

KAYAPO FILM. "DISAPPEARING WORLDS" SERIES, GRANADA TELEVISION.
SCHEDULED SHOOTING: JANUARY 1987. DRAFT SCENARIO AND NOTES.
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I. Immediate topical focus: The confrontation of the Kayapo of Gorotire and neighboring villages with the gold-miners of Cumaru and Serra Pelada (also the lumber companies that have begun to try to move in on Kayapo forest land); the ways the Kayapo have dealt with this situation, considered as a microcosm of the destructive pressures placed upon native Amazonian societies by contact with national societies such as that of Brazil.

II. The wider context.

In space: the penetration of the Amazon (Trans-Amazonica Road system, new settlements, deforestation, the mines; official development ideology, and participation of international capital; the military angle (development of Amazonia is part of a strategy of social and military control); the impact of all this on indigenous peoples of the region (the crisis of the late '60's, depopulation, the seizure of native lands, disease).

In time: historic decline in native population of Amazonia since first European contact (reference could be made here to ideas of the "inevitable" disappearance of native peoples and cultures in the path of progress, abetted by exaggerated press reports of "genocide" in the Amazon).

III. Initial questions to be raised and points to be made in connection with this introductory sequence

A. The question that seems to arise from all of the above is whether the situation of the Kayapo, along with that of other Indigenous peoples of the Amazon, is not after all hopeless? Is it not inevitable, in other words, that they, or at least their cultural "world", will "disappear"?

B. The surprising answer to this question that emerges from the experience of the last fifteen years is, not at all, at least not in the short run, and not in the crude sense of physical extinction or forcible social or cultural annihilation. The Kayapo may be only the most dramatic example of a more general phenomenon, the survival and resurgence of the native peoples of Amazonia. A prime symptom of this is that since the '60's, the population of the Kayapo, and many other Amazonian groups, has been steadily increasing, not decreasing. It is not merely a question of physical survival, however. The Kayapo have demonstrated again and again their ability to adjust to, and when necessary resist, the pressures of national Brazilian

society through reliance on their own internal institutions, cultural values, and political processes. They have survived not only as people but as communities, that is, as a society with an awareness of its own culture and traditions.

C. General point: native Amazonian peoples have social, cultural and political resources upon which they can draw in adapting successfully to coexistence with Brazilian society, and resisting effectively its more rapacious and aggressive forms. They are not, in other words, mere passive victims with no hope of holding their own against the "advance of civilization".

IV. Sequence of scenes and topics (see subsequent sections V. and VI. for summaries of theoretical and interpretative points to be made about these film subjects).

A. The Kayapo village of Gorotire: focus of a dramatic confrontation between the Kayapo and the encroaching Brazilian society. Scenes of village plaza and houses, with typical activities, e.g., women carrying in garden produce or preparing food, men in men's house, some ceremonial dancing.

B. Sequence of shots showing main dimensions of the threat posed by contact with the Brazilians to the Kayapo: the new roads, the burning off of the forest, the mine, dependence on the Brazilians for commodities, the taking of Kayapo land (map could be used showing traditional Kayapo boundaries and Brazilian invasions), population loss through disease (population figure at first contact in late 19th Century: 5,000, compared with present pop. estimated at 2,500).

C. A "bush" Kayapo village, relatively remote from the intense pressures faced by Gorotire (although milder forms of the same pressures are universally felt). This might be MeKran-no-ti, or maybe the new village just formed by the union of Kretire and Jarina (Kuben-kakre). The purpose of this sequence would be to convey the roots of Kayapo capacities for organization, adaptation, and collective action in their own social institutions and cultural patterns. Subjects to be covered:

1)village layout (circular village, extended family houses around periphery, central plaza and men's house);

2)social composition of extended family households: matri-uxorilocal residence, wife's parents as household heads, daughters' husbands must obey, show deference;

3)social composition of men's house: age sets (uninitiated youths, bachelors, mature men), men's societies, chiefs;

4)communal ceremonial activity;

5)trekking;

6) body painting and the social construction of the person;

7) women's roles (relative independence of women, relative sexual autonomy; extended family household as a female sphere);

8) values of Kayapo social life, as manifested in stylized public behavior, especially oratory, women's keening, and ceremonial performance: "beauty", dominance, assertive expressiveness.

D. Gorotire: Kayapo society in confrontation with the Brazilian frontier, as exemplified by the mines and timber companies. Subjects to be covered:

1) Changes from the relatively pristine form of Kayapo society as presented in the "bush" village sequence:

a) Village shape: rectangular "street" layout imposed by Brazilian Indian service

b) Households: smaller extended families, tending to consist of only a single set of parents-in-law with their married daughters. Lockable doors indicate that houses are now important not only as a locus for the family but as a storehouse for private property in Western goods, an important new dimension of social status that is to some extent independent of traditional social structure (see following section).

c) Impact of private property/commodity values on traditional values: show houses with lockable doors, trunks and suitcases full of trade goods; people wearing Brazilian clothes and accessories such as sun-glasses; the communal electric generator, tractor, video system, etc. Comments on the cultural significance of this new commodity wealth follow in section VI.

d) Clothing as supplanting body painting, disuse of penis sheaths, lip plugs, and traditional hair styles: the aboriginal symbolic language for the construction of the person is being eclipsed by Western forms. This may be a useful visual index of the disappearance or transformation of certain of the social aspects of personal identity originally marked by the native features of bodily decoration in question.

e) Trekking may be disappearing, as a result of the diminution of available land area. This will have to be checked out when we get there.

f) A related point is that the diminished mobility of Kayapo society at a place like Gorotire, as a result of the constriction of the area within which the village might move to a new site, the heightened dependence on

the Brazilians and missionaries as sources of goods and medical and other services, tends to diminish the relative autonomy of the Kayapo vis a vis the Brazilians. Note, however, that this has not prevented major schisms leading to the foundation of new villages, e.g., Kikretum as an offshoot of Gorotire some ten years ago, and A-ukre as an offshoot of Kuben-kran-ken about the same time.

g) Changes in the political system.

Chiefs at Gorotire have been appointed, or at least confirmed, by the Indian Service (the same, however, is true in most of the other Kayapo villages, including those of the Xingu). They now derive much of their authority and functional importance from their role as middlemen with the Brazilians, and in particular as distributors of goods, which generally come to the village in collective lots which the chiefs then pass out. This system is surely being followed in the case of the revenues from the gold mining.

h) The role of women: Women may be losing some of their autonomy vis a vis men as a result of their dependence on men as sources of Brazilian goods. Women have virtually no independent access to Brazilian goods, and chiefly distributions are generally made directly to men as heads of families, who pass on female goods like cooking pots or dress material to their wives. It will be interesting to check out women's reactions to Gorotire's relationship with the Brazilians in the light of this possibility.

i) The "generation gap": How much the younger generation have been affected by the whole situation of contact and interaction with the Brazilians and Mission, in the sense of differentiating them culturally and socially from their parents, is another topic we should examine.

j) The role of the mission: The Protestant Mission has buildings directly within the village of Gorotire, as does the Indian Service (FUNAI). It holds services on Sundays, and runs a school class taught in Kayapo (there is a FUNAI teacher who runs a parallel class taught in Portuguese). It also does some medical work. It claims to have baptized everybody at a mass dunking in the Rio Fresco, but the actual effects in so far as conversion is concerned have probably been negligible. Nevertheless it may have been effective in curtailing ceremonial activity, inhibiting nudity and sexuality, and in other similar respects. We will have to see.

k) The role of the FUNAI post. Besides the resident agent (encarregado) and his family, FUNAI maintains several permanent workers at Gorotire: a nurse and clinic, a schoolteacher as previously mentioned, a cowhand with a herd of cattle, and usually one or two more or less transient laborers. I don't have much information about the effects of these various functionaries and their activities, or the role of the FUNAI encarregado in mediating relations with the mines or lumber companies. This again we shall have to check out when we get there.

2. Kayapo adaptation and initiatives.

a) The political system of chiefs and men's house groupings continues to function as the basis for organizing communal relations with the Brazilians, from the production of cash crops for exchange to armed confrontations and reprisals against illegal invasions of Kayapo territory. It also serves, as I have already suggested, as the channel through which Brazilian money and trade goods are controlled and distributed within the community.

b) The Kayapo political system, however, is also an arena of struggle and competition, as well as cooperation, among the Kayapo themselves. This is an integral aspect of its functioning as a dynamic, vital political system. At Gorotire, for example, a long-smoldering factional dispute between the two village chiefs led to a violent schism of the community in 1976. The new village of Kikretum was founded by the breakaway group. A similar schism at Kuben-kran-ken led to the formation of the new community of A-ukre, under the leadership of a young man named Payakan. The relations among these communities and their leaders is an integral aspect of the Kayapo response to Brazilian threats to their traditional tribal lands. The leader of Kikretum, Pombo, was the first to make a deal with a gold-prospecting company for a monthly royalty in exchange for mining rights to a frontier strip of tribal land, and to charter a plane with the proceeds (he used it to fly reconnaissance missions to spy out illegal invasions of his territory). The Gorotire, led by the two chiefs Kanyonk and Toto'i, have followed his example (they have actually bought a plane), but it is hard to believe that they coordinate their activities closely with Pombo, considering that the latter came very close to killing both of them with an axe in 1976 (it was this attack that provoked the village schism). Payakan of A-ukre, for his part, seems to have emerged as the most principled and militant Kayapo nationalist of the lot. He has refused to have either missionaries or a FUNAI post at his village, and it was he who led the attack on and occupation of the mine which caused the Brazilians to cave in and grant the Kayapo a 5% royalty on all the gold found, as well as the right to have an observer at all transactions at the government gold-purchasing office. The relations among these leaders and their respective groups of followers is a vital component of the situation, and one which we should try to present in the film. Perhaps this could be done with interviews of the leaders concerned.

c) Creative use of new Western technology. As you have heard, the Kayapo have learned to use video-recorders and have been making their own video records of all of their meetings with Brazilian officials (it would be very nice to be able to film an instance of this). They also make use of aircraft, and there is now at least one trained Kayapo pilot (this makes them the one Amazonian tribe with an air force). These, however, are only the most spectacular instances of a

more general pattern. The Kayapo also operate their own short-wave radio transmitters, powered by their own gasoline-(sorry, petrol-) fuelled generators. They have learned a lot about Western medicine and now run their own dispensaries at several villages. I am told that there is even a Kayapo who is actually running the missionaries' church services, which may be part of the same configuration. There is an almost Japanese quality in the alacrity with which the Kayapo pick up and master Western technology--and then turn it against its original masters.

d) Relations with other Indian tribes; emergent pan-Indian political consciousness. One way in which the Kayapo resurgence can be seen as part of a more general pattern in Amazonia is their participation in the pan-Indian movement that has arisen in Brazil in the last decade. This is currently embodied by UNI (Uniao de Nacoes Indigenas), whose president, Ailton Krenak, we might call upon in Sao Paulo on our way in. UNI has held national meetings of tribal leaders, and staged dramatic confrontations with FUNAI officials and other national Brazilian political leaders in Brasilia. Kayapo chiefs have played a prominent role in some of these. A couple of years ago, Rauni, a Kayapo chief from Kretire in the Xingu, gathered a large group of armed followers and chartered a bus to go to the aid of a beleaguered non-Kayapo group of Ge-speaking Indians, the Apinaye, across the Tocantins in Maranhao. The Apinaye were facing a concerted move by local ranchers to take over their land. Rauni and his people established a road block on the road in to the Apinaye reserve and announced that they would fight anybody who tried to dislodge it. After a few days' stand-off, the Brazilian government sent people to demarcate the Apinaye reserve, and the crisis was over--the Kayapo had won again, but this time fighting for other Indians, not themselves. This incident dramatically exemplifies the extent to which the new self-conception as "Indians", rather than merely as members of particular tribes, has become a dynamic political force both for the Kayapo and for the indigenous peoples of Brazil as a whole.

e) Reflective awareness of the nature of their own culture, society and history; also, the degree of understanding of Brazilian society. The Kayapo have myths of how the white men originated (e.g., from a giant caterpillar who made love to a Kayapo woman). Alongside these, they also have a relatively sophisticated historical understanding of the development of their relations with Brazilian society. This consciousness tends to be expressed in oratory or personal reminiscence rather than in the genre of mythical tales. I am not sure how far this general awareness has developed among the Gorotire into a consciousness of their own culture as a "culture" in our analytical sense, or how much of an understanding of Brazilian society they have managed to acquire. We could explore this topic by filming some oratory or men's house debates on a related topic and translating some of the juicy bits with sub-titles.

V. Main points to be made in section on aboriginal Kayapo society ("bush" village sequence)

A. Communal organization and institutions of Kayapo society are modelled on the structure of the extended family household, and the social values embodied in public expressive behavior and ceremonial are formulated as the extended-family/household relations of dominance, deference, and kinship solidarity writ large.

B. The family and extended family, on the other hand, constitute the social "factory" for making individual Kayapo persons. The person is constructed on the pattern of relations comprising the extended family household: the structural components of these relations are also those of personal identity, e.g., gender and generation, consanguinity and affinity, dominance and subordination, relative "completeness" or "incompleteness" (the latter as defined in terms of the process of forming the extended family itself, with its culmination in the creation of the personal roles of parent-in-law and grandparent). Changing patterns of bodily ornamentation, especially painting and such obligatory ornaments as penis sheaths and lip plugs, are the objective signs of these aspects and changes of family roles, imprinted upon the physical body as attributes of the personal identity identified with it.

The structure of communal society and the values associated with it, it follows, correspond to the construction of the social person and the valued attributes of personal identity (since the former, as has been shown, themselves correspond to the family and household relations which are also the basis of the latter). This means that for the Kayapo, fulfilling the social roles that make up the structure of their society is felt to be personally fulfilling in a direct way that is hard for someone not raised in such a kinship based society to imagine.

C. This much is true of most of the small, kinship-based native societies of Amazonia and elsewhere in the primitive world. Two features of Kayapo society, however, set it apart from most of these others. One is the way Kayapo society manages to generate a system of dynamic communal groups with the capacity to act as political and military units, and as a part of this structure, a definite hierarchy of positions of influence and authority, which can function under some circumstances as foci for the exercise of power. The second is the degree to which they have built a self-conscious process of collective decision-making into their communal institutions. Collective participation in the political process is an everyday experience for Kayapo men, and to a lesser extent, women. These two points and their implications for the Kayapo response to Brazilian society may be briefly explicated.

1. Communal groups and hierarchy: the Kayapo political system Each Kayapo village is an autonomous political unit. Although members of a given village are normally related by kinship to members of other villages, there are no inter-village relations of a collective, political character. Kayapo villages have frequently, although not invariably, been on hostile terms with one another, and in some cases such relations continue into the present.

Within the village, the collective men's groups associated with the men's house, and to a much lesser degree the collective women's groups also associated with the men's house in the formal capacity of "wives of the men's house", constitute a differentiated political structure distinct from the domestic domain of family and kinship relations.

By "political structure" is meant a system of institutionalized relations which serve to channel access to and control over social values and to regulate conflict and decisions relating to collective action in terms of commonly accepted rules. The commonly accepted right of the holder of a given position or role to exercise leadership or control in such matters is defined as "authority". The acceptance of the capacity of a leader, authority or group to enforce its decisions by resort to force if necessary, so that their decisions or demands are obeyed without its being necessary actually to apply forcible sanctions, is defined as "power". The Kayapo system of collective groupings, with their institutionalized positions of leadership, constitute a "political system" in these terms, in which there is a hierarchical distribution of authority, and under some circumstances a genuine exercise of power.

The men's communal groups are formed through the initiation process. Boys are taken from their maternal households at about eight years of age and inducted into the men's house, where they form a collective "age set" or group based on a certain category of social age, in this case that of uninitiated youths. After initiation they move up to the age set of "batchelors" or marriageable but as yet unmarried youths. Finally, upon marriage (functionally defined by the pregnancy of their prospective spouse) they matriculate to the set of mature men or "fathers". The men of this age set form themselves into men's societies, each of which is led by one or more "chiefs". Married men or "fathers" move out of the men's house to live with their wives in the latter's households, but continue to meet in the men's house, which serves them as a sort of club. These age sets and men's societies act collectively to perform certain labor tasks, such as clearing the chiefs' gardens, fishing by the "poison" method or gathering treks for certain fruits and nuts. The mature men's societies also undertake, often independently of one another, military expeditions (raids) and extended hunting and gathering treks (the latter with female dependents and children in train). Women are also organized into collective age sets and societies, along lines similar (but not identical) to those of the men. the women's groups meet peri-

odically in the central plaza for collective body-painting sessions, and hold a major girls' naming ceremony once a year. They are formally linked to the men's "fathers'" societies by ties of marriage (a woman joins a woman's society associated with her husband's men's house). Both the men's and the women's systems of communal groups can thus be said to be associated with the men's house and central ceremonial plaza as distinct from the extended family households and the individual networks of kinship relations centered in them.

The separateness of the relationships built up in and through the men's house from kinship and domestic ties, and the strength and social density of those relations, make the groupings they constitute politically potent units. These units and relations form a distinct level of social organization that is relatively autonomous, structurally speaking, from the kinship and household level. Membership in these groups, and the communal secular and ceremonial activities they carry out, become the main criteria of adult social identity. The values associated with group solidarity and activities (above all, the relative dominance of senior over junior groups and the "beauty" of collective ceremonial performance and stylized public modes of speech like oratory and keening, which are performed only in the public context of plaza or group activity), likewise become the principal values of adult life, especially for men. The men's groups meet regularly in the men's house and discuss any matter of public concern, the batchelors and uninitiated youths never speaking but listening to their elders and carrying out their decisions. These decisions have authority for the community as a whole, and may be backed up by forcible coercion or violence if necessary. Knowledge of this possibility gives them, in some contexts, a modicum of real power.

Leadership of the mature men's groups is institutionalized in the office of "chief", or in Kayapo terms, "chanter". The office is so-called because its incumbent is expected to deliver certain ritual formulae at key points in rituals. This ritual role bespeaks the community-wide authority of the chief, in spite of the fact that his actual base of support is only his own mature men's society. In his ritual role, the chief embodies the unity of the community, and thus the supreme value of "beauty" or completeness. As the leader of a men's society, he epitomizes the value of dominance. The former lends him authority; the latter, in some contexts, power.

The chief, in all of these respects, is only the crystallization of the more general pattern of dominance of relatively junior men by senior men. Within the "fathers'" age set and societies, younger "fathers" (those primarily identified as sons-in-law and as fathers of families of procreation) defer to older "fathers" (of an age identified primarily with the status of father-in-law and head of an extended family household). Senior "fathers" of the latter category provide the orators and de facto leaders in public debates and decision-making. The basis of their preeminence in these respects is the structure of

the men's house as a generalized analog of the domestic extended-family household, within which an identical order of deference and precedence obtains. the collective institutions of Kayapo society thus comprise a framework for extrapolating the internal hierarchy of the extended family household, centered upon the dominance of the father-in-law (and to a lesser but still significant degree, the mother-in-law) over the son-in-law, as the form of the hierarchical distribution of dominance, value, authority and power in the political structure of the community as a whole.

Ceremonial, which is the main activity of both the men's and women's communal groups, plays a key role in this process of extrapolation, since it is overwhelmingly concerned with the collective recognition and reproduction of certain key kinship and household relationships rather than with the worship or supplication of supernatural beings. The Kayapo have no "religion" in the ordinary sense of belief in a god or gods; they are, rather, Confucians, obsessed with the ritual of social relations as the proper basis of political order.

2. Collective participation in the political process The collective groups (men's and women's age-sets, political societies and ceremonial organizations) which constitute the structure of the Kayapo village meet regularly and reach collective decisions through a process of open debate and consensus building. Everyone (at least, everyone of the proper gender and generational status appropriate to the group in question) who cares to express an opinion has his or her say. Although they do not vote in a formal sense, the course of action finally resolved upon and articulated by the chief or leader usually corresponds closely to the emergent sense of consensus.

The corollary of this open, democratic style of collective organization is that the Kayapo experience their society to a considerable degree as the product of their own conscious activity, both secular (as in group debates and decision making) and ceremonial (as in communal ritual, which is itself overwhelmingly directed toward the reproduction of social relations). The Kayapo are a pragmatic, this-worldly people. They lack the emphasis on shamanism and beliefs in supernatural beings characteristic of many other tribes of the region; and unlike most of them, they have neither hallucinogens nor alcohol. This secular, this-worldly orientation is reflected in the definition of the highest social and personal values in terms of modes of participation in communal social and political life, rather than, say, religious ritual or hallucinogenic trance. The Kayapo also have a tradition of raiding and warfare, both among themselves (i.e., each Kayapo village against the others) and against non-Kayapo peoples. I think that this military tradition is at least partly explicable as an assertion of the Kayapo penchant for collective political coordination, carried to the highest pitch of collective self-assertion of the social group against other groups. This strong tradition of political and military organization and

action, and the general secular, social-political emphasis of Kayapo culture, has enabled the Kayapo to respond more successfully to the challenges posed by contact and interaction with Western society than many other Amazonian peoples.

VI. General points to be made in connection with Gorotire sequence

A. On the social and cultural importance of trade goods: it is significant that the Kayapo classify all trade goods under the term they also use for ritually valued names, special ceremonial functions and paraphernalia inherited through the aboriginal ritual system. This term, nekretch, signifies "wealth", but in a sense directly linked to the enhancement of personal social identity as defined in the context of the communal ceremonial system. It is "wealth" whose meaning is directly dependent on its function in collective social activity, rather than abstract private property, as in the Western notion of wealth defined in terms of individual possession of commodities as private property. Native Kayapo "wealth"/nekretch is also more radically personal than Western private property: as an intrinsic aspect of individual identity, it cannot be stolen and used by anyone else, but only given away to someone else through the prescribed ritual channels, which are an essential aspect of its meaning.

The value of Western trade goods to the Kayapo partakes of some, but not all of the properties of the aboriginal notion of "wealth" (nekretch) in that they function as a sign of social status, not merely in the sense of Western "conspicuous consumption" but as an index of the possessor's place in the community through which he or she obtained the goods in question (usually through collective distributions by the chiefs). Trade goods also have a special prestige as a form of vicarious participation in an alien technology and system of production, which lies beyond the direct control of Kayapo society, and which therefore appears as a source of quasi-superhuman power, making them analogous to a degree with ritual nekretch in the aboriginal ritual system. Some Western goods have even been incorporated as nekretch into the ritual system (e.g., trade mirrors used as elements of certain headdresses which are passed down as the special nekretch of certain individuals related by ritual kinship ties).

Most Western goods, however, are not thought of as integrated into Kayapo society or associated with the personal identity of individuals in this radical, original Kayapo sense of nekretch. They can, for instance, be stolen, and theft has now become so much of a problem in places like Gorotire that padlocks for house doors and lockable trunks or suitcases have become among the most highly esteemed trade objects. A corollary of this is that ownership of differential amounts of Western goods is becoming an indicator of relative status. It is an open question whether being rich in Western goods, or maybe even money, is considered by the Gorotire to be tantamount to being

"beautiful" in the aboriginal sense associated with possession of ritual nekretch, or whether it is directly associated with "dominance" in the aboriginal sense. We shall have to see about this when we get there. If so, then the accession of wealth in the Western sense of private property in commodities will have taken a long step towards severing the traditional values of Kayapo society from their direct connection with traditional Kayapo social organization. My guess is that the accession and distribution of trade goods is still primarily mediated through the chiefs and communal men's groups, so that commodity property is still constrained within the aboriginal system of social institutions and values. Either way, this is an obvious area of tension and change, which should be able to be captured on film in various ways. We should, for instance, film a chiefly distribution of goods, and will ourselves generate the opportunity to do so by the presents we bring. We should be able to shoot some ceremonial nekretch with mirrors or other Western trinkets, and there will be no lack of men strutting about in sun-glasses and baseball hats, etc. It might be a good idea to film a couple showing all the trade goods they have in their house--opening their locked suitcases, hauling out their stashes of beads, cloth, trinkets and ammunition, etc.

B. The Brazilian governmental role, and the impact of indigenous support organizations inside and outside Brazil. Some attention must be given to these two topics, and they are appropriately considered together. The Brazilian Indian Agency, FUNAI, is structurally weak, underfunded, and compromised by its location within the Ministry of the Interior, which is charged with administering and encouraging the "development" policies and activities that are the major threat to the Indian peoples it is supposed to protect. The Brazilian government as a whole has clearly seen, and still sees, the Indian as an obstacle to its goals of economic development and national social, political, cultural, and strategic integration under a strong centralized authority. Even when well intentioned, FUNAI is often overruled by powerful development interests who have much stronger constituencies in the national and state governments. There has, in the past, also been considerable corruption and inefficiency on the part of FUNAI personnel.

Notwithstanding these basically inimical factors and attitudes, FUNAI has always managed to attract a small number of dedicated and idealistic civil servants, who have struggled against great odds to fulfill the spirit of the agency's supposed tutelary role. It, and the national government as a whole, has also proved to be sensitive to domestic and international criticism of crimes against Indians and government failure to prevent the exploitation and decimation of Indian peoples. The Brazilian anthropological community (at present nearly 1,000 strong) has courageously and forthrightly spoken out against Indian abuses, and the organ of the Catholic church concerned with Indian affairs (CIMI) has also agitated vigorously against government policies, indifference, and ineptitude. These Brazilian organizations have maintained contact with an international

network of Indigenous support organizations in Europe and North America which has grown greatly in numbers, resources, and influence in the past 15 years. The latter have agitated with considerable success to force their national governments and organs such as the World Bank to hold up aid to Brazilian development projects which threaten the rights and welfare of native peoples, and have bombarded the world press and the Brazilian government with exposures and protests against particular actions or situations. Finally and most importantly, the Brazilian Indians themselves have begun to find a political voice and to speak and act with political effect on their own behalf, through such figures as the Federal Deputy Mario Juruna and organizations like UNI, described elsewhere in this memo.

The combined result of all these positive forces has been that FUNAI has been able to mount and carry out some beneficial programs, for example of medical assistance, and even to "demarcate" i.e., officially certify, some Indian reserves (something the Brazilian government has been enormously reluctant to do). The record of the Brazilian government's conduct of Indian affairs, in sum, is not all bad; FUNAI deserves considerable credit for the net increase in the indigenous population over the last two decades, and for playing at least an important supporting role in averting a number of potential expropriations and even massacres of native communities during that time. There is, in short, a complex political field of forces surrounding Indian affairs in Brazil, which allows Indian groups considerable room for manouever and places important constraints on private and governmental forces interested in acting at Indian expense.

The relative success of the Kayapo in resisting the destructive pressures of private enterprise and governmental policies has depended in large part on their skill at manipulating this larger political situation, above all in being able to guage what they can get away with (although they have taken some big chances). Milestones in the recent history of Kayapo-governmental relations have been the Kayapos' success in forcing the demarcation of two (or maybe by now three) reserves, one being the "Kayapo Park that includes Gorotire, the recovery of Kayapo land to the north of the Xingu National Park that had been officially expropriated by the government, the liquidation of two large groups and numerous individuals that had attempted to set up ranches or other types of enterprise on Kayapo land without government reprisal, the successful Kayapo expedition in support of the Apinaye, and perhaps most spectacularly, Payakan's seizure and occupation of the gold mine at Maria Bonita, which forced the government to grant the Kayapo a 5% cut of all proceeds and allow Kayapo inspection of its transactions. Some of these facts and points could be brought out in the film through interviews with Kayapo leaders and possibly Brazilian officials, UNI leaders, Brazilian anthropologists and indigenist advocates.

C. General point: adaptation by an indigenous people to the technological, political-economic, and cultural forms of Western society does not mean the abandonment of its own social institutions and cultural forms; these, on the contrary, while changing in certain respects, may retain or even enhance their importance as the framework for the native community's coordination of its resistance to, and modus vivendi with Western society.

D. But what about the long run? The Kayapo have succeeded thus far in maintaining their social and cultural identity, but they have also absorbed important aspects of Western society and culture. This has not only made them dependent upon Brazilian society in various irreversible ways, but has clearly undermined some aspects of their traditional culture, while transforming others in ways that have added new dimensions of meaning and social importance to them even as their traditional forms have become altered. Kayapo culture and society, in short, has changed and is changing as a result. This, however, does not mean that it is simply merging with Brazilian society or culture; nor does the mere fact of historical change in Kayapo social forms and cultural traits necessarily indicate a disintegration or diminution of Kayapo "culture", or more fundamentally of its capacity for culture. The Renaissance saw the loss of numerous traits of Medaeval European culture and the adoption of many new cultural forms, but we do not therefore consider that it marked an impoverishment of Western culture. The key question is, to what extent are the Kayapo able to exercise control over the changes emanating from contact with the Brazilians and the dynamic conflicts within their own society? To what extent, in short, is Kayapo history still in some sense a Kayapo project? To a surprising degree, the answer appears to be that it still is.

E. General polemical conclusion. The larger issue implicit in all this is that of what we really mean (or ought to mean) by words like "culture", "ethnicity", or "social autonomy". The Kayapo may well succeed in "preserving" their "culture" by changing it in various ways; and they may manage to maintain a significant measure of social autonomy and ethnic distinctness by skillfully manipulating the terms of their dependence on what has become a world society. This will not leave them essentially as they were before contact with that world society, but on the other hand it may enable them to avoid the fate of many tribal peoples in Amazonia and elsewhere, that of losing their own social and cultural identity while failing to find a place within a national society whose local representatives regard them as less than human, so that they become marginalized paupers with no future and no past.

The real point is that the meaning of "culture" itself seems to be changing in the contemporary world. Cultural differences may increasingly be losing their significance as markers of static separateness between peoples, and becoming more and more a sort of currency through which communities

struggle to negotiate, defend and augment their own places in the increasingly fluid, complex and historically dynamic society of the late Twentieth Century world. The emphasis may thus be shifting from a notion of culture as a more or less ahistorical pattern of folkways and collective ideas to that of culture as a dynamic ability, a collective social capacity to define the terms of participation in the wider society of region, nation and world: in short, in history. It is "culture" in this dynamic sense of a collective capacity for culture that the Kayapo seem, so far at least, to be successfully preserving, perhaps even increasing, for themselves.