manipulate data and consequently the masses.

The Erased, just as those who the ruling politics have administrative dehumanized and immigrants from other parts of Bolivia who the government settles in the lowland regions of the dry tropical forest in the east of the country, have in common just this: folk tragedies and ecological catastrophes, total indifference, even hatred for their fellow man, and the destruction of nature just for bigger profits, regardless of the consequences to all living and being in this or that country.

Obviously Slovenia in its political function isn't any different from Bolivia, except for in nuance. The unipolar world as the same behaviour of political-capitalist actors anywhere and the multipolar world, which allows for something secondary or tertiary. Unipolarity as a synonym for sameness in fascism and multipolarity as a synonym for difference and democratism.

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In autumn of last year, they set off on the paths of deforestation in Bolivia – with support from the Focus Association for Sustainable Development – also photographer Matjaž Krivic and journalist Maja Prijatelj Videmšek, to document and research the causes of the destruction of the forest on such a scale. The text for the photographs was contributed by Maja Prijatelj Videmšek, who in the frame of a reportage trip across Bolivia met multiple representatives of different interest groups – livestock farmers, lumber merchants, indigenous groups, forest guardians in decision makers.

Last autumn forest fires swallowed thousands of hectares in Bolivia, in the place of which will



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Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday, from 3 to 5 p.m., for organized groups also outside this timeframe by prior appointment (kibla@kibla.org).

soon be planted soy, corn and sorghum, and in a few years they will settle it with cattle. Not much is written about the contraction of forests in Bolivia, after all in neighbouring, much larger Brazil they are gradually destroying the Amazon rainforest. However, the intensity of deforestation in Bolivia is such that the country has the third highest level of contraction of primeval tropical forests, right after Brazil and DR Congo.

In 2021, according to data from the environmentalist NGO Friends of Nature (FAN), Bolivia lost almost 300,000 hectares of forest, with which it surpassed Indonesia in third place for the level of destruction of primeval tropical forests. From 1976 to 2021 Bolivia lost 8.6 million hectares or 14 percent of all forest. The intensity of deforestation is increasing. The federal government supports it with lawmaking and budget money. By 2025 it plans to triple the size of processing areas and double the number of heads of cattle from the current 10.6 to 22 million, which means approximately two heads of cattle for every inhabitant.

Land in Bolivia is cheaper than in neighbouring countries and speculation is widespread. In search of short-term profits, local and foreign buyers are contributing to the conversion of tropical forests into savannah. Forest fires caused by humans are becoming more frequent and atmospheric temperatures are gradually rising. Communities face recurrent droughts, water pollution, soil degradation and the spread of new diseases.



The exhibition is organized by **Focus Association for Sustainable Development**.

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Amnesty International Slovenia in collaboration with the Erased and with photographer Borut Krajnc »honored« the 30th anniversary of the erase with portraits of nineteen people, Erased and just as so their children, personal insights into their experiences, quotations of the depicted people and explanation on how the erase, such a severe breach of human rights, marked their lives and the life of those close to them. They repeat the event a year later, on the 31st anniversary.

On the 26th of February 2023 passed 31 years since the unlawful erase of 25,671 people from the register of permanent residents in Slovenia; among them 5360 children. The aftermath of the erase was horrifying. They lost their jobs, their social and health insurance, education opportunities, many were deported and separated from their loved ones, and others lived under the daily threat of deportation.

The Erased have won in the Slovenian Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights, but so far the redress of injustice has been only illusory: only about half of the Erased have managed to regain their permanent residence, many of the deported have not been able to return to Slovenia, and many families remain separated or have been broken up as a result of the erase. Only a fraction of those who were erased received meager compensation. Some remained in Slovenia without regularised status and related rights. The erase was never investigated and no one was held accountable.

In the exhibition, through the photographic eye of Borut Krajnc, the Erased reflect on their memories, experiences and attitude towards erasure more than thirty years later. They tell us

that the erasure is still ongoing for them. The exhibition also invites people to sign the petition for the Erased.



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BIOGRAPHIES

Matjaž Krivic is an internationally renowned documentary photographer who follows the stories of people and places over the long term. For twenty-five years he has recorded the face of the Earth in a personal and aesthetically convincing style and depicted the poorer parts of the world which are marked by tradition, social upheaval and the strong presence of religion. In the past few years he has oriented towards environmental questions and with his work advocates for a greener future. He is a recipient of the prestigious award **2022 Travel Photographer of the Year**.

Maja Prijatelj Videmšek is a longtime journalist at *Delo*, focusing on environmental, nature conservation and food issues, as well as the future of agriculture. Her articles have also been published in multiple of the most respectable global magazines and newspapers. She is the coauthor of the book *Last Two*, about the project to save the northern white rhinoceros from extinction.

Borut Krajnc is a documentary photographer and a photo-journalist, who also works as a freelance artist. Since 1991 he has been working as a photographer at the independent political and cultural weekly magazine *Mladina*. He is the author of the photos in the book *Route66* and coauthor of the monograph *Restart* (together with the photographers Matej Leskovšek in Miro Majcen). In 2009 he won at the festival **Slovenian Press Photo**. He lives and works in Ljubljana. In his work he focuses on current sociopolitical themes. With the help of conceptual as well as documentary methods, he explores the relationship between politics and economy, along with the micro- and macro conditions in his direct surroundings.