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THE CONTINUING AGONY OF BRAZIL'S NATIVE PEOPLES

- I. The plight of Brazil's surviving tribal peoples: the facts and what is at stake.
- A. "Genocide", ethnocide and cultural self-determination: false charges and real issues.

The native peoples of Brazil have become known to the North American and European public chiefly through press reports of their rapid disappearance, frequently attributed to a deliberate policy of "genocide" on the part of the Brazilian government. The facts are horrifying enough. 38 per cent of the aboriginal groups in existence at the beginning of the century had become totally extinct by 1957, and many of the groups that still survived had sustained population losses of 80 or 90 per cent (Ribeiro 1957). It is worth bearing in mind that these statistics are not unique to the present century: they represent the continuation of a virtually uninterrupted trend that began with the discovery of Brazil by Cabral (it is estimated that there were around 3,000,000 Indians inhabiting the present national territory of Brazil at the time of the discovery, or roughly 30 times the present indigenous population).

The causes of this continual decline of the indigenous population have been varied but relatively constant, in general terms, throughout the entire historical period. They are for the most part

inherent in the structure of the situation of contact between the advancing national society and the indigenous groups. This situation has much in common with the analogous North American experience, but also has unique features that arise from the specific characteristics of Brazilian social and economic organization. Comprehension of the dynamics of the decline of the native population and formulation of effective policies to counteract it depend alike on an adequate analysis of these factors.

The task of analysis and comprehension, it must be said at the outset, is only mystified by the charges of "genocide" by which superficial and sensationalist reporters

have attempted to account for the situation. Such a policy has never existed, at either the national or state governmental levels at any time in the modern history of Brazil. The existence of a genocide policy would obviously greatly simplify the task of accounting for the decimation of the Brazilian tribes, <sup>and provide, at the same time, an easy</sup> ~~by the same~~ <sup>target for moral and political condemnation: the conscious and overt policies of the Brazilian government. It is</sup> ~~target~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~the Brazilian government~~ <sup>but</sup> ~~only~~ <sup>Brazilian</sup> ~~mystifies~~ <sup>provides</sup> the real causes of the problem with an easy pretext for shrugging off all criticism of its Indian policies, and on both counts harms rather than helps the cause of the Indian. The federal and state governments of Brazil have much to answer for in relation to the Indian: there is ample room for criticism <sup>s</sup> without resorting to false charges. The present regime is currently advocating policies that have regularly led to the physical decimation, social disorganization and cultural demoralization of native communities in the past, although in several important cases it is still hesitating to put these policies into effect and has shown <sup>some</sup> signs of flexibility and willingness to change or compromise. In certain respects, indeed, the government has taken steps that have positively improved conditions on the Indian posts (e.g., in the fields of health and the training of Indian service personnel). The situation, in short, is a good deal more complex, and not quite so hopeless, as the polemicists of "genocide" would lead one to suspect.

Beyond the simple right to biological survival, the basic issue posed by the struggle of the tribal peoples of Brazil to survive is the fundamental right of ~~the~~ peoples to ethnic sur-

or cultural

vival ~~and~~ self-determination, and the willingness of the Brazilian regime to recognize and guarantee this right. This is not a question of political independence but simply of the maintenance of social and cultural identity, including the right to hold religious beliefs, maintain social institutions and pursue economic activities conforming to a group's own values without restraint or coercion by the dominant society. This right, as all those familiar with the history of contacts between tribal peoples and national societies in the Americas are aware, is closely linked to the more fundamental issue of biological survival. In Brazil as elsewhere, the abrupt conquest or pacification of primitive tribes, followed by the imposition of heavy-handed social and political tutelage, economic dependence, and the negation of native cultural values by religious missionaries and other agents, has frequently been directly associated with explosive population decline and even the extinction of entire tribes or communities within one or two generations. Many factors, notably epidemic diseases new to the Indians, contribute to such results, but the pervasive demoralization induced by extreme "culture shock" is one of the most important vectors in such situations. The issue of ethnic self-determination, however, outlasts the first phases of contact: it endures for as long as a significant ethnic identity is preserved by the group (or continues to be forced upon it by the national society).

~~The policies adopted by a national society toward its ethnic minorities, it goes without saying, tends to be sensitive indicators of the rights it recognizes and the qualities it values.~~

~~(and, conversely, those it does not) as essential to its own so-~~  
~~order.~~

B. The statistical mentality, romantic pessimism, and cultural nostalgia: three modes of false consciousness of the Indian problem.

These are not <sup>quantitative</sup> ~~statistical~~ issues, but there is a widespread tendency, both among ordinary citizens and intellectuals (and as prevalent among intellectuals of the left as among intellectuals of the center and right), to treat ~~them~~ them in statistical terms. In the words of Prof. Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira, a Brazilian anthropologist who has made the study and critique of the relation of Brazilian society to the Indian his life work,

Why should we bother about a few thousand Indians, when the real problem is the destiny of a nation of some 80,000,000 inhabitants? What does the death of a few hundred Indians matter, when thousands of babies die in Brazil every day?

So goes the argument, as if it were possible to define a moral act in quantitative terms. When a single criminal is condemned to death, is not the entire society responsible, and is it not represented at the judgement by someone who has the right to speak and act on its behalf? Should not the same then be said of entire tribes condemned to extinction for the sole crime of occupying areas capable of economic exploitation? For those who are so fascinated by statistics, here are a few: of 230 indigenous groups in existence at the beginning of the century, 87 became extinct in its first fifty years. (Cardoso de Oliveira 1972:73).

A critique of this "statistical mentality", to adopt Cardoso's phrase, however, does not penetrate <sup>to the roots of the profound pessimism</sup> ~~the more-fundamental~~ <sup>or its direct product, indifference)</sup> ~~scaption~~ with which many intellectuals and ordinary citizens alike regard the "Indian problem". This <sup>eir</sup> ~~the~~ attitude can be summed

up as the conviction that, 1) the Indian cultures and societies must necessarily change profoundly in order to coexist with a modern Western society like Brazil; 2) change of this order will inevitably undermine the Indian's traditional culture, and thus sooner or later bring on social, moral and cultural collapse, if not biological extinction; ~~and~~ therefore, 3) the regrettable but unavoidable conclusion is that there is really no solution to the "Indian problem" other than a charitable holding operation, in which the survivors of the tribes are maintained as wards of the state until they either die off or merge with the lowest levels of the rural proletariat. Finally, given that the disappearance of the Indian is an inevitable by-product of the development of Western society, regardless of its particular form of government or economic organization, it follows that the Indian problem is not a meaningful subject of political or social debate.

This attitude, which might fairly be described as a ~~kind form~~ of romantic pessimism, is simply the inverse of that equally distorted <sup>conception of the problem</sup> ~~form of romanticism~~ according to which the proper solution to the plight of the tribes is to "preserve" them and their cultures "intact" in special zoo-like preserves.<sup>2</sup> Both of these forms of <sup>romanticism</sup> ~~pessimism~~ rest equally upon ignorance of the facts and a romantic mystification of the nature of "culture", <sup>that is,</sup> ~~that~~ that vital yet fragile attribute which, it is held, is what is inevi-

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<sup>2</sup>This attitude is frequently <sup>held</sup> out as a straw man by defenders of the official Indian policies of Brazil, who attribute it to those anthropologists and workers of the Brazilian National Indian Foundation who have dared to criticize their policy of "assimilation". So far as I have been able to discover, however, it is held by none of those to whom it has been attributed by these spokesmen.

tably lost upon contact or, *mutatis mutandis*, is what it is essential to "preserve unchanged". First, the facts: Brazil already possesses several tribes that have succeeded in arriving at a modus vivendi with Brazilian society while maintaining their ethnic identity and, to varying degrees, their aboriginal culture and language: the Kraho of Maranhao, the Terena of Mato Grosso and the Kaingang of Parana, to name but three.. Such examples, taken together with similar cases from other South and North American countries, show that tribal peoples, given the right conditions, can make the adjustment to life in a modern Western-type society. These facts amply refute the thesis that tribal societies like those of Brazil are a priori too fragile or rigid to adapt successfully to coexistence with Brazilian society.

Underlying both forms of the romantic attitude is a common propensity for the nostalgic reification of the concept of "culture", which tends to becloud the issues and mislead many would-be friends of the Indian. The views that the goal of Indian policy should be to preserve the tribal cultures in a form as close to their aboriginal state as possible, or conversely, that the impossibility of doing this means that the Indian problem is essentially hopeless, are alike expressions of this reified concept of culture. In so far as the proponents of this position oppose the casual deprecation or deliberate destruction of tribal culture by private or public agencies, they perform a valuable service. But their own outlook is based upon a subtle transformation of the nature of tribal cultures, which are, in the aboriginal state, in a process of continual readjustment to



to changing social and environmental circumstances, into static, ideal forms, to be preserved for their own sakes. Such "preservation", if it were possible, would amount to the strangulation of the vital principle on which all living cultures are based, namely the capacity to adapt to changes in the natural and social environment in such a way as to protect or further values or goals determined by the society in question. Either "romantic" view, pushed to its logical conclusion, ends by holding tribal peoples hostage to their own cultures, or rather to a certain moment in their histories that has irretrievably passed. To transform such a moment--the moment of contact with the national culture--into the standard of cultural "purity" and value for all succeeding time is to invert the original--and authentic--relation between cultures, peoples, and their history; in short, to indulge in nostalgia in the strict sense of the word.

What must be preserved, and what it must be the chief aim of a national Indian policy to foster, is not "cultures", conceived as collections of particular traits and beliefs, but the power to adapt, on a people's own terms, to historical conditions. This obviously includes the ability of the bearers of the culture themselves to preserve, to modify, discard, or replace items of their traditional cultural repertory to whatever extent they deem necessary.

Cultural nostalgia, or the desire to preserve tribal cultures in their pristine state, is in no danger of becoming the official Indian policy of Brazil. It is nevertheless necessary to confront such attitudes at the outset of any discussion of the predicament of the tribal peoples of Brazil because they set the



terms for so much opinion and discussion of the subject, both within Brazil and abroad. In so far as they do, they do great harm, above all by contributing to the attitudes of futility and pessimism which lead many to write off the entire, complex situation as a lost cause, or at best as a baffling dilemma with no perceivable solution. Such conclusions, like the assumptions from which they arise, are dangerous distortions of reality. The cause of the native peoples of Brazil (those that still survive, at least) is not lost--yet.

- C. The "Indian problem" as a continuation of the social and economic problems of Brazilian society in Amazonia, the frontiers, and rural problems.

The first step towards a correct understanding of the situation of the tribal peoples of Brazil is to realize that it is a product, not of some arbitrary and deliberate government policy, but of the fundamental structure of political, social and economic relations prevailing in those parts of the national society in which virtually all Native Brazilians now live: the rural interior, Amazonia, and the frontier territories. Not only can the plight of the Indians not be separated from that of the poorer strata of the Brazilian population in the same areas, but the special problems surrounding the pacification, maintenance, and control of indigenous peoples on reserves or government posts, and their integration into the regional economy, tend to reflect and focus in microcosm the major conflicts and dilemmas of the surrounding Brazilian society.

Specifically, the position of virtually all the surviving tribal peoples of the "semi-integrated" and "integrated" categories is determined by a triangular pattern of conflicting ethnic

and class interests that has always provided the basis of Brazilian social organization in the Amazonian interior and on the frontiers. The Indians themselves form one apex of this (very lop-sided) triangle, the rural proletariat of ranch hands, rubber and nut gatherers, squatters and subsistence farmers comprises the second, and the dominant class of employers, investors, land speculators, and entrepreneurs, backed up by an assortment of government administrators, planners and politicians, make up the third. The problem of the Indian can be succinctly stated as the impossibility of being positively aligned with the interests of both of the other two vertices of the triangle at the same time with respect to the same issues. The current massive campaign to develop the Amazonian interior and the northern and western frontier territories has already considerably exacerbated the tensions and contradictions inherent in this "triangle", at the same time that it has increased the already disproportionate strength of its two non-Indian elements.

The scarcity of resources and employment at the bottom of the social pyramid of rural and frontier Brazilian society, coupled with the inability of the Indian to integrate into the social and economic structure of Brazil on any other level, makes the Native Brazilian the natural competitor of the rural lumpen-proletarian, both for subsistence resources and for wages and other benefits handed down by private employers or governmental sources. Even when Indian agents or private entrepreneurs impose upon the Indian forms and terms of exploitation analagous to those imposed on the local Brazilian population, the result is not the develop-

ment of a consciousness of common oppression or "class" interest, but rather the aggravation of the pervasive competition and antagonism between the two groups. Governmental efforts to aid or protect the Indian tend to exacerbate the bitterness of the lumpen-Brazilian, who typically feels that such measures discriminate unfairly against himself or herself. The interests of the poorer strata of the national society and those of the private and public sectors of its dominant class, on the other hand, do have one point of convergence: the expropriation of Indian land and resources.

All of these points will be explicated in the following pages. I mention them here partly to give a preliminary idea of the extent to which the problems of the native peoples of Brazil are inseparable from the problems and contradictions of Brazilian society as a whole, and partly to indicate how, by the same token, they constitute a unique vantage point from which to understand some of the fundamental structures and contradictions of the national society itself. Let us turn, then to a more detailed consideration of the social and economic dimensions of the situation of the tribes.

II. Social and economic aspects of the position of the indigenous tribes.

A. Demography and general typology of contact situations.

There are perhaps 90,000 persons classifiable as "Indians" currently alive in Brazil or about .001 of the total population of the country.<sup>1</sup> This total figure includes every type of Indian community, from tribes that have never yet come into contact with Brazilian society to groups that have lost their tribal

1 "Indians" are defined, for purposes of this paper and in

terms of current Brazilian usage, as persons of aboriginal descent preserving a distinct ethnic identity both in their own eyes and those of the surrounding Brazilian population, and normally living in separate tribal communities or ethnic enclaves.

language and have become virtually indistinguishable in general culture and way of life from the Brazilian small farmers or migrant laborers among whom they live. It is evident that an adequate picture of Brazilian Indian problems must take account of the wide variations in the type of contact situation of the various tribes. For these purposes it will suffice to break the Indian population down into three broad categories: isolated or uncontacted groups, semi-integrated groups (i.e. tribes that

have established stable relations with Brazilian society, usually implying the presence of an Indian service post, but have not yet become absorbed into the regional economy on a full-time basis), and ~~many~~ integrated groups (communities that have become bilingual and ~~fully~~ absorbed into the regional economy on a more or less equal footing with the lowest levels of the Brazilian working class). The population of these three categories may be roughly estimated at 20,000, 45,000, and 25,000 respectively.

It is worth emphasizing that, whereas the first two groups (i.e., those with exclusively or predominantly aboriginal culture and way of life) have received virtually all of the attention in the discussion of Indian affairs both at home and abroad, it is the third ("integrated") category which affords the best indication of the problems facing all <sup>Brazilian tribal peoples</sup> ~~tribes~~ in the future. The first and second groups--above all the second ("semi-integrated" <sup>2</sup> tribes)--are those that run the greatest risk of the cat<sup>2</sup>strophes (massacres, epidemics) that have been so widely publicized. The danger of such disasters is still very real for many groups, but for the majority of tribes it has probably already passed. The populations of many tribes are on the increase for the first time in half a century or more, and a future for most, if not all, of the tribes <sup>0</sup> ~~now~~ extant seems assured. It therefore behooves us to look closely at the situation of the more "integrated" tribes for indications of the more stable and enduring dimensions of the plight of the Indian in Brazilian society.

B. The situation of contact and inter-ethnic friction.

Let us follow a hypothetical Indian community through the various stages of contact with Brazilian society, from "attraction" and "pacification" (the official Brazilian terms for the process of establishing peaceful relations between an Indian group and Brazilian society) to "integration".

The process of "attraction" itself is a delicate and gentle technique perfected by the great Marshal Candido Mariano da Silva Rondon, the founder of the Brazilian Indian Protection Service in 1911. A team of "sertanistas", specialists in this work and pledged to Rondon's motto of "Die if necessary but never kill", advances to the vicinity of the Indian village and leaves presents for the Indians. They then retire to a more distant camp, returning to see if the presents have been accepted and if any have been left in exchange by the Indian group itself. This may be repeated for months or even years until a relationship of reciprocal exchange is established. Only after this primitive social bond is achieved does the Brazilian team attempt to bring about a direct personal encounter, which again takes the form of an exchange of gifts.

The tact, circumspection and patience of the pacification process itself stand in sharp contrast to the context in which it arises and the social and economic ends to which it is usually directed. "Attraction" is normally undertaken by the National Indian Foundation for one of two reasons. Either the indigenous community in question has already become involved in serious conflict and attrition with the local representatives of the advancing frontier of the national society (e.g., rubber tappers, small



farmers, big ranchers, prospectors, etc.), or its presence is recognized as an obstacle to the plans of a large private developer or government development agency (e.g., a mining company or road-building authority) who are interested in using the territory of the indigenous community for their own ends. The "pacification" mission itself may be composed of idealists who wish to end the danger of conflict between Indians and Brazilians. The wider socio-economic motives of pacification, however, are almost invariably to restrict the freedom of action and access to territory of the indigenous groups in ways that facilitate the aims of the private or governmental interests involved.

It may be said on behalf of the sertanistas who make up the pacification teams, some of whom are idealists committed in their terms to aiding the Indians, that the consequences of failure to establish such peaceful contact would in many cases be more immediately and totally disastrous to the indigenous community than the longer-term consequences of pacification. It is nevertheless true that in a number of cases groups have been pacified with a clear foreknowledge on the part of those directly engaged that post-pacification plans (often including the relocation of the group without adequate medical or food assistance) would be bound to lead to catastrophe for the group concerned, specifically entailing the death of a large number of its people and the demoralization and impoverishment of the rest. A flagrant example of this sort is the pacification of the Western Kayapo groups in 1958 under the leadership of the noted Francisco (Chico) Meireles (Moreira Neto 19 ). The members of such pacification teams must bear their share of the responsibility for such disgraceful inci-

dents, which are among the blackest pages in the history of the Brazilian Indian.

Even at its best, pacification and the establishment of permanent contact invariably brings in its train a series of traumatic shocks. The whole group may be moved and relocated at a new "post" of the National Foundation for Assistance to the Indian (FUNAI), or, before its dissolution in 1967, the Indian Protection Service (SPI). In the later years of the Indian Protection Service, relocation was frequently managed in so criminally negligent a manner that it resulted in the swift death of up to 50% of the group involved through disease and malnutrition. At best, a post is founded near or at the site already occupied by the group. In either case, the group loses its political autonomy and passes under the tutelage of the Indian service, represented by the encarregado (Indian agent) of the post. It also loses all, or the greater part, of its traditional territory, with the result that hunting, gathering, and fishing activities may be considerably curtailed. Perhaps most insidious and far-reaching in its effects is the inception of dependence on Brazilian society for a variety of manufactured goods, ranging from firearms and ammunition to beads, sunglasses, and used razor blades. To this

It should be added the usual procession of epidemics, which are apt to be particularly severe and worsened by food shortages if the tribe has been relocated at a newly founded post.

The establishment of economic dependence on the Brazilians for manufactured goods is the decisive step that leads the Indian to commit himself to participation in a more-or-less stable "inter-ethnic system" (to follow the terminology and analysis of Cardoso de Oliveira: 1972:79 ). The type and degree of economic integration Indians are able to achieve within such a system (which normally forms a part of one of Brazil's various regional economic systems) is a function of several factors. Most obviously and directly, it depends upon the balance between the dependence of the local Brazilians upon <sup>the Indians</sup> ~~them~~ (for the labor and raw materials <sup>they</sup> ~~they~~ can offer), as against <sup>their</sup> ~~his~~ degree of dependence upon them (for manufactured goods). A few tribes have been able to arrive at a relatively favorable "balance of trade" in their relations with the Post and their Brazilian neighbors, but such cases are exceptions. The rule is that the Indian is exploited, in economic terms, at or below the level of the poorest local Brazilian workers. <sup>9</sup> Another important variable is the form of social organization of the two societies in confrontation--the Indian and the regional Brazilian, including the Indian post itself. If the Brazilians with whom the Indians are directly in contact are agricultural small-holders with little effective centralized organization, a relatively well organized Indian tribe may be able to hold its own or even assume a patron-like role toward the surrounding Brazilian set-

tlers. This is the case, for example, of the Kraho of Maranhao (Melatti 1967). <sup>the local representatives of</sup> If Brazilian society, <sup>on the other hand, are</sup> ~~the~~ large and powerful landholders, ranchers or mining interests, able to command political influence in the state and national capitals and disposing of sizeable organizations, ~~the~~ the prospects for the indigenous community are grim: social and political subordination, economic pauperization and further losses of land and population. ¶ If the tribe or village in question is located well in advance of the Brazilian frontier in a region not heavily frequented by rubber or nut gatherers, prospectors, skin hunters, etc., the Indian <sup>Foundation</sup> ~~post~~ post itself, with its encarregado and his family, perhaps a few other Brazilian workers or a missionary, and its landing strip or river landing, may fulfill the functional role of "Brazilian society" in the inter-ethnic system. On all posts, isolated or not, a regular part of the encarregado's job is to ~~stimulate~~ stimulate the Indians to produce some marketable commodity (either a gathered wild ~~product~~ product or an agricultural crop) to "exchange" for trade goods and to help defray the administrative costs of the post and the national bureaucracy of FUNAI. One of the drawbacks of this system is that it is not tied to any direct or visible quid pro quo? The total ~~production~~ production ~~of the~~ of the post is appropriated as a matter of administrative prerogative by FUNAI: what fraction of it is actually returned to the post in the form of manufactured goods, and how much is retained for other official or unofficial uses of the bureaucracy and its members is entirely up to the bureaucracy itself. The

rationale, such as it is, for this policy will be discussed below. What matters for the moment is that the Indians on the post, whether they receive windfalls of "presents" for which they have not worked or whether the products of their labor are expropriated for the benefit of other tribes or bureaucrats of whom they have no knowledge, are utterly dependent, in their economic relationships with the post, on decisions by the encarregado (post administrator) and his superiors. These decisions, moreover, may be based on considerations that have nothing to do with their own needs or the facts of their own situations, and therefore seem arbitrary and irrational to them.

The Indians' economic relations with Brazilians, whether post personnel or private entrepreneurs, are conditioned by their lack of ownership as individuals of either the means of production (e.g., land) or the products of their labor. Indian land is tribally owned and controlled, which means, in practice, controlled by FUNAI. The individual cannot ordinarily trade the produce of the land he or she has been farming, or the nuts or skins he or she may have gathered or hunted, as "his" or "her" private property. What is produced in the community is ordinarily collectively marketed by the encarregado and FUNAI. The result is that the only opportunity the Indian has to engage in economic transactions with Brazilians, the returns from which are not appropriated by the encarregado, is to hire out as a laborer. For this reason, opportunities to work as laborers on Brazilian farms, nut and rubber gathering operations or road-building projects are generally popular among Indians. For the same reason, they tend to be strongly

disapproved by FUNAI and the encarregados of many posts, since such individualistic activity tends to undermine the collective "production" of the post controlled by the encarregado.

From what has been said, it is obvious that the political structure of the post itself, the way in which the Indian community is actually organized and administered by the encarregado, ~~local~~ is a decisive factor in determining the nature of the integration of the Indians, as individuals and as communities, <sup>ies, into the local</sup> ~~into~~ inter-ethnic systems. There are several ways of organizing posts. In some cases, the encarregado lives directly in the Indian village and administers it through Indian middlemen (whom he usually appoints as "chiefs", either creating the institution of "chieftaincy" for the purpose or supplanting the leaders of the indigenous political system). This type of "indirect rule" is often preceded, in newly contacted tribes, by the cooptation of indigenous chiefs by making them the intermediaries through whom all largesse from FUNAI and occasional visitors is channelled ~~through~~ and distributed. In return, the Indian leader is expected to see to it that the encarregado's directives, including his projects for communal "production", are carried out. ~~This system is perpetuated in pure form in the regime of FUNAI appointed chiefs.~~ There are a number of posts, however, in which the encarregado does not reside in the village itself (he may live in a separate compound a few kilometers away or in the nearest town) and exercises much less direct control over affairs in the village, even though he may be represented by an appointed "chief" in the village itself. ~~This arrangement clearly has its advantages for Indian communities that are well-organized and not in need of heavy medical assistance or protection from the depredations of local squatters~~



Even when groups continue under their own indigenous leadership, it is made plain to both leaders and community at large that the group is essentially under the political authority and tutelage of the encarregado. The sanctions of the encarregado's authority are the threat of cutting off the trickle of "mercadoria" (manufactured goods) on which the community largely depends, and ultimately the threat of force. It is ordinary policy to take the leaders of newly pacified groups on tours to large Brazilian cities, and on such visits to treat them to demonstrations of infantry weapons (machine-guns, automatic rifles, etc.) and to describe, or even in a few cases demonstrate, aerial tactics such as strafing, bombing, and rocket attacks. The aim is to impress the natives with an awareness of the overwhelming power that can be brought against them if they step out of line.

The threat of a different kind of force hangs over many indigenous communities: the danger of raids and depredations by Brazilians who either feel threatened by the Indians or more simply stand to gain by bringing about their removal from their land by fair means or foul. Dangers from this quarter can obviously be an even more potent

if indirect, sanction of the encarregado's power and authority as the protector of the community. All in all, the indigenous communities of Brazil (at least those under the administration and protection of FUNAI) are, as Cardoso de Oliveira has put it, like "occupied countries in the strict sense of the word": deprived of political autonomy even in their own domestic affairs, with leaders appointed by the local representatives of the "occupying" power, and kept in <sup>their</sup> place as "protectorates" by the threat of force and the manipulation of the chief source of <sup>the</sup> manufactured goods upon which they have come to depend (Cardoso 1972:91-95).

In return for their submission to this situation--in which they have, in any case, little choice--the Indians receive, at best, protection against attacks and depredations by local Brazilians; a chance to acquire some of the "advantages of civilization" in the form of manufactured goods and medical assistance from the encarregado, a missionary, or both; and a chance to learn Portuguese and enough of the ways of the local Brazilian labor market and economy to qualify as laborers and to <sup>acquire</sup> ~~buy~~ goods with their money--<sup>or by barter</sup> in short, to survive and make their way <sup>at the lowest level of</sup> ~~in~~ Brazilian society.

There are already a number of tribes in Brazil that have reached this level of adjustment, notably in the southern part of the country. <sup>of Mato Grosso</sup> The Terena<sub>^</sub> are perhaps the best example.

Even at this stage, however, the problems of the Indians, as Indians, are far from over. Although they have become able to enter the Brazilian economy, they can only do so in the vulnerable role of laborers at the lowest levels of the working force. As

such, they enter into competition with the lowest and most insecure strata of the Brazilian working class, for whom there are already, in most regions, not enough jobs to go around. The Indian and the Brazilian lumpen-proletarian may no longer find themselves hunting each other down in the jungle in the roles of hostile "unpacified" tribesman and wild rubber-gatherer, but they are still in fierce competition for the crumbs at the bottom of the economic system. It is a competition in which the Indian often, though not always, finds himself at a disadvantage (in certain cases, usually involving agricultural jobs or the gathering of wild products, Indians may actually come to be preferred to Brazilian laborers: this is the case with the Terena, for example: Cardoso 1972:27-53). Either way, the competitive relationship between Indian and lumpen Brazilian promotes friction between the two groups. ¶ The resentment of the poorer elements of the Brazilian population against the Indian is greatly exacerbated by any evidence of special government concern for, or assistance to, the Indian. Why, the Brazilian subsistence farmer or ranch hand plausibly asks, should the government be so concerned with a bunch of semi-savages when they are already as well or better off than himself, while <sup>it</sup> ~~pay~~ ~~no~~ attention at all to his problems and needs? It should be emphasized that in many areas of the interior, the poorest strata of the regional Brazilian population are indeed no better or even worse off, economically and in terms of social and political subordination, than even the less acculturated Indian communities. Under the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that lower-class Brazilians in the general vicinity of

Indian villages tend to feel intense racial prejudice against the Indians and to regard them as sub-human beings--all of which, of course, both fortifies and exacerbates their sense of injustice that they themselves are no better off ~~than the Indians.~~  
~~than the Indians.~~ than the Indians.

The <sup>full assimilation</sup> ~~of the Indians~~ of the Indians into Brazilian society must take place, if it is to take place at all, at the lowest social and economic strata of the Brazilian system, given the nature of Brazilian society as presently constituted. <sup>For the reasons I have just put forward, however,</sup> ~~the very nature of the socio-economic system prevailing in the regions of Brazil where most of the Indian population is ~~located~~ located~~ stands <sup>in</sup> ~~in~~ massive contradiction to the <sup>assimilation or even the</sup> "integration" of the Indian. ~~for the reasons I have described.~~ As Cardoso de Oliveira and his associates have demonstrated in an exemplary series of studies, it is this contradiction that determines the situation of the <sup>native peoples</sup> ~~Indians~~ in Brazilian society, regardless of <sup>their</sup> ~~the~~ level of "acculturation", from the moment of "pacification" to the point at which they <sup>are</sup> ~~are~~ culturally and linguistically indistinguishable from the local Brazilian population. In the light of this ~~fact~~ ~~fact~~, Cardoso has rejected the concept of "acculturation" as an <sup>in,</sup> ~~an~~ adequate basis for understanding the situation of the Indian in Brazil and has proposed an alternate concept, that of "inter-ethnic friction", based on the notion of contradiction as the essential nature of the relationship between the indigenous and the national societies. In Cardoso's words,

NOTE: INDENT spaces

It should be stressed that it is not simply a question of a relationship between mutually contrary entities, which are merely different or exotic in relation to each other, but contradictory systems, that is, systems each of whose existence

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tends to negate that of the other. This is why we have adopted the term inter-ethnic friction (in place of the prevailing concept of "acculturation") to emphasize the fundamental property of the contact situation. The expansion of Brazilian society into the territories of the tribes, resulting in the destruction of the tribal societies (more specifically, in phenomena such as depopulation and the disorganization and dispersion of tribal communities, etc.) affords the prime example of this essentially contradictory relationship. On the other hand, the same relationship is represented by the predicament of those elements of the national society (usually comprising isolated individuals) that are exposed, in most instances against their will, to contact with hostile tribes, and are obliged to enter into conflict with them in order to survive. This is the case, for example, of the wild rubber gatherers, caught between the Indians and the patron. It can thus be seen that in each of the opposed societies there exist dynamics generated by their mutual contradictions. (Cardoso 1963:42-43).

To sum up, the predicament of the Indian in Brazil is the result of a fundamental contradiction imposed by the nature and dynamics of the expanding national society. This contradiction has its social, political, and economic aspects. Politically, the overriding interest of Brazilian society in the Indians is to dominate and control them in such a way that they present as little <sup>an</sup> obstacle to <sup>its own</sup> territorial expansion and economic development ~~as possible~~ as possible. The achievement of this purpose, as much as the relatively secondary goal (I speak here of historical realities rather than official rhetoric), has led the Brazilian government to deprive the indigenous societies of <sup>their internal as well as external</sup> political autonomy, ~~and to deny them the right to participate in the national society and polity as~~ <sup>at the same time of the right</sup> ~~legally responsible~~ citizens or voters. Economically, the Indians remain caught between their new-found economic dependence on the national society for a variety of goods and services, <sup>on the one hand,</sup> and the structure of <sup>the</sup> Brazilian economy and society, <sup>on the other. The latter</sup> ~~imposes~~ imposes upon them, as a condition of satisfying their new needs,

of protecting the Indians against the encroachments of "civilization"

a set of relationships that perpetuate the tension and contradiction between themselves and their Brazilian neighbors and competitors. It is this basic contradiction that continually regenerates, in the "inter-ethnic system" of which they form a part, the multiform pressures of social and cultural friction (of which the ~~theft~~ land <sup>theft and</sup> ~~land~~ killing ~~are~~ are only the most extreme forms). <sup>these pressures,</sup> Against ~~the~~ <sup>only</sup> the best organized, most favorably situated, or most effectively protected native societies ~~can~~ <sup>have been able</sup> ~~long~~ <sup>for long.</sup> maintain themselves. The same primary contradiction forces the indigenous communities into continued dependence on the National Indian Foundation, which not only undermines their internal political and social autonomy but exacerbates the very tensions with the local Brazilians that gave rise to the need for government protection in the first place.

Even the existence of a post at or near the Indian village is no firm guarantee of protection against the forcible or legal expropriation of tribal lands and other forms of depredation. Relatively few native communities have clearly demarcated, legally established territorial boundaries. There are 140 posts currently maintained by the National Indian Foundation, but only ten "reserves" and four "indigenous parks" (large reservations for more than one tribe or <sup>indigenous</sup> ~~tribe~~ community). Only the latter two categories possess boundaries with clear legal status. The posts not on reserves are more or less vulnerable to extra-legal squatters or to land speculators able to manipulate the state land regulations. Even the reserves and parks are far from secure, as the blatant seizure of one-fifth of the territory of the nation's



(the National Park of the Xingu)

largest and most exemplary indigenous park, by a powerful conspiracy of government figures and private interests in 1971 made abundantly clear. A reserve or indigenous park in Brazil is only as secure as the vigilance, energy, good faith and political influence of the officials charged with its administration and maintenance. <sup>make it, or</sup> ~~for~~ for some purposes (protection against squatters and itinerant Brazilian tappers and gatherers) the bellicosity and organization of the Indians themselves. There is no doubt, however, that the demarcation and legal establishment of boundaries (i.e. the creation of reserves) is an essential step in the defence of tribal territories against ~~pressures~~ pressures from Brazilian squatters, speculators, or large private interests. That such a minuscule number of reserves has been established in the sixty-odd years that <sup>a national Indian service has existed</sup> ~~the government has been in power~~ ~~is~~ is a fairly accurate measure of the effectiveness of the latter in protecting the interests of the Indians. The relatively uncertain benefits of protection by FUNAI obviously do not even begin to apply to those indigenous communities without posts, which lack any government protection. The number of such groups is uncertain: perhaps forty, not counting uncontacted tribes?

The physical extermination of Indian communities by massacre, starvation or disease, which has (understandably, in the light of the large number of groups--87 in this century--that have actually become extinct) monopolized the attention of the international press, is thus in a sense only the most <sup>extreme</sup> ~~manifestation~~ <sup>pattern of</sup> ~~manifestation~~ <sup>and conflict of interests</sup> of a far more general and pervasive <sup>contradiction</sup> ~~contradiction~~ between the



indigenous and national societies. This pattern, which Cardoso de Oliveira has summed up in his term "inter-ethnic friction," affects every indigenous community in Brazil, including those under no threat of extinction or population loss from massacre, disease or starvation and even the relatively prosperous tribes whose populations are on the increase.

It is for these reasons that the charges of "genocide", as I said at the beginning of this paper, only mystify the real nature of the problem for its cause. The real causes of the attrition of the physical population, culture, and social organization of the native tribes lie, not in a conscious and deliberate government policy, but in the fundamental social and economic structure of the interior and frontier areas of the country. The failure of the successive Brazilian regimes to protect the Indians against the effects of these fundamental structural factors has been the result of a number of related causes: failure to analyze the social and economic dimensions of the situation of contact between native peoples and Brazilians and to draw the correct conclusions for the formulation of policy; failure to protect both the Indian and the poor rural and frontier Brazilian from exploitation by powerful private interests; control of the relevant parts of the national and state governments by representatives of private landed and extractive interests interested in removing lands from the Indians or Indians from their lands, whichever were cheaper in any given situation; considerable corruption at all levels of the Indian Service itself; the racist and chauvinist ideology of many (but by no means all) bureaucrats and politicians, and dominant today,

which holds that the only valid goal of government policy toward the Indians should be their total "assimilation" into Brazilian society and culture; and administrative neglect and inefficiency stemming from sheer unwillingness to devote the necessary energy and resources to a problem which seemed, in the national perspective, to be of minor importance and no political significance.

To understand how these and other factors, have combined to shape the situation of the present day, let us review the history of Brazil's relations with its indigenous inhabitants from the time of the founding of the Indian Protection Service in 1910.

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

11. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ <sup>Brazilian</sup> The development of Indian policy and ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ <sup>relations</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ <sup>with the</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ <sup>indigenous</sup> tribes in the Twentieth Century.

12. The rubber boom atrocities and the foundation of the Indian Protection Service in 1910. London.

The process of social, cultural and physical attrition of the indigenous population of Brazil has been continuous since the arrival of the first Europeans, but until the Twentieth Century large areas in the interior of the country and on the northern and western frontiers remained virtually unpenetrated and even unexplored. In these areas many indigenous groups survived under more or less aboriginal conditions. This situation was shattered by the wild rubber boom of the first decade of the century. The burgeoning automobile industry <sup>in Europe and North America</sup> had created an enormous demand for rubber, which at that time had been neither successfully domesticated nor artificially synthesized. The only source were the wild rubber trees of the Amazonian jungles, most of them in Brazil. Brazilian and foreign capital rushed into the area, and the forests were soon filled with wild rubber tappers. The demand for labor was so intense that many Indian communities were raided for workers, who were forced to work as slaves under armed guard. Conditions were appalling: men, women and children were worked until they dropped, <sup>and</sup> casually tortured, raped, and murdered on a wholesale basis. Other Indian villages were decimated or wiped out by bands of rubber tappers fearful of attacks by the inhabitants, which were often enough provoked by the brutal treatment of villagers by itinerant tappers.

The exposure of these appalling conditions by the Englishman,

Roger Casement, in 1910 created an international scandal, which had strong repercussions in Brazil. The major result of the uproar was the founding of the Service for the Protection of the Indians under the leadership of Col. (later Marshall) Rondon, in ~~1910~~ *the same year.*

Rondon was a determined and courageous idealist. He articulated and put into practice a policy toward the Indians so enlightened and humane that it became the model for other nations and international bodies.

The basic principle of Rondon's policy was respect for the social and cultural integrity of the tribes. He held that recognition of the right of indigenous peoples to their traditional beliefs and way of life, including their ancestral lands, must be the first principle of Brazilian policy toward them. It was the obligation of the Brazilian nation, in Rondon's view, to defend the Indians against the destructive effects of contact with the expanding frontier of the national society, within ~~the~~ *their* traditional territories<sup>ies</sup>. The function of the Indian Protection Service should be to guarantee and safeguard these rights, while assisting the Indians to gain access to such benefits of Brazilian technology and civilization as they themselves desired. It is perhaps worth noting that Rondon was not a man of the left. A Comteian Positivist, he was a loyal army man and a conservative opponent of the republic.

Rondon was able to bring with him into the S.P.I. (Indian Protection Service) a cadre of dedicated men (for the most part army officers and Positivists like himself) who made up in intel-

ligence, energy and dedication what they often lacked in ethnographic sophistication or administrative expertise. <sup>of</sup> The rampant atrocities of the rubber boom era were, if not completely brought to an end, at least reduced to a trickle. The young Indian Protection Service played a part in this, but a relatively minor one. The major cause ~~was~~ <sup>of</sup> the cessation of the depredations of the rubber gatherers and their bosses was the collapse of the market for wild rubber, brought about by the success of the British in domesticating rubber trees for large-scale production in Malaya (followed closely by the French in Indo-China). The Service did, however, achieve some important success in its own right in its earlier years, in spite of its small budget and lack of political and administrative backing. It obtained the proclamation of reservations to protect the land of a few ~~tribes~~ endangered tribes, and created a network of posts, usually located at a discrete distance from the Indian villages they were intended to protect, throughout the interior. These posts ~~were~~ <sup>often</sup> able to play a genuinely protective and supportive role, ~~and~~

There were, of course, exceptions from the outset, due largely to the fact that the S.P.I. never disposed of a budget sufficient to hire <sup>enough capable and reliable personnel</sup> ~~enough capable and reliable personnel~~ to man its posts. It was obliged, from its formation in 1910 until its dissolution in 1967, to recruit its lowest-level functionaries, the encarregados de posto, for the most part from among the local inhabitants of the regions <sup>in which the</sup>

posts in question were located.

These men often brought to their jobs attitudes and ideas about "Indian policy" far different from those of Rondon and his colleagues, with the result that the practice of the Service was often significantly different from its theory at the level that

*most:*  
counted <sup>A</sup> that of the Indian post and the tribal community itself.

There was, however, a more profound reason for the divergence of the effects of the most enlightened S.P.I. policies from the ideals and hopes of those who formulated them. This lay in the shortcomings of the Comteian evolutionary ideology that formed the basis of Rondon's program, and in the failure of Rondon and his group to ~~bring~~ <sup>bring</sup> their ideological assumptions ~~into line~~ <sup>into line</sup> with the realities of the position of the Indian in Brazilian society. Cardoso de Oliveira has stated this point admirably:

Let us recall that the creation of the Indian Protection Service in 1910 was intended as the institutionalization of an implicit recognition that the absorption of the tribal societies into the national society was inevitable. Never at any moment in its history did the S.P.I. dare to espouse policies or ideas which presupposed that the indigenous groups might have a future outside the national political system. The best of many positive positions it assumed in its struggle to promote the well-being of the aboriginal societies, even though accompanied by a rather lyrical regard for their cultures and traditions, never reached the point of (advocating) their recognition as politically autonomous groups.

Our intention, it goes without saying, is not to belittle the positive role played by the S.P.I. as inspired by Rondon's ideology. Our objective is merely to show that, regardless of how progressive its policies and actions may have been, they were, so to speak, incomplete, insufficient; and this because they lacked the force and the inspiration to "radicalize" the problem. Although they recognized that the indigenous societies were undergoing a process of change, the question change to what was never dealt with beyond vague theoretical formulations to the effect that, with effective technical assistance and medical aid, the tribes would eventually be able to attain the benefits of civilization. In this was implicit the assumption that the tribes would sooner or later become incorporated into Brazilian society, if only their natural evolutionary process were allowed to continue undisturbed. But it never occurred to these idealistic Brazilian Indianists that the practical implication of this policy was the virtually total suppression of the self-determination of these societies. The lack of understanding of this aspect of the problem by the higher authorities who determined Indian policy, on the one hand, and the contradictions inherent in the way their policies were put into practice, on the other, prevented any recognition of the magnitude of the alienation of the protected tribal groups.

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Confronted with this situation, the Indian Protection Service--in order to remain consistent with the ideology it had created--had no choice but to opt for a policy of protection, unavoidably compromised with an orientation of the "patronage" type, with overtones of philanthropy. The "redemption of the savages" through faith was replaced by the belief in their "evolution" through technology. (1972:61-63)

B. The transformation of Brazilian Indian policy in the middle decades of the century: the concepts of the Indian post as revenue-producing enterprise and of "assimilation" through labor replace the policies of Rondon.

At best, the Rondonian program was a noble ideal, which could only be imperfectly approached by dedicated men willing to struggle against heavy odds for objectives which they clearly understood and believed in. As Rondon and his colleagues grew old, however, they were increasingly replaced by time-serving bureaucrats or (which was in many ways worse from the Indian point of view) men committed to a sharply different set of ideals. The Indian Protection Service, while it continued (as its successor, FUNAI, continues today) to proclaim that it was guided and inspired by the principles of Rondon, increasingly abandoned those ideals in practice and reoriented its major policies toward goals antithetical to everything Rondon had stood for. Cardoso de Oliveira has well described this transformation:

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The progressive disappearance of the original functionaries, whose lack of technical preparation for their jobs was largely compensated for by their Rondonian ideology...made way for a new generation of bureaucrats virtually unqualified for the tasks of assistance and protection. These men lacked any [theoretical or ideological] perspective to orient their [administrative] conduct other than the bureaucratic mentality of the common run of civil servants, with no redeeming qualities that would permit them to be identified as idigenistas...It is on the whole a safe generalization that this bureaucratic mentality is typical of the lower- and middle-level functionaries of the Indian Service, while the top administrators, those who believe themselves to be imposing a more "modern" policy, have taken on a set of attitudes virtually indistinguishable from those of private entrepreneurs--the



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traditional exploiters of the Indian... [These] directors of the S.P.I.... completely divorced from the doctrines of Rondon... established an orientation [in the S.P.I.] totally committed to the transformation of the indigenous posts... into veritable business enterprises, dedicated to production and profits. The fundamental assumption of this orientation is that the Indians can only "become civilized" through labor: not work as defined in their own cultures, but labor of a type introduced and taught them by the "civilizado".

There would seem on the face of it to be much to be said for such a policy, e.g. the inculcation of modern work habits and more productive technologies into the native societies. These ideals are put into practice, however, without the slightest ethnological consideration and with the grossest empiricism, so that their potential value [is not realized]. What the policy generally means in practice is the transplantation of local forms of labor to the post, and the transformation of the encarregados into "patrons", ranchers or employers of wild rubber-gathers depending on the area. If this sort of thing was always tolerated in the S.P.I., as an unavoidable by-product of the lack of proper training of its lower-level functionaries, it was now instituted as the guiding principle of official Indian policy. The second part of the policy, however, is completely unacceptable: this is the desire of these entrepreneurial-minded administrators that the costs of assistance and protection shall be paid by the victims of Brazilian society themselves... This payment is always managed in such a way that the workers themselves, those who produce the profit, cannot benefit directly from it, once it is incorporated into the "indigenous revenue" (as the fund derived from production on the various posts destined for application to the needs of any post or ~~part~~ of the Service is called). That is to say, the product of the labor of a Kaingang of Rio Grande do Sul or of ~~the~~ Munduruku of Amazonas can be used--and generally is--to defray the expenses of pacification teams or the central bureaucracy. What might be hoped for, that the Indian might be allowed to convert the production of his own labor into goods for his own consumption, never happens... (1972:75)

As Cardoso de Oliveira points out in another essay, the attempt to make the government's services to the Indians self-financing is ~~incompatible~~ incompatible with the original goals of those services (assistance to the Indians in their efforts to adjust to the impact of the Brazilian economy and society). Its result is simply

...a refined form of internal colonialism: the levying of indirect taxes... by the transformation of the Indians' labor and economic patrimony into the means of financing his protection and assistance by the government... On the other hand,

since the revenue thus collected is destined for the indigenous population as a whole, to be shared out--in theory-- among all the groups according to the specific needs of each, it represents an unfair penalty against precisely those tribal groups or territories that succeed in achieving higher rates of production...The consequences of this policy are, as might have been expected, the most negative possible...

(Another) result of the institution of the "indigenous revenue" is that (the Indian Service) posts...are, or are becoming organized as business enterprises. In this form of organization, the Indians are not the masters of their own production, which is taken over and marketed by the post-- whose object is not necessarily the well-being of the particular community under its supervision...

The lack of participation by the Indians in...decisions concerning the organization of their economy and the course of their development...conforms to the type of patron--employee <sup>relationship</sup> which obtains in general between encarregados do posto and Indians. This type of relationship, which prevails in much of rural Brazilian society, functions as the framework of the economy of the post in a way no different in any important sense from the local ranches or other regional enterprises (1972:136-137).

It should not be omitted in any discussion of the "indigenous revenue" and the way production was organized and disposed of at the level of the individual posts that the opportunities for corruption the system afforded to the encarregado and his immediate superiors in the regional inspectorate headquarters, not to mention the bureaucrats of the national office, were great and often exploited to the hilt. When I carried out anthropological research among the Gorotire of southern Para State in 1962-3, I found they had been organized to produce Brazil nuts. The post had produced over 4,000 crates a year for the two years before I arrived and was in the process of gathering a crop of the same size when I arrived. In spite of repeated promises by the encarregado, the <sup>Gorotire</sup> ~~encarregado~~ never received any payment for their past two years' production. I was present when the regional inspector finally visited the post and explained to the assembled villagers

that there would be no payment because "a bad man" had stolen the entire crop for both years from the warehouse, so that the S.P.I. had never had a chance to sell it on the market! I made a full report of the situation to the then chief of the Indian Service, one Col. Moacyr, only to hear, a few months later, that he had been fired and charged with massive corruption, including rake-offs from the indigenous revenue of the second inspectorate, in which Gorotire was located!

Cardoso de Oliveira's point about the lack of "ethno-sociological consideration" with which the indigenous revenue policy is applied requires further explication. The concept of economic production for surplus or profit, and especially as a primary focus of community organization and effort, is profoundly alien to most of the tribal peoples of Brazil. One reason for this is that economic activity in traditional tribal society is carried out almost exclusively by nuclear or extended family units, which constitute the lowest level of communal organization. The higher levels of social structure (that is, the institutions that unite the community as a whole and which serve as the major focus of collective values and communal life per se) are typically conceived ad diametrically opposed, along the dimension of public values versus private interests, to the level of individual interests represented by the domestic family households which provide the framework of the relations of economic production, distribution, and consumption. The introduction of cash-crop production on a communal scale as the basis of the organization of the post community thus often represents a profound contradiction from the standpoint of the traditional values and social organization of the indigenous community. The imposition of such a policy, with no regard for the wishes of the

~~Indians themselves or~~ Indians themselves or  
~~the disruption of the indi-~~

~~genous value system it in most cases entails,~~ the disruption of the indi-  
genous value system it in most cases entails, is a clear viola-  
tion of the guiding principle of Rondon's approach, namely re-  
spect for the integrity of the native societies, and specifically  
for their cultur<sup>al</sup> beliefs and values~~.~~. Rondon, more-  
over, always insisted that the protection and assistance of the  
Indians was the obligation of Brazilian society: the idea of  
imposing the task of paying for the protection upon the Indians  
themselves could not be more foreign to his philosophy and poli-  
cies.

The indigenous revenue policy derive<sup>s</sup> its justification  
from the assimilationist ideology of the ~~was~~ bureaucrats who took  
over the leadership of the Indian Protection Service from Rondon  
and his group<sup>^</sup> *and who continue to dominate the outlook of the National Indian Foundation.*  
In terms of this outlook--as Cardoso de Oliveira  
observes in a passage already quoted--engagement in productive la-  
bor (as defined by Brazilian society) <sup>is</sup> held to be the most  
effective method by which the Indians <sup>can</sup> be transformed into  
useful members of civilized society, or "assimilated". This pol-  
icy was perhaps most forcefully and succinctly stated by Gen.  
Frederico Rondon (no relation to Marshal Candido Mariano da Sil-  
va Rondon, the founder of the Indian Protection Service) in a  
manifesto issued in 1934, Pelo Brasil Central, ~~which proclaims~~  
the "manifest destiny" of Brazilian society to "take possession"  
of the vast Amazonian interior and, in the process, absorb the in-  
digenous inhabitants. ~~Perhaps~~ Perhaps sensing that the time  
of his idea has finally arrived, ~~Gen. Rondon~~ Gen. Rondon reissued

a revised and updated version of his manifesto in 1969. I quote from Davis's translation of the following passage:

The problem of the Indian must be solved through the assimilation of aboriginal populations. The methods of protection and assistance to the Indians which consist in organizing exclusively indigenous villages or colonial nuclei, segregating them from contact with more advanced national elements, contributes to the delay of the incorporation of the Indian into Brazilian nationality.

The assimilation of the Indian will spontaneously take place through the mixing of backwoodsmen with the accessible tribes, within colonial nuclei that progressively replace the Indian villages and the backward settlements of the interior. (This assimilation) has attracted docile Indians to the civilized nuclei, already permitting the settlement of rural families close to the traditional Indian village, which by their localization, ~~have lent themselves to a progressive transformation~~ have lent themselves to a progressive transformation (Rondon 1969:95, as quoted in Davis n.d.: 27-28).

C. The dying of the tribes and the realities of "assimilation": the twentieth-century record.

That Gen. Rondon could thus maintain unshaken his belief in "assimilation" as a solution to "the Indian problem" after three decades of disclosures of the appalling sufferings (including the wholesale physical extinction) of virtually every indigenous group that has been forced to accommodate itself to "assimilation" through "mixing with backwoodsmen", or the assimilation of its own tribal lands by "rural families (settled) close to the traditional village", etc., convincingly attests to the invincibility of his indifference both to facts and the fate of the aboriginal inhabitants of his country. <sup>Data concerning</sup> ~~the effects of the progressive~~ the effects of the progressive integration of the Indian into the Brazilian economy and society, in the absence of the careful and intelligent preparation the General and his co-ideologues in the Indian Protection Service have always considered superfluous, are abundant and appalling. The

best comprehensive summary and analysis of the situation for Brazil as a whole was done by the noted Brazilian anthropologist, Darcy Ribeiro, in 1957. His findings have been well summarized in a recent discussion by Davis (n.d., 32-37), upon which I draw for the following account.

Ribeiro marshalled the available data on changes in the situation of 230 groups between 1900 and 1957. He classified all of these groups according to their situation in 1900 into four broad categories.

- 1) isolated: tribes which still inhabit or depend for subsistence on lands in zones as yet unpenetrated by Brazilian society.
- 2) intermittent contact: tribes living in regions already being swallowed up by the advancing frontier of Brazilian society.
- 3) permanent contact: tribes maintaining direct and permanent communication with numerous representatives of Brazilian society of different types (i.e., not only Indian Service personnel).
- 4) integrated: tribes which have survived the pressures of the previous stages and exist as islands in the midst of the national society, without, however, having become assimilated into it.

He then reclassified them, using the same categories plus the additional category of extinct, on the basis of their circumstances in 1957 (Table I).

The results speak for themselves. Of all the groups that were "isolated" in 1900, almost as many of those that had ceased to be isolated by 1957 became extinct as survived their contact with Brazilian society (33 extinct, 33 remained isolated, 39 surviving in contact). The condition of the surviving groups, moreover, was horrifying. The three groups that had moved from "isolation"



in 1900 all the way to "integration" in 1957 had suffered the loss of between 75 and 95 percent of their populations (Kaingang, 1,200 in 1900: 87 in 1957; XoKleng, 800 in 1900: 189 in 1957; Umotina, 1,000 in 1900: 200 in 1957). As Davis remarks

Integration for these tribes has meant a constant series of conflicts with the agents of civilization, and a high rate of demographic decline as a result of epidemics, such as grippe, measles, whooping cough, etc. (n.d. 35).

Of those groups already in intermittent contact in 1900 (57 in all), 14, or virtually one-fourth, had ceased to exist by 1957. The 39 groups in permanent contact in 1900 had shrunk to 11 in 1957 (a loss of 70%). The 29 groups classified as integrated in 1900 had fallen to 17 (a 41% loss). The trend in these figures is significant: in Davis's words

...at all of its stages, and increasingly so in the later ones, the process of national integration simply means the physical and cultural extinction of a vast majority of Indian groups (n.d., 36).

As in the case of the previously isolated groups that still survived in 1957, the condition of the surviving groups in the other categories was hardly an advertisement for the advantages of integration, let alone "assimilation". Ribeiro's description of the condition of the groups in permanent contact deserves to be quoted:

Participation in the national economy had disorganized tribal subsistence systems. The old patterns of cooperation were broken; the Indian's dependence upon the agents of the national society was increasing at every turn. And, unlike the tribal Indian, the individual living in permanent contact was dependent upon the national society as an individual rather than as a group member. Freed from the ancient system of social control by the breakdown of tribal sanctions, the group was headed for disintegration. As this process unfolded, a movement for cultural reorganization began. The intensity of the movement varied by tribe and by the circumstances of contact. Some groups tried to flee contact and



to reorganize their lives on the old, already impracticable base. Others became involved in revitalization movements (Davis's translation, from Davis n.d. 36).

Of more direct significance for the officially advocated goal of "assimilation" is Ribeiro's characterization of the situation of the integrated groups:

At the turn of the century their economic role was that of a reserve labor force or of specialized producers of certain marketable commodities. They were an unwanted minority, restricted to segments of the lands they formerly held, or cast out of territory rightfully theirs, and forced to roam from place to place... Of all the survivors, these integrated tribes were enduring the most precarious conditions of life in the greatest dependency and misery. Between these contemporary Indians and their isolated ancestors-- in some cases members of the preceding generation--there was an enormous gap... These tribes had run the gamut of acculturation. But some imponderable obstacle blocked their assimilation; there was a final step they were unable to take (Davis's translation, from Davis n.d., 37).

As Davis, following Ribeiro, remarks apropos of the inability of even the most "integrated" groups to achieve "assimilation":

What is characteristic of these remaining Indian groups is not their assimilation into...civilization, but their desperate struggle to adapt to the parasitic and exploitative society in which they have been embedded. Contact, in other words, implies a process of forced accommodation with, rather than...assimilation into the structure of national society. Given their status as an unwanted minority, this is the only way in which the Indian can survive. (n.d. 37)

As a final, ironic footnote to the debacle of "assimilation" as a historical non-fact in the history of Brazilian-Indian relations, Ribeiro's data suggest a direct relationship between the degree of social and cultural closeness of Indian groups to their rural Brazilian neighbors and their tendency to become extinct. Breaking the tribes covered by his study into major linguistic families, Ribeiro found that virtually 50% of the groups of the <sup>u</sup>Tapian stock had disappeared. The rate of disappearance in the

other major linguistic families (Karib, Arawak, Gê) was far lower. Yet the Tupians are far closer in most respects to the rural Brazilian in cultivation patterns, food habits, settlement patterns and supernatural beliefs. Indeed, the culture of rural Brazil is permeated with Tupian influences, whereas tribes of other language groups have had relatively little ~~impact upon it.~~ <sup>impact upon it.</sup> Davis remarks,

It appears that such cultural similarities lead to both the intensification of communication between Indian groups and the members of national society, and the heightening of competition for available resources within the same territory. These processes in turn, speed up the disorganizing and destructive effects of integration. They do not, however, produce assimilation. To the contrary... (n.d., 38).

The statistics compiled by Darcy Ribeiro provide eloquent testimony <sup>on</sup> ~~the~~ the meaning of "assimilation" to the small indigenous communities <sup>that</sup> ~~find~~ <sup>i</sup> find themselves thrust into contact with the advancing juggernaut of Brazilian society. The dynamics of the process of expropriation, exploitation, and extinction, <sup>however,</sup> do not ~~have~~ <sup>statistics.</sup> have to be inferred from ~~statistics.~~ Most of them can be <sup>explicitly spelled out</sup> found <sup>in</sup> in the pages of the reports of government investigating commissions.

The first and most notable of these commissions was that established <sup>toward</sup> ~~at~~ the end of 1967 to investigate the charges of crimes against the Indians which had ~~amounted~~ amounted to the proportions of a major scandal in the European press. The commission's specific charge was to inquire into the performance of the Indian Protection Service and its possible connivance in the crimes. The commission, under the leadership of the federal Attorney General, Sr. Jader Figueiredo, compiled 5,115 pages of testimony and presented its report in March, 1968. Broadly speaking, it verified the

charges of mass murder, theft of land, enslavement, torture, and a host of lesser crimes, directly linked them with private economic interests allied with corrupt politicians, and pointed out in a dismal catalogue of specific instances how they had contributed to the decline and disappearance of scores of Indian tribes and communities. While blaming the government for rendering the Indian Protection Service ineffective by starving it of resources, the report focused upon the malfeasance of the bureaucrats and workers of the Indian Service itself. 134 Indian Protection Service personnel were named in the report as having committed crimes, ranging from corruption, theft, and bribery to committing or permitting murder, torture, rape, enslavement, kidnapping and prostitution. Evidence was provided for the indictment of a grand total of 714 past and present members of the Service. Figueiredo charged that personnel of the Indian Service had acquired \$160,000,000 in corrupt deals with private interests involving illegal acquisition of Indian lands, or the pacification and removal of Indian groups from their traditional lands so that they might then be occupied by the entrepreneurs. \$62,000,000 worth of land had been stolen from the Indian communities of Brazil in the previous decade alone (1958-1968), according to Figueiredo.

The Figueiredo report contained much evidence implicating private citizens (such as the owners of the economic enterprises directly involved in the corruption of the Indian Service officials and the theft of lands) and several extremely prominent political figures.

The names of all those implicated were, however, suppressed, with the exception of the 134 officials of the Indian Service

already mentioned. The report of the commission itself was declared a state secret and has been maintained under lock and key *since its presentation: it has never been made public available to the press or public. The Indian Service* ~~until this writing.~~ The officials named were either fired, demoted, or subjected to other forms of "administrative discipline" on the basis of civil service regulations, but none of them, and no other person implicated by the Figueiredo report, has ever been indicted and brought to trial in a criminal court. Various government figures have since made statements denying or watering down statements about the extent of the crimes--or the involvement of public figures in them--made by Figueiredo in his press conference and press release (the only data from the report ever made public). The government has no plans to bring indictments and clearly considers the whole question closed. By its handling of the report and the entire problem of crimes against the Indians, *present regime has thus* the ~~government~~ put itself in the position of an accomplice *to these* after the fact ~~in the face of the most heinous and horrifying series of~~ crimes. ~~of the Indian Protection Service~~ In this context, the dissolution of the Indian Protection Service, which followed the presentation of the Figueiredo report, looks less like ~~the expression~~ *the expression* of a genuine desire for reform than a cynical sop to domestic and foreign public opinion.

The scale and details of the crimes listed in the Figueiredo report (bombing native villages with sticks of dynamite, massacres by hired gunmen, gifts of poisoned food to whole communities, forced labor and enslavement, abandonment and exposure of the sick and of children, a variety of sadistic tortures many of which were intended at least partly as terroristic measures, not to mention thefts of land and resources) provide a sobering counterpoint to

the optimistic affirmations of "assimilation" by the leaders of the Indian Service and other government figures concerned with the Indian over the last forty years, ~~but one that is clearly more consistent with the historical disappearance or depletion of the indigenous populations.~~ An even more telling assessment of the general situation of the native tribes, <sup>however,</sup> was produced by a second commission, created by Presidential decree two months after the Figueiredo commission turned in its report (May 1968). <sup>It</sup> ~~was~~ consisted of an inter-ministerial committee (including representatives of the departments of Justice, Interior, Agriculture, Treasury, and the Federal police) headed by a prominent member of the Justice department. The committee was charged with arriving at an objective general assessment of the situation of the indigenous tribes and recommending appropriate government action to remedy major problems.

The inter-ministerial committee turned in its report in the latter part of 1969. The report, and the very existence of the commission itself, were, however, kept secret by the National Indian Foundation <sup>(formed in 1968 as</sup> the successor of the <sup>defunct</sup> Indian Protection Service) ~~without, however, making any effort to put into effect its more important recommendations",~~ as a Brazilian journalist put it after the report was finally leaked to the press in Oct. 1971.

The report <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ a systematic indictment of the effects of contact with the national ~~and~~ society, unaccompanied by adequate safeguards, upon the Indian. <sup>In contrast</sup> ~~with~~ to the easy rhetoric of assimilation characteristic of <sup>recent</sup> ~~the~~ government pronouncements <sup>concerning Brazil's</sup> ~~concerning~~ native peoples, the re-

port states:

Unfortunately, indigenous communities that have not been the victims of the greed of the civilizado are rare: almost all of them have been reduced in area by thousands of hectares: for example, the territory of Nonoai (Rio Grande do Sul) was reduced from 34,906 hectares to 14,910. [In the case of Teresa Cristina, in Mato Grosso, a Bororo community whose boundaries were originally fixed by Marshall Rondon himself] the crime against the indigenous patrimony was carried out with the connivance and protection of the state government. The Indians, after being thrown off their land, saw it divided up among innumerable small proprietors, armed with titles given or sold to them by the state government. (Correio da Manhã, 4/10/1971).

The report goes on to interpret these facts in the perspective of a historical analysis strikingly at odds with the official views of the National Indian Foundation:

"As a result of the outburst of economic development which has characterized the last several years, the frontier of civilization has been pushed steadily further into the interior... From this arises the readily observable and inevitable collision between the two cultural stages: on the one hand, the Indians, lacking in the capacity to adapt themselves in a relatively short time to the new culture and lacking the means to defend themselves against the legions of progress; on the other hand, the frontier of the national society, in both its official (public) and private aspects, oriented toward the effort to develop the remoter regions, to which the Indian appears only as one more obstacle to be overcome.

"The <sup>history of the</sup> conquest of the interior of our country is ~~one~~ <sup>one</sup> ~~history~~ of conflict between <sup>the</sup> Indians and representatives of the national society, and we have already had--as in the U.S.--cases of massacre of Indians--men, women and children--as happened among the Kayngang, in 1912, during the construction of the Northeastern railroad.

"Such things are also happening in our own time. On the Para-Maranhão frontier, the Gavião tribe is being steadily pushed northwards, fleeing the advance of the Cidas Co., which is devastating the forests of the Gurupi region which are rich in hardwoods, especially mahogany." (Correio da Manhã, 4/10/71)

The report cites chapter and verse to emphasize the crucial role played by local and state governments in the process of despoliation. The following examples are worth quoting as typical cases, which emphasize the seriousness of the problem of gradual



enchroachment by "lessees" and concessionaires of resources located on Indian land, as well as that of outright land theft.

Although the pertinent passages of the constitution are quite clear, many state governments have not respected them. In Rio Grande do Sul, the state government, in order to gain control of the indigenous territories of Nonoai and Votoro, although it knew full well that they were occupied by Indians, first declared them "public utilities", then "forest preserves", and finally "lands alienated to intruders and squatters".

In the indigenous area of Serrinha, in the township of Sarandi in the same state...there lived, until a few years ago, 230 Kaingang and Guarani Indians, brought together in an area administered by the State Institute of Agrarian Reform. To take over this territory, the state government mounted a two-phase campaign.

On March 10, 1948, it declared an area of 6,624 hectares adjoining the indigenous area of Serrinha a 'forest preserve', when in reality this land<sup>o</sup> belonged to the indigenous area itself. In the second phase (Jan. 6, 1958), already provided with the title of ownership of the area by this means, the government deceived the state Assembly and gained authorization to alienate a tract of state land situated in the township of Sarandi, a place called Serrinha'. This was a part of the land taken from the Indian community for the forest preserve. Thus was the area of 80,500 hectares reserved for the (original indigenous area) reduced to 34,123 hectares.

The land allotted to the Bororo community of Teresa Christina (Mato Grosso State), demarcated by Marshal Rondon himself, originally measured 65,923 hectares. The survey, made in 1896, was officially approved only in 1927, and in 1952, the state government began to sell titles to land in this tract. Today, Teresa Christina is reduced to less than 2/3 of its original area; the surviving Bororos are confined to a discontinuous strip of sterile scrub country.

One of the threats to the integrity of tribal lands is the possibility that they might be made to yield a profit of any kind, whether from mineral resources, as in the current case of Rondonia and the Rio Aripuana valley (where dwell the Cintas-Largas tribe, in almost 20 villages), or from the use of the land simply as pasture, or merely as <sup>an</sup> object<sup>o</sup> of speculation.

In 1899, responding to the requests of Rondon, the state of Mato Grosso ordered the surveying and demarcation of the lands of the Kadiweu, the descendants of the celebrated horseback warriors of the Mbaya-Guaikuru stock. The demarcation was approved August 7, 1903. In 1931, the federal government inspector, Dr. Antonio Mena Goncalves, considered this action of the state government as manifesting the highest statesmanship and ratified it as in full legal force.



In spite of all this, the state legislative assembly in 1958 rescinded the grant of lands to the Kadiweu and declared that these lands reverted to the domain of the state. The state governor, João Ponce de Arruda, refused to sanction this bill and characterized it as 'immoral and unconstitutional'. The Assembly rejected his veto and re-approved the original bill. It was passed as law No. 1,077 on April 10, 1958...

To cover up the land-grab and to prevent the fruits of the swindle from falling into other hands, the president of the legislative Assembly, Deputy Rachid Mamed, and his accomplices ordered only two copies of the official gazette to be printed with the new law, and did not utilize the state government press for this purpose. One of the copies was kept at the state archives to serve later as proof of the validity of the law, while the other was taken, that same afternoon, to Campo Grande, where the office that processes concessions of lands that have reverted to the state<sup>is located.</sup> in Campo Grande, they exhibited the text of the new law and caused over one hundred concessions of tracts of from two to five thousand hectares of Kadiweu land to be registered. Rachid Mamed, who signed the law, registered several concessions in his own name and others in the names of various of his relatives. The majority of deputies who had voted for the law did the same thing. (*Correio da Manhã*, 4/10/71)

The threat posed by the practice of leasing indigenous lands or resources to Brazilian concessionaires is in some parts of the country as serious as that of the outright theft of land. This problem is perhaps most acute in the southern states of Parana, Santa Caterina and Rio Grande do Sul, and the Terena territories in southern Mato Grosso. Timber is perhaps the most common commodity involved, but grazing rights, minerals, nuts and other wild products also are the objects of such practices. The most common form of the transaction is for the chief officer (encarregado) of the Indian post charged with "protecting" a certain community and its land to make a deal with a private operator in exchange for a cut of the profits. This practice has often, as would be expected, been associated with graft on the part of the encarregados. In a number of cases, however, ~~the~~ <sup>have</sup> encarregados entered into such arrangements as their only means of rais-

ing funds they felt were indispensable to the proper running of their posts, and which were seldom or never forthcoming from their pinched and erratic administrative budgets. In either case, the results have often been the same: the despoliation of indigenous resources (often irremediable, since such operations are often carried out in disregard of the conservation laws normally regulating extractive activities), and the acquisition by the concessionaire of a hold over the territory he is allowed to exploit that may gradually become transformed into outright possession. Such expropriations have been far from infrequent, and not one has ever been successfully challenged in court. In the words of the report

There is no example--not one--of the Indians successfully regaining possession of lands stolen from them through the judicial process, not one case in which [Brazilian] invaders of [Indian] lands were expelled [by legal means]. (Correio da Manhã 4/10/71)

At the root of most of the problems faced by Indian communities, the commission found a common factor: the lack of legally defined and enforceable boundaries around the native areas. In the commission's words, the <sup>failure to create more than a handful of</sup> ~~lack~~ of clearly demarcated reserves must be considered the greatest failure of the Indian Protection Service, and <sup>by</sup> the same <sup>taken as the highest</sup> ~~priority~~ <sup>for an Indian policy seriously</sup> ~~committed to the~~ <sup>ion of</sup> ameliorat<sup>A</sup> the situation. Pointing out that the <sup>boundaries</sup> ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> the majority of the indigenous areas ~~defined~~ <sup>only by</sup> decrees or titles signed by local magistrates, or simply by maps or other types of official documents lacking the force of law (which requires an official "act of demarcation"), the report remarks,

It is not possible that in the 58 years of the existence of the Indian Protection Service--created in 1910--that resources were never available for the legal demarcation of the areas under its responsibility.

In this period, as a result of dereliction of duty on the part of the official guardians of the Indian and the greed of private citizens, many indigenous communities had their areas reduced, while others, which for years have been under the administration of the Indian Service, lack, to this day-- ~~are~~ under the aegis of the National Indian Foundation--legally established boundaries. (Correio da Manhã, 4/10/71).

The negative connotations that ~~the~~ "reservations" have acquired in <sup>the</sup> North American <sup>context</sup> ~~must~~ must not be allowed to obscure the far more <sup>the</sup> negative consequences of <sup>of any legally demarcated</sup> ~~tribal territory~~ <sup>tribal territory</sup> at all. As the commission's report points out,

✓ The possession of a physical territory is the first requirement for the survival of an indigenous community, for it provides an indispensable measure of independence permitting the community to control the pace of acculturation at the same time that it provides a basis from which it can draw its own subsistence (Correio da Manhã, 4/10/71).

Citing the dismal record of Brazilian "justice" in regard to the indigenous land question, the commission recommended that the demarcation and protection of Indian lands be put on a legislative and Presidential footing through the passage of a special "institutional act" guaranteeing indigenous land rights, together with a complementary bill that would

...regulate in a definitive manner the situation as regards the lands of the indigenous posts and parks, disappropriating their present Brazilian occupants without indemnification (Jornal do Brasil, 4/10/71)

*future legislation.* The commission was not content <sup>merely</sup> with <sup>General</sup> ~~its~~ recommendations <sup>for</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>it proposed</sup>. It attached drafts of the ~~acts~~ <sup>acts</sup> as appendices to its report. These bold, forceful, and desperately needed measures have unfortunately met the fate feared by their authors when they warned that their findings and proposals

...will be worthless if they are simply left in the drawers and files of ~~the~~ administrative bureaus. (Jornal do Brasil 4/10/71)

The commission noted that the execrable performance of the Indian Protection Service was in large part the result of shortages of resources, both financial and human:

Handicapped by great personnel problems--both as regards quantity and quality--and lacking material and financial resources, the assistance that is actually rendered to the populations of the Indian post communities is completely contingent and unreliable. (Corveio da Manhã, 4/10/71) ~~¶~~

It properly insists, however, that the bureaucratic structure of the Indian Service and its successor are partly to blame, over and beyond such handicaps. The problem is, above all, the excessive centralization of administration which renders control over the widely scattered posts largely ineffective and at the same time stifles decision making and adaptability to local conditions at the lower levels. A further important point is made about the deleterious effects of the excessive paternalism of the bureaucracy in relation to the Indians themselves, especially the "integrated" groups, which concurs with the analysis of the ~~the~~ Indian post, put forward above:

The excessive paternalism of the protective agency in relation to its wards, particularly towards those groups that have already become integrated, leads the Indian to become totally dependent upon the white guardian, and breeds inertia, lack of initiative, and apathy and indifference on the part of the Indian toward the solution of personal and community problems. (Correio da Manhã, 4/10/71; italics mine--T.T.)

Finally, the commission ~~covered~~ <sup>registered</sup> a series of criticisms of the role of religious missions, which are all the more important in the light of ~~the~~ recent attempts by the National Indian Foundation to give the missions a more prominent administrative role within

the post system:

"Although religious missions have rendered valuable service to the indigenous cause, they have in many cases been responsible for the detribalization and marginality of indigenous groups.

"The attempt to impose new religious beliefs, and at the same time the violent effort to extirpate old taboos, creates in the Indians a disbelief in themselves, through the loss of their ancient cultural values. They destroy the confidence of the Indians in their own values, without replacing them with others capable of securing minimal self-respect...

"In this process, the Indians learn to look upon themselves with the eyes of the white man, to consider themselves ignorant creatures, whose most venerable traditions are nothing more than foolishness or heresy that must be eradicated.

"Another aspect of the role of the missions that must be considered is the question of ownership of the lands upon which the religious missions are built. Some areas, inhabited by the Indians since immemorial times but now the sites of religious missions, have been registered by the latter as their own property (Sangradouro, Meruri, Sao Marcos, Santa Teresinha and others)." (Correio da Manha, 4/10/71) ✓

D. 1967 to the present: the military regime, the economic boom, and the National Foundation for Assistance to the Indian (FUNAI).

1. The "genocide" scandal of 1967 and the dissolution of the Indian Protection Service: the emergence of the Indian crisis into prominence as a domestic and international issue; the impact of the press and public opinion on Indian affairs. By the mid-60's, economic activity and speculative interest in Amazonia and the frontier regions had reached higher levels than at any time since the collapse of the rubber boom at the beginning of the century. This was in part the result of the construction of the new capital of Brasilia and the Belem-Brasilia highway, which provided the first overland link between Amazonia and the industrialized southeast and represented a dramatic shift of national energy toward the undeveloped heartland of the country. The consequences of these developments for the indigenous population of Amazonia were disastrous,

as evidenced by the findings of the investigating commissions detailed in the previous section. The Indian Protection Service, corrupt, lacking political influence or budgetary support, and directed for the most part by mediocre bureaucrats of the assimilationist persuasion, was powerless to render effective assistance to the tribal peoples and frequently collaborated with their oppressors against them.

Reports of what was happening in the Brazilian interior began finding their way into the foreign press. In 1967 the trickle became a flood. Detailed accounts of massacres, epidemics, theft of lands, oppression and neglect, culminating in charges of genocide against the native population, filled the European press and created a major scandal. International academic and charitable organizations, such as the Red Cross, passed resolutions and dispatched investigating teams. The military regime that had seized power only three years before found itself confronted with a minor crisis in foreign relations: the "image" of the regime, and the country itself, was at stake.

The results of the crisis--the actions taken by the regime--have already been, in part, indicated. The Indian Protection Service was dissolved, many of its functionaries were publicly denounced and either fired or demoted (in many cases only to be quietly rehired or rehabilitated in the following year), and the two investigating commissions whose findings were reported in the last section were appointed.

More important than any of these official acts was the nature of the crisis that had created the need for them. Much as in 1910,



the situation of the indigenous population of the country had risen to the status of a major domestic and international issue, and the press and public opinion (both foreign and internal) had once again played important roles in galvanizing the government into action.

A brief explanation is in order as to how an embarrassing issue like the disgraceful state of the indigenous population could receive such full and free discussion in the tightly controlled Brazilian press. In the first place, it is important that Indian affairs have never been considered to fall within the purview of political issues in Brazil. They therefore escaped the heavy censorship that had already fallen on all news and opinion concerning political, economic, or ideological questions. By the time the Indian question had exploded into an international scandal, it was being too widely discussed in the foreign press (much of which is readily available within Brazil) for domestic discussion of it to be easily suppressed. It is also probably true that the regime did not feel itself to be directly implicated or involved in the issue of the treatment of the Indians: the Indian Protection Service was not its creation, it had only been in power a short time, and (most importantly) the problems, goals and ideological themes with which it was preoccupied seemed only remotely related to the fate of the remnants of the indigenous population. It was doubtless at least partly for such reasons that it felt free to respond to the press attacks and denunciations.

For whatever reason, it did respond, and reportage of Indian news and policy questions continues to be uncensored. The unforeseen result has been that Indian affairs have become one of the



most prominently discussed themes in the mass media, and have become subjects of considerable popular interest. When I was in Brazil in the summer of 1971, I was told, only half-jokingly, that futebol and Indios had for six months been the only topics seriously and freely discussed in the media. The damaging effects of the Indian issue abroad, its new-found notoriety at home, and the regime's attitude toward it as a peripheral matter unconnected with its central concerns have combined to produce an unusual degree of pragmatic flexibility and sensitivity to foreign and domestic public opinion on the part of the regime--a flexibility that has so far shown itself at the practical level of delays in putting bad measures into effect or shifting policy emphasis in positive directions (for example, creating more reserves) than at the level of ideology or policy statements. The pressure of public opinion and the press cannot be counted upon to prevent individual disasters like the dismemberment of the Xingú National Park (a collective Indian reservation for some tribes) in 1971. It cannot be doubted on the other hand, that it has become a significant factor in the situation, and perhaps more than is true for any other issue, has had an impact on the development of the regime's attitudes and policies. The impact, it should briefly be added, has not by any means been entirely favorable. Charges of the more sensationalist, inaccurate and inflammatory type (for example, "genocide") have played into the hands of a regime anxious to depict all foreign criticism as "calumnies" against Brazil perpetrated by "ideological opponents" of the regime or embittered expatriates. Such charges, being easily refuted, have

lent a semblance of plausibility to the government's claims and have allowed it to rally nationalistic and xenophobic sentiments (which it is in any case assiduously encouraging) to its own support, while allowing it to rigidify its position and making it easier to shrug off responsible and accurate criticism. On the whole, however, the effect of the domestic and international publicity has undeniably been beneficial. The Brazilian Indian is no longer a forgotten issue; the regime cannot afford to neglect the reality of the plight of the Indian, nor can the regime be unaware that its actions with respect to the Indian are closely watched and have an immediate effect of its image both at home and abroad. This situation is undoubtedly the most significant result of the crisis of 1967.

2. The founding of the National Foundation for Assistance to the Indian (FUNAI): the military regime formulates its Indian policy. Having dissolved the old Indian Protection Service, the regime found itself in the position of having to create a successor to it and, in the process, to formulate an Indian policy. It was a critical moment in the development of the situation of the remaining tribal peoples. The vast development schemes for Amazonia and the western frontier regions were just being launched. Regional development authorities, the Superintendência pelo Desenvolvimento do Centro-Oeste (SUDECO) had been formed to channel domestic and foreign investment capital into these areas through generous tax rebates and other inducements. The Trans-Amazonia highway system was on the verge of beginning construction.

The needs of the native peoples in this situation were clear

and pressing. First and foremost was the necessity for the demarcation and legal establishment of adequate reservations to protect tribal lands from encroachment and expropriation by the deluge of immigrants and developers about to be precipitated into Amazonia. Secondly, greatly improved health assistance and police protection would be required to counteract the predictable effects of contact with settlers and construction gangs. Thirdly, some technical assistance and training would be required to enable the tribal peoples to adjust to, and participate to the extent they desired in, the new economic system about to be created in the area. Concomitantly, the development of the region would clearly raise in acute form the issue of the cultural autonomy and self-determination of the indigenous peoples-- their right to choose their own course without economic, social, or cultural coercion or forced draft "assimilation".

In the first couple of years of its existence, FUNAI and its newly created advisory council, the Conselho Nacional do Indio, gave verbal recognition to these needs and made some tentative moves in the direction of satisfying them. A training program was set up for prospective encarrezados of Indian posts, a much-needed step toward up-grading the personnel of the service. A call was sent out to the regional offices for the surveying and filing of legal petitions for reservations for the tribal groups of the area (although, since no financial resources were provided and time allowed for the surveying was short, it proved difficult to take advantage of this "opportunity" on anything like the scale that was needed). Over a hundred petitions for reservations were,

however, duly filed.

It soon became apparent, however, that the government had no intention of actually creating the reservations: only two or three were in fact set up before mid-1971. By 1970 it was clear that the regime had settled upon a "hard line" on the Indian question. An important advocate of this line was Cavalcânti, the Minister of the Interior, within whose ministry FUNAI is located. Cavalcânti, who continues in office as of this writing, is known for his close connections to large landowners and São Paulo business interests. A series of new appointments in 1970 and 1971 confirmed the shift in emphasis. The civilian head of FUNAI was replaced by a military man of strongly conservative opinions on Indian issues and no other perceptible qualifications for the job (such as previous experience of knowledge of Indian affairs): General Oscar Bandeira de Melo. The Conselho do Índio was packed with military men, development economists, and lawyers; anthropologists and others with first-hand experience of native societies and their problems have been totally excluded.

The attitudes and policy decisions implicit in the refusal to create the needed reserves and the new appointments were made explicit in a series of statements by government spokesmen, most notably General Bandeira himself. These statements advocated the total assimilation of the indigenous communities into the national society and culture and avowed that the Indians would not be permitted to become "obstacles to national development" or "threats to national security". A few representative statements of Bandeira are the following:

Assistance to the Indian must be as complete as possible. But it cannot obstruct national development, and the task of settling Amazonia. This is one of the policy directives of FUNAI for 1971. (quoted in the New York Times, July 14, 1971, translation slightly modified by the writer).

Brazil will not permit the formation of ethnic cysts... within its borders (O Estado de São Paulo, July 14, 1971).

When, in the summer of 1971, the Xingú National Indigenous Park was unexpectedly bisected by BR-80, one of the main roads of the Trans-Amazonica highway system, and the section cut off by the road sold to private interests, the Villas-Boas brothers, who had created the park almost single-handed as their life work and were administering it for FUNAI, protested the dismemberment of the park. They were joined in their anguished protest by many anthropologists and others, both within Brazil and abroad, who knew of the work of the Villas-Boas and recognized it as the highest expression of the indigenist tradition of Rondon. The Villas were promptly ordered to cease their protests and remain silent on the subject of BR-80 or face the loss of their jobs: the orders came from Cavalcânti and Bandeira. Bandeira's comments on the incident exemplify his attitude (and that of Cavalcânti and the regime as a whole) to the predicament of the tribal communities: a mixture of scurrilous distortion of the position of indigenist critics, assimilationist rhetoric, and development-whatever-the-cost ideology:

The Indians are not guinea pigs, nor the property of a half-dozen opportunists (this is a reference to the Villas-Boas brothers and their partisans-- T.T.). You can't stop the development of Brazil on account of the Xingú Park... The acculturation of the Indians has to proceed by degrees until they are totally integrated into the national community. (Folha da Tarde, March 10, 1971)

The dismemberment of the Xingú park, and the obvious collabor-

ation of Cavalcânti and Bandeira in the whole operation, is unquestionably the ugliest and most ominous episode in the short life of FUNAI to date. When the map of the proposed route of the Trans-Amazonica highway and its branches was made public, BR-80 was shown as passing to the north of the park by a considerable margin. The plan was, however, secretly altered, and construction of the road-bed through the park rushed so that the Villas-Boas brothers themselves (and the public at large) only learned of the altered plan when the road construction crews had arrived at the Xingú River, already half-way across the park. The reason for the change was never explained, beyond vague and obviously inadequate references to its necessity for engineering reasons, nor was any explanation offered for why the change in the announced plan had been kept secret. The entire operation was obviously a deliberate conspiracy against the park, involving cabinet-level officials such as Cavalcânti and Camargo Junior, the head of SUDECO, the development authority responsible for the area in which the park is located.

One motive for the conspiracy was patently clear. As the direct ideological descendants of Rondon, the Villas-Boases represented the antithesis of the policy being adopted by the regime toward the tribal communities. The park was based on the principle of guaranteeing the Indians' right to their own cultures and ways of life, while giving them time to adjust on their own terms to the onset of Brazilian society. It had already come under heavy criticism by Bandeira and other spokesmen of the regime's position as a threat to national security, a utopian experiment in cultural isolationism, and a contradiction of the principles

of "integration" and "assimilation" upon which the national Indian policy should be founded. So the regime had ideological reasons for wanting to destroy or at least weaken the park.

Ideological motives were not the only ones involved in the conspiracy against the park, however. The case of BR-80 and the vivisection of the park will probably be recognized when and if all the facts become known, as the prototype of how official ideology, administrative policy-making, and large private economic interests fit so closely together in contemporary Brazil as to be virtually indistinguishable. The most vociferous opposition to the Xingú Natural Park had always come from the big fazendeiros and land speculators of Mato Grosso, Goras and points south, who were outraged at the removal of so much rich potential pasture land from the market. One of the biggest land-owners and ranchers in all Mato Grosso is Camargo Junior, who is also the director of SUDECO, the regional development authority within whose domain the Xingú park is located. One of the greatest friends and proponents of landed interests in the interior, and a man of considerable wealth and landed interests himself, is Cavalcanti, the Minister of the Interior, bureaucratic chief and bitter foe of the Villas-Boas brothers. Camargo Junior and Cavalcanti were excellently placed to influence the course of BR-80 through northern Mato Grosso. When it became known that the course of the road had been altered so as to amputate the northern fifth of the Xingu park, the rumor got about that the separated section had already been secretly divided and sold to three private parties: Camargo Junior, Cavalcanti, and an American corporation whose identity remains unknown. This story has been repeated to



me by Brazilian government personnel in a position to know the facts: I cannot, however confirm it on the basis of evidence such as deeds of sale. It is nonetheless worth noting that Cavalcanti took the stories seriously enough to deny them in a public speech ( O Globo, 7/20/1971). Cavalcanti nevertheless failed to explain why, assuming that it was true as he claimed that the severed northern section of the park "still belonged to the Indians" and had not been allocated to private (Brazilian) owners, it was necessary to remove the area from the jurisdiction of the park-- an act carried out under his authority. In sum: if the reports are true, the fate of the native peoples of Brazil and the entire national bureaucracy for handling Indian affairs is in the hands of bureaucrats whose ideological commitments and private interests alike align them against the interests of the indigenous peoples themselves.

The extent of the outcry raised by the act of official piracy by which the Xingu park was dismembered appears to have surprised government officials. At home, the Villas-Boas brothers' status as quasi-legendary folk heroes was confirmed and strengthened: the sympathy and support of the press and public were clearly overwhelmingly on their side. Abroad, especially in Europe, where the Villas had become prominent candidates for the Nobel Peace Prize, scientific societies and the press registered loud protests and denunciations. The result was that, whereas the statements of government figures and publicists like Gen. Federico Rondon (no relation the late Marshal), Raquel de Queiroz and Bandeira himself at the beginning of the controversy had sounded very much like trial balloons for a move to destroy the Park

altogether, the government wound up by backtracking and "compensating" the Park for its loss by the addition of 9,000 square kilometers of relatively worthless scrub country to the southwest of the park. This step had not been announced or even mentioned as a possibility in the initial stages of the affair, and bore all the hallmarks of a hasty improvisation. The conclusions to be drawn from the Xingu Park crisis about the effectiveness of internal and foreign publicity and public opinion are thus ambiguous. It would perhaps be fair to say that, while such considerations will not be decisive in cases where the regime is firmly committed to a plan of action damaging to Indian interests, they can have a strong impact on its choice of alternative policies in cases where it has not yet made such a firm commitment.

The uproar over the Xingu National Park dramatized for the public at large what had already become apparent to those familiar with Brazilian Indian affairs: to wit, that the regime had in effect taken the final step in the process of making the anti-Rondonist policies of the "entrepreneurial" bureaucrats who had presided over the Indian Protection Service, and the principle that economic development a la laissez-faire capitalism brooks no obstacles, which had inspired the army of private speculators, ranchers, and assorted extractive entrepreneurs that had harassed, robbed, displaced and slaughtered the indigenous people for the past century, into the official Indian policy of the Brazilian government. Listening to the speeches of Bandeira, it was easy to believe, in the words of Shelton Davis, that "Custer is alive and he lives in Brazil" (Davis 1972). In more precise terms, the

policy of FUNAI was denounced in a manifesto signed by 84 Brazilian social scientists at the time of the Xingu Park affair as follows:

...the process of rapid expansion to the last frontiers of the country is creating a climate of opinion favorable to the emergence of actions and attitudes that threaten the essential rights of the indigenous populations, including even their cultural and biological survival. Just as in the first years of this century, there are those who attempt to characterize the surviving aboriginal groups, together with all their material possessions and cultural traits, as useless obstacles or threats to the progress and development of the country.

As in the past, the Indian and progress are seen as the polar and mutually exclusive terms of a false antinomy...The signatories note, with undisguised foreboding, the appearance of (such) falacious theses in the acts and declarations of functionaries of FUNAI (O Estado de Sao Paulo, 6/15/71)

The manifesto specifically called attention to FUNAI's emphasis on "assimilation" or "acculturation" as a magic formula for transforming useless Indians into productive pioneers (sertanejos) through the elimination of all elements of the aboriginal cultures that would interfere with this result (same source).

The case of the Xingu National Park is not unique. There have unfortunately been other instances of collaboration by FUNAI in the theft of aboriginal lands by large private business interests, in violation of existing Brazilian law and the regulations of the regional development authorities. The most flagrant of these was the case of the Nambikwara-speaking groups of the valley of the Guapore in western Mato Grosso.

The Guapore valley consists largely of lush pasture land: it was largely unsettled by Brazilians, and inhabited by nine mutually unintelligible but remotely related languages of the Nambikwara linguistic stock. When the SUDAM regional development authority was set up, several large Brazilian companies rushed to take

advantage of the tax incentives for investing in the Guapore district of the development region.<sup>1</sup> There was one hitch: the regulations establishing the development authorities specify that all lands involved in proposed development projects must be certified "free of Indians" by FUNAI in order to qualify for support from the authority. The regional office of FUNAI responsible for the Guapore had requested the establishment of three new reservations for the Nambikwara groups of the area in addition to the reservation that had already been established for one of the groups, when the requests for clearance of the proposed land purchases were forwarded to FUNAI from SUDAM. Somehow, although the areas of the proposed reserves (located as close as possible to the traditional village sites of the groups concerned) were within the areas that the companies proposed to acquire, the latter's SUDAM projects were all approved as "free of Indians", and the proposed reservations never received the approval of the then chief of FUNAI, Sr. Queiroz Campos, his successor, Gen. Bandeira de Melo, or the Minister of the Interior, Sr. Costa Cavalcanti. The alternative solution proposed by FUNAI was to truck all the eight groups still lacking reservations to the reservation already established for the ninth group and dump them there. It was urged upon the central office of FUNAI by its own local functionaries that this reservation, which consists almost entirely of arid scrub land, was barely sufficient to support the one tribe then established on it, and that to relocate eight other

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<sup>1</sup> The companies involved are: Galera, Padronal, Guape (an acronym for Alto Guapore), Sape, Nomura Agropecuaria, Zilo Lorenzetti, Madeirama S.A., Edmundo Rodrigues, and Maria Geraldini. So far as I have been able to find out none of these have foreign financial backing.

groups (which were, incidentally, mutually hostile to one another) on the same territory was to invite starvation, internecine conflict, and the flight of many individuals and groups from the reservation, possibly followed by hostilities toward the Brazilians occupying their traditional lands or those sent to bring them back. All of these warnings were to no avail. FUNAI operatives were ordered by Campos and Bandeira to carry out the relocation of the eight groups. They have now been moved, some under duress, to their new home. According to the ex-functionary of FUNAI, Antonio Cotrum Soares, the move was carried out in such a careless and brutal manner that practically no children under the age of 15 survived out of the 400 Indians involved. (Jornal do Brasil, 5/20/71).

It has been suggested by some that the case of the companies was materially aided by the retention of the son of the minister of the Interior by one of them as its liaison man with SUDAM and FUNAI.

The case of the Nambikwara of the Guapore is only the most glaring and disgraceful of FUNAI's violation of its trust and collaboration with the would-be exploiters of Indian land and resources against the interests of the Indians themselves. Numerous other instances can be cited, most involving the seizure of Indian lands by large companies, in which FUNAI either has never acted or has only stepped in when Indian resistance threatened to explode into large-scale armed conflict. The Gavião of the northern Araguaia have been steadily driven out of their ancestral territory by Brazilian colonists and loggers of the CIDAS lumber company. The Urubu of northern Maranhão State were expelled from

the land they were occupying by a subsidiary of the Swift meat-packing corporation. The Guaja of the same region have had their reservation invaded and most of it seized by the large Pindare project, a private venture certified for tax write-offs by the Northeastern development authority (SUDENE). The territory of the large Shavante tribe of northern Goras was bought out from under them by several large Sao Paulo-based Brazilian companies. After much inter-cine struggle a reserve was proclaimed, only to be revoked by Cavalcanti within 24 hours (thereby proving that communications between Sao Paulo and Brasilia are considerably faster and more effective than Brasilia and Xavantina, which is only a couple of hundred miles away): This happened in the spring of 1971. Since that time, there have occurred a series of incidents and steadily mounting tension between the Shavante and the encroaching ranchers. The danger of serious armed conflict finally forced FUNAI to take action, and three reservations were proclaimed by President Medici on September 22, 1972, 22 years after it was first promised to the Shavante (New York Times, 9/24/72; Jornal do Brasil 9/23/72).

The most successful instance of organized resistance on the part of an indigenous group against invasions of its territory by Brazilian colonists in recent years is the case of the Sherente tribe of the municipio (township) of Tocantinia in the state of Goras. The Sherente had been steadily losing their tribal lands to encroaching Brazilian squatters (small ranchers and farmers) for over thirty years. In 1963 the tribe sued in the Brazilian courts to have the invaders expelled and its lands legally demarcated. No action was ever taken on their suit. It became clear that there was no hope of support from the government, neither the courts nor FUNAI.



On September 1, 1971, the tribe resolved to take matters in its own hands. Parties of armed men, armed with a mixture of bows and arrows, lances, rifles and automatic weapons (the newly-formed Sherente detachment of the "Indigenous Guard", a sort of Indian Military Police that FUNAI had recently launched as a national program, supported their tribal brethren in the struggle) visited thirty Brazilian ranches in the disputed zone. The war parties were always superior in numbers and armament to the Brazilians on the ranches: they gave the ranchers and families an ultimatum to clear out in two hours with what they could carry with them or face attack. All thirty ranches complied, and others were vacated by their panic stricken tenants. Not a shot was fired.

The Sherente established a perimeter around the vacated lands (including one-half of the territory of the municipio) and announced that they would defend it to the death. To avert a blood-bath, and the adverse publicity that would be sure to result since the case was being closely followed in the national press, the federal government decided to intervene and negotiate a compromise. A surveying team was sent in and a reservation, roughly corresponding to the territory reconquered by the Sherente, was agreed upon and officially proclaimed in September, 1972 (New York Times, 9/24/72).

Incidents such as the Sherente success in Tocantinia throw light on several of the more important factors in the contemporary situation of the tribal groups vis à vis the Brazilian government and society. Perhaps most importantly, the chances of successful resistance by an indigenous group to prevent the loss of its lands to Brazilian colonists are greatest when the Brazilians concerned are small-holders or squatters (that is, lower-class, unorganized citizens with no political or economic power). The federal government has



shown itself far more ready to compromise and settle in the Indians' favor at the expense of Brazilians of the lower socio-economic strata that in cases where the Brazilian protagonists are large corporations and investment projects of the type authorized by SUDAM and AUDECO. The case of the Xingu National Park, which has already been reviewed, provides a further illustration of this point: the lands removed from the park appear to have been sold to large private Brazilian and U.S. interests, whereas the land with which the Park was "compensated" was occupied only by small-holders and squatters. The Sherente case, in short, is in a sense a further exemplification of the "triangle" of contradictory class relations alluded to in the introduction as the underlying framework of the situation of contact between the tribal peoples and the national society.

Another important point revealed by the Sherente case is the flexibility, within limits, of the national regime. The Sherente case is perhaps only the most notable of a number of recent cases in which the regime has shown itself willing to make concessions (that is, set up reserves or restore territory) in order to avert conflict and the resultant bad publicity. The concessions in question are usually "too little and too late", and tend to be made in circumstances where the political and economic costs to the regime are minimal. They nevertheless serve to illustrate the important fact that the regime is flexible enough to respond to pressures such as organized resistance and publicity in situations where its own interests, or those of the big private corporations with whose interests it aligns itself, are not deeply involved.

Of course, the need to account for cases in which the government has acted forcibly in defense of Indian interests against elements

of the national society as special cases of "flexibility" only serves to bring home more strongly that the central tendency of the ideology, policy and practice of FUNAI is to subordinate Indian interests to those of "development" wherever they come in conflict. The situation was aptly summed up by Antonio Cotrim Soares, who quit his job as sertanista (one who contacts new tribes and works with recently contacted groups) after ten years with FUNAI and its predecessor in May of 1971, because he felt his work had essentially become that of "a grave digger for Indians." To quote from the press reports of his statement at the time of his resignation:

(Cotrim) declared that he was no longer willing to be the instrument of a bureaucratic organ that is nothing more than "a bluff for public opinion" nor to help carry out an Indian policy that is basically erroneous, since it does not try to reconcile the interests of the development of the national society with the protection of the primitive societies... Cotrim Soares observed that the Indian policy currently in effect is based on the notion that the primitive cultures are "cysts" (in the way) of national development, and asserted that the Ministry of the Interior is itself a "contradiction", since it is at the same time the principal administrative organ for the promotion of the development of the interior and the agency charged with the protection of the primitive cultures of the area. (Jornal do Brasil, 5/19/71)

To this it is only possible to add that it would be impossible to find two figures who embody this contradiction more perfectly than the present Minister of the Interior and the chief of the National Foundation for Assistance to the Indian.

3. The administrative accomplishments of the National Foundation for Assistance to the Indian: a mixed record. There is a considerable temptation to oversimplify the role of FUNAI on the basis of incidents as have just been reviewed, but this temptation must be resisted for the sake of presenting as complete and accurate an account of the present situation as possible.

Perhaps the most important difference between FUNAI and its predecessor, the SPI, is that it is more effective: better funded, better staffed, with more active posts and reserves. This has both good and bad implications. To take the latter first, programs like the Renda Indigena (Indigenous Income)--the practice of organizing the indigenous communities located on FUNAI posts into work brigades to produce cash crops, the income from which is then appropriated by FUNAI to defray its own operating expenses-- has been raised from a sporadic tendency in the old SPI days to the status of a top-priority administrative program. This is, of course, fully consistent with the capitalist development ideology of the regime as a whole: the criterion of useful "integration" in the national society for indigenous people as well as Brazilians is effectively reduced to the production of surplus value for the national economy. The internal colonialist nature of this policy, and its effect of depriving the indigenous communities themselves of even the capitalist incentive for labor (namely, the ability to benefit from the products of their own labor), have already been described in an earlier section. Elimination of this pernicious policy should be at the top of the agenda for any reform of Brazilian indigenous policy.

FUNAI's greater efficiency, resources and energy have, on the other hand, had some important positive results. Medical services, for example, are better than they have ever been (which is not in itself saying very much) and are at least beginning to approach, if they do not yet by any means reach, adequate levels. Ten "roving health teams" (one located in each regional headquarters and one in

Brazilia) have been established, which make regular rounds of the posts within each regional "inspectorate" (administrative district). Each team consists of one doctor, one dentist, and one nurse. Standardized pharmacy kits, consisting of an assortment of medicines and basic medical supplies, have been placed in each post and are supposed to be regularly replenished from reserve stocks held at the regional headquarters. The encarregados do posto now being turned out by the newly established training program at Brasilia receive medical training in the use of these materials. Agreements have been reached with a number of hospitals and medical schools to accept Indian patients or to provide other specialized medical services. Special vaccination and TB control campaigns have been put into effect. These measures are not yet sufficient to prevent epidemics in more remote areas (there have been several, accounting for significant numbers of deaths in a few groups, within the past year) but they are a great improvement over anything previously available.

Thanks partly to improved communications and medical assistance, and partly to the fact that many tribal groups have now passed through the period of greatest vulnerability to new diseases and cultural shock that usually follows the first Brazilian contacts, a number of native communities whose populations had been declining are now beginning to show a population increase. It may, in fact, turn out that the lowest point in the decline of Brazil's aboriginal population has already been reached and passed. This is not to say, of course, that many groups will not continue to show a decline for some time. The situation is far from stabilized. But the fact that some groups are again on the increase at least gives grounds

for hope that the secular trend toward demographic decline may at last have been reversed.

The training program for prospective encarregados or chiefs of Indian posts also deserves favorable notice. This program (in large part the creation of Prof. Roque Laraiá, director of the Division of Human Sciences at the University of Brasília) is the basis of an attempt to raise the level of general competence, anthropological sensitivity and medical effectiveness of post administrators, heretofore the weakest (and most important) link in the bureaucratic structure of FUNAI and the SPI.

Another valuable program is the establishment of a training college (the Colegio Clara Camarao) for native teachers in Rio Grande do Sul. The object is to bring representatives of every post community to the school to instruct them in Portuguese, reading and writing in Portuguese and their own languages, and basic arithmetic, and methods for teaching these subjects in their home communities. The training program has so far included general background material on Indian cultures of the Americas and Brazil, the history of Indian-Brazilian relations and bases of pride in Indian identity. This program is having the important side effect of creating an inter-tribal network of communication between members of the heretofore mutually isolated native groups, who are able to communicate by writing in a common language, know one another personally and share a common consciousness of their situation as native Brazilians. The beginnings of a pan-Indian affairs in the popular media over the past several years. Such beginnings as these could develop into significant elements of future indigenous consciousness and relations with the national society.

Another FUNAI program with more immediate and disturbing impli-

cations for the tribal communities is the Guarda Rural Indigena. The goal of this program is to create a small detachment of indigenous military police, complete with uniforms, side arms and carbines, in every native community. The ostensible purpose of the Guard is to keep order and perform police functions within the community and to protect the community against incursions from small-time "criminal" elements of the national society such as itinerant rubber-gatherers or impoverished squatters (Swift, Inc. or Pindare, S.A. are obviously in a different category).

The Guarda Indigena provides yet another melancholy example of the apparently irresistible tendency of the national regime to attempt to remake the tribal societies within its borders in its own image. Just as the theme of "national security" (as the primary mission of the armed forces and military police) shares equal emphasis in the propaganda of the regime with economic development, it was perhaps inevitable that an institution like the Guarda Indigena should be created as a complement and corollary of the Renda Indigena (indigenous income) scheme to stimulate native production for the national market. However this may be, the creation of a disciplined armed force, existing outside of the indigenous political and social system and with no organic relationship to the traditional mechanisms of social control, and with its own authority derived directly from the Brazilian encarregado and responsible solely to him, can obviously have profoundly disruptive effects on tribal communities. The potential for arbitrary intervention in communal affairs, without adequate safeguards against abuse, is great.

The prospects for abuses of this kind have become more ominous with the establishment of a detention camp especially for Indians,



Crenaque, located near the town of Resplendor in the state of Minas Gerais. Crenaque was established in 1971 at the time of the graduation of the first class of Indigenous Guards. The two events were directly linked: both the Guard and the detention camp were founded by Captain Manuel dos Santos Pinheiro of the federal military police, drawing upon his success in putting down a nascent rebellion by Maxacali tribesmen in the state of Minas Gerais against Brazilian small-holders who had been relentlessly encroaching on their lands. To be fair to Pinheiro, as part of his forceful and effective solution he reconfiscated much of the stolen land and charged the remaining Brazilian squatters rent for the Indian lands they were occupying. With the rent money he paid for many community developments, including three irrigation dams. Pinheiro's performance earned the enthusiastic accolade of the English reporter, Norman Lewis, who held it up as an example of the kind of solution that is the "only hope" of the Brazilian Indians at the end of a pioneering, detailed and scathing expose of the general situation of the Brazilian tribes (see Lewis, "Genocide", Picture Post, London, 1968; p.59).

Pinheiro's solution of the Maxacali crisis had another side, however, which Lewis missed. Here is how Pinheiro described his "pacification program" to a Brazilian reporter sent to investigate the rumors that a detention camp for Indians had been established in Minas Gerais. He found that Pinheiro was in charge of the camp, and that he proudly claimed both the Guard and the camp as his own creations.

The captain recounted how, a little more than five years ago, he was sent to the Jequitinhonha Valley...to deal with the Maxacali Indians, who were in revolt against invasions of their tribal lands:

"I immediately seized the leaders of the (Indian) movement"-- the captain spoke as if he were referring to criminals--"and was



able gradually to reestablish peace in the area. My work was considered excellent, and I was therefore invited by the President of FUNAI (Gen. Bandeira de Melo--T.T.) to work with the Indians of the state of Minas Gerais."

Captain Pinheiro explained the organization and functions of Crenaque and, always in proud tones, asserted that the Indigenous Guard was created, above all, to "resolve a problem of national security."

"Yes, the Indians can be a threat to the national security, since when they rebel they create disorder and subversion; in such cases, after being taken prisoner by the Indigenous Guard, they are sent to Crenaque, to reeducate them and transform them into good Indians."

"We are not dealing out punishment here at Crenaque. The Indian, by his behavior, determines the length of time he remains in the camp (emphasis added--T.T.)...I understand how sad and hard it is for the Indian to be separated from his family, his children, but it is necessary to get erroneous ideas out of his head..."

When asked how the Indian, who is legally considered irresponsible, could be confined in a penal colony--if this were not by definition a legal anomaly and an unconstitutional measure--the captain replied as follows:

"Now see here," he responded in solemn tones, "this is not a prison in the strict sense. It is a kind of reformatory dedicated to reeducation. It is a social necessity for the Indian." (Jornal do Brasil 8/27/72)

The reporter who wrote this story noted, however, that conditions at Crenaque appeared to be not so idyllic as the captain's emphasis on "reform" and "reeducation" might be taken to imply:

Access to the penal colony is forbidden to everyone, especially journalists, and the few inhabitants of the region tell many strange stories about attempted escapes and the violence to which the inmates are subjected (ibid).

The Indigenous Guard and the Crenaque detention camp, as presented by their founder and commander Captain Pinheiro, are merely direct extensions of the principles by which contemporary Brazil as a whole is ruled and dissident elements dealt with. They cannot, on that account, be held up as examples of unusual or unfair treatment of Indians relative to the rest of the population. Pinheiro's straightforward account does at least have the virtue of making clear that the Indigenous Guard was conceived as much as an instrument of internal control and repression as of defense of the tribal

communities against external oppressors. "National security," as guaranteed by the national armed forces and military police, and tribal security, as protected by the Indigenous Guard, are in this sense strikingly similar concepts.

As things have turned out, however, the Indigenous Guard has not functioned smoothly as a tool for indirect rule and repression of rebellious elements within the tribal communities. The Sherente detachment of the Guard, for example, made common cause with their tribal brethren in the Sherente coup of September 1971 in Tocantinia (described in the preceding section). On Bananal Island, the home of the Karaja tribe, which has recently been besieged by an influx of 5,000 Brazilian colonialists, Karaja Guardsmen have murdered at least one squatter and driven off others. There have been rumors that, as a result of such experiences, the government may curtail or discontinue the Indigenous Guard program. It is perhaps too much to hope that Crenaque, too, might be discontinued at the same time.

There are signs that FUNAI has finally begun to take seriously the need for legally demarcated reserves. After all that has been said about the primacy of the problem of safeguarding indigenous lands, it should come as a shock to learn that as of August 1972, when there existed 142 Indian posts and 9 indigenous settlements, there were only eleven legally demarcated reservations and four Indian parks (multi-tribal reservations). At least half of these reservations had been established in 1971 and 1972. The three new Shavante and one Sherente reserves created in September 1972 bring the total to fifteen (the source for these figures is the text of Gen. Bandeira de Melo's address to the VII Conference of the Instituto Inter-Americano de Indigenismo, which met in Brasilia in August

1972). Bandeira described the demarcation of Indian lands as a "priority objective of FUNAI," and announced that funds had been budgeted for the demarcation of roughly twice as much land in 1973 as in the present year. This is obviously still only a drop in the bucket, considering the scale of the job remaining to be done. But at least some efforts are finally being made in this area; this in itself is an almost revolutionary change from the inaction of the past half-century.

5. The proposed National Indian Statute (Estatuto do Indio).

The clearest and fullest articulation of the Indian policy of the new regime is the draft of a proposed comprehensive statute regulating all aspects of indigenous political and legal status, as well as the legal status of tribal lands and resources. The statute had the laudable purpose of providing a legal basis for defining the relation of the Indian to the national society and the process of ending the "tutela" (legal guardianship) of the state over the Indian. No legal basis for either exists in current Brazilian law, one result of which is that there is no way for an Indian to exercise the civil and political rights of a Brazilian citizen, nor to become legally redefined as a Brazilian citizen.

Unfortunately, the new Indian statute proposes to remedy this situation by defining "Indian" status on the basis of varying degrees of savagery and imperfect "assimilation" to Brazilian culture and identity, that acquiring the status of a legally responsible Brazilian citizen entails the loss of legal recognition as an Indian. As Minister Temistocles Cavalcanti, the distinguished Brazilian jurist responsible for the draft of the statute, expressed the ideas underlying the law:

(Cavalcanti said that his statute) is oriented toward the inte-

gration of the Indian, once he is assimilated, into the community, or on the other hand to preserve the customs and religious traditions of Indian groups still in a savage or very retarded state of acculturation. (O Globo, 6/17/71; emphasis mine--T.T.).

This baldly stated presumption that the indigenous cultures are inferior in themselves, and have as their only historical goal to "evolve" to the point where they can leave their "savage" "Indian" attributes behind and become assimilated into Brazilian society pervades the statute. In its first section, Indian communities are classified according to a graduated scale ranging from the "tribal state: to the final stage of "assimilation". It is only in the final stage (that is, when the Indians cease, in effect, to be "Indians" in the cultural and legal sense) that the Indian "acquires his full civil rights." Until then, the Indian as such has a legal status, but only as a collective tribal community under the "tutelage" (that is, legal guardianship and protection) of the "competent technical organs" of the government (FUNAI). In other words, as long as tribal communities with their associated territories are recognized as legal entities, they can only exercise their legal rights through their guardian, the government, and cannot themselves initiate claims (especially against the guardian, the government or FUNAI itself).

A corollary of the provision that only "unassimilated" indigenous communities and their lands are legally protected under the proposed law is that the lands of any group the government chooses to recognize as "assimilated" automatically cease to be protected by law. Instead, the law specifies that the tribal lands of "assimilated" communities shall be parcelled out to the individual members of the group, who would then hold them (and be able to sell or lease them) as their personal property. The North American ex-

perience of this arrangement has been highly unfavorable from the standpoint of tribal communities: the usual result is the dispersion of the tribal land, as individuals sell their allotments (often under pressure and for a fraction of their true value) to local ranchers or developers. In this respect the proposed law is a step backward from the existing law, under which all Indian lands are in theory protected.

The new statute guarantees even to the unassimilated tribal communities only the usufruct of such territorial resources as they made use of in the aboriginal state (agricultural land, and hunting, gathering, and fishing rights); the ownership of the land itself is vested in the Brazilian state. The government is also given the ownership and control over subsoil (mineral) and timber resources. It has the right to lease these resources to private concessionaires without consulting the indigenous community concerned. Concessionaires are supposed to return ten per cent of their earnings, not to the native community itself, but to the "Renda Indigena", or "indigenous income", the fund used by FUNAI to defray its operating expenses. By giving legal recognition to the Renda Indigena, the new statute legitimizes the principle that indigenous peoples should pay, with their own labor and production and the income from their communal resources, for the protection and services granted them by the government.

The most pernicious provision of the proposed statute is, however, the section empowering the President of Brazil to remove indigenous communities from their lands and relocate them in other places of the government's choosing, without consulting them, under five conditions (I quote from the draft of the statute):

- 1) to end a battle between indigenous tribes
- 2) to combat grave epidemics that could lead to the extinction of a tribe
- 3) to counteract any misfortune which could put the integrity of an Indian or a tribe in danger
- 4) to impose the interests of national security through specific measures
- 5) to promote regional development according to higher national interests

These provisions are either so vague and imprecise as to permit arbitrary displacement of indigenous groups at the whim of the government, or transparently phony pretexts to anyone at all familiar with the experience of the native peoples of Brazil with forcible relocations under the auspices of the Indian Protection Service or FUNAI. It is precisely such relocations (invariably involving movement to much less productive and desirable land) that have regularly given rise to the worst epidemics: they are themselves the greatest "misfortunes which...put the integrity of an Indian or tribe in danger". "Battles between indigenous tribes" since the time of the discovery of Brazil by Cabral have probably claimed fewer lives than have been lost as a result of the forcible relocations of tribal communities in this century alone.

In its oppressive emphasis on the assimilation of the indigenous tribes into Brazilian society and culture, the proposed Indian Statute embodies many of the anti-Indian prejudices Rondon struggled so valiantly to combat. It also violates the standing resolutions of the United Nations and the Instituto Inter-Americano de Indigenismo on the rights of cultural minorities. In its provisions concerning indigenous land rights, resources, and the powers of the Brazilian government to remove tribal peoples from their ancestral



territories at will, the statute codifies most of the worst aspects of the impact of the expanding national society on the native peoples as official state policy and law. In the words of Shelton Davis, in the proposed Indian statute:

...the Brazilian government has pulled off an incredible feat. Not only has it contradicted most of the Indianist legislation Rondon struggled for, but it has put into one twelve page document all of the most socially destructive features of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century federal Indian policies of the United States. Amongst these features are coercive removal, forced assimilation, negation of aboriginal land rights, individual allotment of Indian lands, and the leasing of Indian timber and mineral resources. (Davis 1972: 17)

The grim implications of this anti-Indian statute are brought home by an examination of the projected development plans for the Amazonia and central-Western development regions (see appendix). These long range plans show that the government plans to create vast ranching, agricultural, and mining enterprises on the sites of many native communities. It would appear that the Brazilian regime is so intent on ramming through its new Indian law in spite of the storm of criticism it has aroused both at home and abroad,<sup>1</sup> for very good reasons of its own.

#### IV. The problems of Brazil's native peoples in the national political and economic context.

Laws are socially significant only in so far as the responsible authorities are able to enforce them. In contemporary Brazil both of these factors are almost totally dependent upon the extent to which the laws in question conform to the ideology of the regime. The new Indian statute is thus less important as a legal document as an expression of the basic attitudes and intentions of th

<sup>1</sup>The American Anthropological Association specifically criticized the proposed Brazilian Indian Statute in a resolution adopted at its annual meeting in 1970.



As the proposed statute so clearly and thoroughly reveals, these attitudes and intentions are virtually identical with those of the private investors and "developers" who have always been the worst enemies of the indigenous peoples and against whom, until now, the governments of Brazil have at least verbally recognized their responsibility to defend the Indian. The present situation and probable fate of the indigenous peoples of Brazil is dependent in large part upon this general ideological orientation of the regime, which more than anything else determines what the regime is and is not willing to do to protect and assist the Indian.

From the point of view of the regime, the indigenous tribes are a relatively minor and peripheral issue in contrast to its overriding preoccupation, the transformation of Brazil into a technologically sophisticated and fully developed capitalist society capable of playing the role of a great power in the South American and world stage. In so far as the indigenous peoples enter into this scenario at all, they do so in the role of obstacles to the achievement of this goal (this is the meaning of Gen. Bandeira's eloquent metaphor for them, "ethnic cysts" which Brazil "will not tolerate within its borders"). The fanatical zeal of the regime for "development" can only be understood if its intimate connection to these nationalistic visions of national greatness and manifest destiny. All threats to the surest and quickest path to economic development thus ipso facto assume the guise of "threats to national security". In this role, newly-contacted tribes find themselves the bedfellows of political "subversives"--communists, social democrats, and all other elements of the national society that for one reason or another oppose the regime and its allied policies of repression and development.

"National security" and economic development, the two great slogans of the regime, are thus regarded by it as complementary aspects of the same thing: the goal of "national reintegration", or the remaking of Brazil along the lines the regime deems necessary for it to achieve its historic destiny as a great power.

h4 2. Both of these obsessive themes of the regime, security and development, converge in the great Amazonian development scheme (officially known as the "Plano de Reintegracao Nacional").

The greatest threat of internal disorder in Brazil comes from the impoverished, landless population of the Northeast. The Amazonian development scheme was conceived partly as a way of resettling the huge "surplus" population of the Northeast and thus defusing its revolutionary potential, while avoiding the politically painful and embarrassing process of carrying out long-overdue reforms in the archaic social and economic structure of that region. There is thus much justice in the bitter remark of a Brazilian official that the development of Amazonia is "agrarian reform at the expense of the Indian." Not only does the regime see the Amazonian development plan as a potential solution to its number one internal security problem, but also as the solution to its major external security concern as well. Even before the military of 1964, the Brazilian government, and particularly the armed forces, were intensely concerned about the possibility that certain countries on Brazil's most vulnerable (least settled) frontiers, such as Guyana and Bolivia, might come to be governed by revolutionary regimes that would stir up unrest, infiltrate guerillas or even colonists across the Brazilian frontiers. Rapid settlement of Brazilian immigrants along these frontiers, and the construction of a network of strategic roads and airstrips, was seen as the most effective way of com-

batting this "menace" to the national security. The settlement of Amazonia with migrants from the Northeast and other impoverished rural areas, and the construction of the Trans-Amazonica highway system, obviously fulfill this objective.

As for economic development, it goes without saying that the provision of an effective system of roads linking Amazonia's vast resources of land, timber, and minerals with the rest of the country, together with the influx of capital and labor created by the previously mentioned investment incentives and immigration programs, respectively, should provide an enormous stimulus to the national economy.

It is readily apparent how both the "security" and development aspects of the regime's "Plan of National Integration" combine to encourage policies and attitudes detrimental to the nation's indigenous communities. From the standpoints of both security and development needs, as the government sees them, the settlement and development of the Indian territories of Amazonia, Mato Grosso and the northern frontiers are top-priority objectives. The indigenous peoples are, moreover, regarded as in themselves threats to national security (see statement of the commander of the Crenaque indigenous detention camp quoted in a previous section). Above all, to a regime that so single-mindedly defines "national integration" in terms of economic "nationality" and amenability to the forms of motivation, work, accumulation and calculation of values and interests on which a capitalist social system depends, the tribal peoples necessarily appear as "irrational" "cysts" blocking the path of national development. The only Indian policy consistent with such an ideology is one of "assimilation"--as rapid and complete as possible--into the

Brazilian labor force, coupled with the removal of the Indians from the path of "progress" whenever they get in the way (sic). It is, as we have seen, precisely such a policy that is embodied in the regime's proposed Indian Statute and major policies, and is constantly reiterated in the public statements of the regime's official protectors of the Indians, notably Gen. Bandeira himself.

Economic development is not in itself opposed to the interests of the Indian. Quite the contrary: an indigenous community may be much better off in a relatively settled and developed social environment, in which there are enough jobs to go around so that cut-throat competition for jobs and subsistence resources between Indians and poor Brazilians can be avoided, than in a frontier environment in which it is liable to armed attacks from itinerant Brazilian frontiersmen and utterly dependent on the FUNAI post as its sole source of supply of "civilized" goods. The extent to which economic development as currently carried on in Brazil does clash directly with the interests and well-being of the tribal peoples is a product of several special factors. One is, of course, that the interests of the private entrepreneurs and speculators who are the primary agents of development in Brazil have everything to gain and nothing to lose by dispossessing the Indians, and that the government is too closely aligned with their interests even to want to restrain them effectively. Another is the degree to which development itself, (in particular the values and forms of productive relationships associated with the laissez-faire model of development adopted by the regime), has acquired the status of an ideological fetish in contemporary Brazil. This fetishism of development leads the regime to strive to impose capitalist values of nationality and forms of work

on the entire society, including its indigenous enclaves, as a matter of ideological principle and missionary zeal. The suppression of all values and social forms incompatible with those of the regime is, in terms of this ideological perspective, not only an economic convenience but a patriotic duty.

It is not ideological fanaticism, however, but a contradiction inherent in the Brazilian model of rapid economic growth itself which poses the gravest threat to the native communities. This is the latent contradiction between the capital-intensive form of the development process encouraged by the regime (especially by its efforts to attract foreign investment) and the necessity to expand the domestic labor force to the degree necessary to create a market for the greatly increased volume of commodities turned out by the productive sector. Nowhere is this contradiction likely to come to a head sooner, or to give rise to more extreme forms of social stress, than in the new territories of Amazonia and the frontiers.

The development of Amazonia is currently in its most labor-intensive phase. Large numbers of workers are being brought in to build the roads and to clear the forests for the pasture lands and fields of the new ranches and farms. Other immigrants are being given small allotments of farm land with meager stakes of seed and supplies to tide them over until their first crop. Beyond this there are no credit facilities suitable to the needs of small farmers. The ominous question therefore presents itself: after the roads are built and the pastures are cleared (probably by the end of 1975), what are the armies of unskilled construction workers going to do after they have sold their little farms to pay their debts? It does not take many vaqueiros to run even a huge cattle

fazenda.

The danger in short, is that after the initial labor-intensive phase, the development of Amazonia may create a large reserve army of unemployed that cannot be absorbed by the capital-intensive enterprises (large ranches, mining operations, etc.) now being established in the region. The lack of credit facilities for small farmers practically guarantees that this army of unemployed workers will almost certainly be augmented by large numbers of failed homesteaders. The only recourse of this jobless and landless rural proletariat will be to revert to the status of squatters, clearing small subsistence farms on "unoccupied" land, or to engage in one of the extractive occupations (gathering wild vegetable products, hunting, prospecting) that have traditionally formed the basis of the Amazonian economy. That is to say, the only recourse of the huge new rural proletariat of Amazonia will be to enter directly into competition with the Indians for the region's diminishing supply of subsistence resources (agricultural land and wild produce). In the resulting struggle, the Indians will be at a heavy disadvantage, if only because of the sheer weight of numbers on the other side.

Emphasis on the competition between natives and Brazilian colonists should not be allowed to obscure the importance of competition for scarce jobs and resources among the lower strata of the Brazilian labor force, nor the feed-back effects of this competition onto the situation of the native communities. Some of the blackest pages of the history of Amazonian slave labor are already being repeated by the new generation of developers. There are reliable reports that some of the large new fazendas have been set up on a slave-labor basis. Workers are bought in the Northeast and shipped



in sealed trucks along the new roads to their places of work. There they labor under armed guards, who prevent escape and enforce labor discipline. Such oppressive forms of labor can only survive for long in the presence of a permanent surplus of unemployed agricultural laborers. At the same time, of course, they themselves contribute to the pauperization and brutalization of the labor force as a whole (for a U.S. press account of these conditions, see the article, "Brazil fighting sales of people to ranchers" reprinted from the L.A. Times in the Boston Globe, April 17, 1971).

The point is that the interests of the native peoples of Brazil are directly and inextricably linked to the interests of the lower strata of the Brazilian working class (unskilled construction workers, farmers, gatherers of forest products, etc.) Forms of development that lead to significant benefits for these strata of the Brazilian labor force should also benefit the tribal peoples, since they will decrease the competition between Indians and Brazilian workers for jobs, and by the same token make more jobs available to Indians as well. Highly capital-intensive forms of development such as those currently being put into practice in the Brazilian interior, on the other hand, may well have the opposite effects. The two modes of development in question may be thought of as respectively relaxing and intensifying the "inter-ethnic friction" arising from the "triangle" of relations between indigenous peoples, Brazilian workers, and capitalist employers described in the introduction to this paper.

The greatest danger to the surviving indigenous peoples of Brazil is thus not so much physical extinction (although undoubtedly many more will die in epidemics and some in battles with Brazilian colonists) as a combination of economic pauperization, social margin-



alization, and cultural suppression: in a work, "ethnocide", or the destruction of the social and cultural identity and viability of ethnic communities. The point I have been trying to make, however, is that this threat is not primarily "ethnic" in its causes and origins. It is rather part and parcel of the general predicament of the lower strata of the Brazilian working class under the prevailing conditions of laissez-faire development capitalism.

It is at least theoretically possible that the Brazilian government might change its policies to the extent of making the tribal peoples "exceptions" to its general policy line. It might, in other words, try for a "separate solution" to the Indian problem by providing special safeguards (such as reservations and police protection) against the ethnocidal effects of its ongoing development policies. Some such separate solution is perhaps all that can be hoped for in the short run, and is implicit in the positions of many critics of the regime's Indian policy. Bearing in mind that the relatively diminutive size of the indigenous population would make the cost of such a solution relatively small, it is conceivable that the pressure of foreign and domestic opinion, a concern for the image of the nation and the good name of the regime itself, and last but not least the resistance and will to survive of the indigenous peoples themselves, might persuade the regime that the price is worth paying. What is in question here is not an optimal solution, but rather a minimal solution that would enable the tribal communities to survive at approximately the same social and economic level as the Brazilian rural working class, while maintaining their own social organization and cultural identity in so far as they wish to do so.

At present, however, even such a partial and unsatisfactory solution seems unlikely, owing to the ideological fanaticism of the regime, its general indifference to the problems of the working class (especially the rural proletariat and the unemployed), and the ever-rising pressures from private investors eager for slices of tribal lands and resources-- interests which the government will always be strongly inclined to indulge, for ideological as well as pragmatic reasons.

The general issue at stake in the Indian question, the issue that gives the plight of the tribes its great topical interest for the Brazilian public and its significance as an index of the ideological and social course of the regime, is nothing less than the issue of how far the principles of laissez-faire capitalism are to be carried out, when they can be seen to entail the destruction of cultural values, social communities, and even physical populations.

Through a series of historical accidents, the indigenous question has emerged as virtually the only issue that can be freely discussed in contemporary Brazil which poses this question, in general terms, with direct reference to the policies of the regime. It is, simultaneously, one of the two issues on which the regime's image is seriously vulnerable abroad, and hence on which it is most sensitive to foreign public opinion (the other being political torture and repression). These two factors have combined to give the fate of the indigenous peoples of Brazil an impact and importance out of all proportion to the relatively negligible percentage of the national population they represent.

What can be done by North Americans (and citizens of other capitalist countries with investments in Brazil) to aid the Bra-

zilian tribes in their struggle to survive? The Brazilian regime has shown itself to be at least superficially responsive to international public opinion in the past on this issue (for example, the dissolution of the Indian Protection Service in 1967). Various channels are available to publicize concern over the fate of the Brazilian Indians. Research can be done to determine which U.S. corporations are involved in oppressing tribal groups (for example, the Swift meat-packing company in the case of the Urubu and Tembe of Maranhao) and publicity campaigns and direct actions can be undertaken against them. Congressman Dellums (D., Calif.) has undertaken to raise the issues of political torture and oppression of Indians as grounds for cutting off American aid to Brazil. Dellums deserves the full support of all partisans of the welfare of indigenous peoples in this effort.