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THE BRAZILIAN INDIGENOUS PROBLEM AND POLICY: THE EXAMPLE OF THE XINGU NATIONAL PARK

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IWGIA - International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs - is a nonpolitical and nonreligious organization concerned with the oppression of ethnic groups in various countries.

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In spite of the fact that FUNAI (National Indian Foundation) has recently announced the existence of two dozen reservations, Xingu Park is, as far as we know, the only patch of Brazilian soil which is totally and exclusively reserved for the indigenous population, and where this population can at all times count on the assistance and protection owed to it by the responsible body. The majority of the other reservations are partially occupied and exploited by civilized people numbering more than the Indians themselves, who due to the lack of means and especially of qualified, devoted and disinterested personnel, are insufficiently or not at all assisted and even less protected.

Covering approximately 25,000 square kilometres in the very heart of Brazil, Xingu National Park was officially set up in 1961 on the initiative of the Villas Boas brothers, whose intention was to afford shelter from economic expansion and its consequences in the form of disease and poverty to a certain number of still isolated tribes, and to give them the opportunity of being integrated gradually, that is to say naturally, into the dominant society.

At present 1500 Indians, more or less, belonging to several culturally and linguistically very distinct groups share this reservation, which is unique in its kind and access to which is properly denied to settlers as well as to missionaries. Disposing of their own villages, plantations, rivers and forests, the members of these tribes leave them only temporarily to visit one of the two stations set up by the Villas Boas brothers, or to take part in a collective celebration in one or another of the villages.

Between 1955 and 1970, at which times we visited these Indians, numerous changes in their favour had taken place, due to the efforts of the Villas Boas brothers; one might well speak of the most conclusive native experiment ever to be carried out in Brazil. Not only had the traditional culture of the population been preserved, but the physical survival of the Indians seemed to be definitely assured, -3-
or at least guaranteed, by the presence of a small but well-equipped hospital, a small airplane, a radio transmitter and receiver. Due to the isolation of the Indians, controlled by the Villas Boas brothers, and to vaccination campaigns carried out with the collaboration of the São Paulo Medical School, the danger of epidemics had been practically averted; it is no accident that the International Red Cross, on its recent Amazonian mission, confirmed the most excellent state of health here.

Incredible though it may seem, it is just this Xingu Park which, against the will of the Villas Boas brothers, but with the approval of FUNAI and of the entire government, was crossed in 1971 by a road linking Brasilia with Manaus - a road which was originally planned to pass north of the reservation. It is true that the part thus cut off, inhabited by several hundred Kayapo Indians, has been compensated by an extension of the southern part of the park, but this extension is of no more interest to the indigenous population than to the settlers. This is an extremely disquieting development in a country which for 150 years has considered itself as the champion of "humane and Christian" action, to serve as an example to the Geneva International Convention on the protection and integration of aboriginals (see AMAZIND map).

Judging from a document recently published by the Ministry of Transportation, Xingu National Park will not even get off this easy, but will be the object of yet another road violation. Linking Salvador with Cuiaba, BR 242 will cross the reservation at an even more critical point than BR 080: it will cut off the bottom of an already seriously mutilated body. Finally, in addition to all this the impending withdrawal of the Villas Boas brothers and their replacement by FUNAI personnel leaves little hope as to even the physical survival of a population relatively isolated from civilized people, and thus unprepared for being integrated with them.

We could extend the example of Xingu National Park to other territories apparently reserved for Indians, but this example suffices to illustrate Brazilian natives policy at present and to indicate the difficulty, indeed the impossibility, of solving the problem of the final remaining indigenous population of this country. Efforts expended by qualified persons such as the Villas Boas brothers are quite in vain when they collide with the failure of a responsible body which is as incompetent as it is powerless! This failure is all the more evident as it is supported by a fraudulent law known as the Statute of the Indian, which serves more the
interests of those who passed it than those of the Indians.

One must thus question the usefulness of the reservations announced by FUNAI, since this body is in no position to command respect for them and to prevent these territories which belong to the Indians from being invaded by elements of the dominant society. Economic expansion first, and at any price; later - or never - the rights of the Indians.

René Fuerst, AMAZIND
During the past years Brazilian indigenous policy has been strongly criticized and condemned. Thus, the question which immediately arises is: Why does a country, which was famous throughout the world for the quality of its legislation governing relationships with its tribal people, today deny its Indians even the most elementary conditions for survival? To attempt to answer that question would lead to refuting its validity.

Indeed, the policy toward the Indian, which has its origins in the colonial era, has not suffered any fundamental change up to the present. The SPI (Indian Protection Service), guided by humanitarian ideals, allowed the implementation of a valid policy. However, this was only a short-lived experience which is not characteristic of the usual Brazilian indigenous practice as a whole.

We shall now try to review the main stages of the implementation of that indigenous policy, summarizing Moreira Neto's conclusions. In order to avoid too lengthy an article we shall omit reproducing empirical data which the author uses and which can easily be consulted (1).

"The history of European colonial expansion over territories which later were to form Brazil is essentially that of a westward moving frontier constantly pushing further into areas which had been occupied for thousands of years by indigenous tribal populations" (p. 175).

"During the whole of the colonial period this expansion was achieved at the expense of the 'Indian and against him. Historical literature abounds with examples of just wars, slavery, epidemics of contagious diseases and the loss of territories, all of which exterminated the natives along the coast and in other areas already reached by the occupation. Documents of the end of the 18th century already testify to the decadence and the degree of exploitation and misery to which the natives of the Amazon region and other areas
were subjected after the failure of Pombal's plans to change colonial customs and life. Lay "leaders" of Indians replaced the missionaries and settlers in the exploitation of native labour. Economic and social development plans making use of the Indian as a free producer generally failed. In areas of the interior which were being settled the Indians continued to be subjected to the traditional techniques of just wars, deportation to the coast and enslavement, and even of being sold on the block to pay the costs of expeditions, in open defiance of all existing protection laws" (p. 176).

"With the move of the Portuguese royal court to Brazil and the promotion of the Colony to the status of Kingdom united to the metropolis, the number and the severity of repressive laws against the natives was increased. The growth of population along the coast stimulated the expansion in search of new territories. The last Indian territories in the coastal area were systematically invaded" (p. 177).

"In actions against hostile or simply bothersome Indians, any and all methods were considered valid and legitimate. It was a current practice to attract shy Indians with gifts and promises and then to enslave them or simply slaughter them. Not even intentional infection by highly contagious and deadly diseases, such as smallpox, was rejected by settlers and regional administrators..." (p. 178).

"The years immediately preceding the independence of the country marked a new vigour in the consolidation and enlargement of areas already occupied and consequently in the intensification of private or official actions against the Indians" (p. 176).

"During the past ten years Brazilian society has experienced fundamental structural changes, marked by industrial development, by a rapidly growing population and by the opening up of immense stretches of virgin territory to occupation by pioneering sectors of the population. These changes must also be linked with increasing tensions in the rural sector and with the beginning of agrarian reform and reforms in other sectors essential to the country's life. The building of Brasília is a clear sign of the pace and the direction of such changes. Vast areas have been made accessible to economic exploitation by the construction of thousands of miles of trunkroads. Along those highways and secondary roads which branch off from them, new settlement centers have been established, usually founded by real estate companies which have obtained large land concessions from State governments and then sell the land to farmers, by using modern advertising, credit and trans -
port means. In this way new pioneer settlements are being established in the Tocantins, the Tapajós, the Arinos regions, in the area of the Xingu headwaters, in the valleys of the Madeira and the Guaporé rivers, as well as in other areas. In its development, this rapid expansionist movement inevitably tends to affect areas, which are the refuge for the last remnants of native groups" (180/181).

"The question of land ownership constitutes the basis of the Indian problem and it is precisely on this fundamental issue that conflicts with indigenous groups have appeared throughout history. Governments from colonial days to the present times have invariably failed in the implementation of a policy adapted to the interests and rights of tribal groups, because the solutions to this and to other fundamental problems, which might have radically changed the character of traditional domination, were never seriously envisaged" (p. 180).

"Until 1964 appropriations of indigenous lands by groups of small landowners and by farmers without land had occurred on various occasions, especially in the southern States, constituting an additional threat to the traditional kind of occupation of vast stretches of tribal property by real estate companies, great landowners and rubber planters. In each of these incidents the intervention of SUPRA (Superintendence of Agrarian Policy) was implicitly based on criteria of "conciliation" and maintaining the status quo. As a matter of fact such interventions meant the permanence and legitimation of those occupations and consequently the expulsion of the Indians from part or the whole of their lands. The issue of indigenous minorities in the country is one that is neglected by, and to a certain extent contrary to the aims of agrarian reform. This is easy to explain: the agrarian reform plans only take into account the dominant interests of the national economy and are based on private ownership of land and on criteria of productivity and integrated economic development. In this context the Brazilian indigenous populations are not only quantitatively negligible, but are also economically, socially and culturally marginal human groups living on collectively owned reservations by economic techniques of mere tribal subsistence" (p. 184/185).

Thus, throughout the history of Brazil, the Indian has always been considered as an obstacle to progress and civilization.

In 1910 a new official approach resulted in the creation of the Indian Protection Service. Through the influence of positivist ideals there emerged a new image of the native as a being who,
although lacking protection, had the right to develop within his own cultural patterns.

"For the first time respect for the indigenous tribes was established as a principle of law, respect for people who had a right to be themselves, to have their own beliefs, to live according to the only way they knew: the way of life they had learned from their ancestors and which could change only very slowly" (D. Ribeiro, *A política indigenista brasileira*, 1962, p. 23).

After a brief period during which it was dedicated to the defense of the Indians' interests, the SPI came to voice, and in an increasingly demanding manner, the interests of national groups. (D. Ribeiro, op. cit., p. 135). Finally, in 1967 its mandate was terminated, when it no longer worked satisfactorily, even as a merely bureaucratic body.

In its place a new body, the FUNAI (National Indian Foundation) was created with the clear mandate to unify the various entities whose task it was to implement the government's indigenous policy. FUNAI's task is to harmonize the Indian defence policy with the interests of economic development of the country.

"When establishing the guidelines of its action FUNAI must take into account, on the one hand, the needs of national integration, the interests of the Brazilian community which wants to expand and is expanding, by eliminating any obstacles on the path of development and, on the other hand, it must consider the needs of the Indian who cannot change abruptly and whose traditions, customs, beliefs and way of life must be preserved so long as he needs them for his survival" (*Supysáua*, published by FUNAI, no date, pages unnumbered).

Since its inception FUNAI has been attempting to define its objectives in a wave of contradictory statements. Fairly liberally manipulating concepts of integration, acculturation, assimilation and maintenance of cultural patterns, FUNAI tries to prevent the country's development plans from harming the Indian, while at the same time trying to prevent the Indian from being an obstacle to national development. The difficulties of reconciling FUNAI's protectionist ideals with the programme of the Ministry of the Interior to which it is subordinated are really enormous. The inevitable outcome of this effort is a set of contradictory aims and endeavours which proclaim both respect for indigenous culture and its extinction through "acculturation". It may be that by some historical irony part of the responsibility for the inconsistencies found in today's official statements on indigenous policy.
falls upon Candido Mariano da Silva Rondon and his collaborators. Rondon proclaimed the country's duty to protect the last native populations from the destructive effects of national expansion, thus making Brazil internationally known for the outstanding qualities of its indigenous policy. (D. Ribeiro, A política indigenista brasileira, 1962, p. 26/27).

Today, in an extraordinary wave of developmental euphoria, FUNAI insists on upholding Rondon's concepts, using them as a motto for its "integrationist" policy of a singularly anti-Indian brand. The notable contradictions which this entails are ignored, since, indeed, they have very little weight when it comes to implementing national objectives. Thus, the Xingu National Park, where one of the few practical experiments of indigenous policy has been successfully carried out, is criticized by FUNAI for taking a position contrary to the "Federal Government's plans for promoting national integration" ("O Estado de São Paulo", 23/4/71).

The objectives and activities of the Xingu National Park.

Although they have been accused of practising an unfruitful isolationism ("Folha de São Paulo", 10/4/71; "O Estado de São Paulo", 22/4/71), the administrators of the Xingu Park are guided by Rondon's principles of indigenous policy: not to interfere violently in the life, the beliefs and customs of the Indians.

What are the practical activities of the Park?

Access to the Xingu river is fairly difficult. Before the Rio-Manaus air link was established by the FAB (Brazilian Air Force) the only normal way of acceding to the area was by land or by river.

Probably the main factors which facilitated the isolation of the native populations there, were the natural barriers protecting the region, the long distance from any civilized center, together with the existence of aggressive tribes in neighbouring areas and also the lack of economic interest in the land.

The first contact, of which we have knowledge, between those populations with white man's civilization was with the Von den Steinen expedition in 1884. From then on, several expeditions penetrated into the area and established contacts, periodically and temporarily, with the Indians of the Upper Xingu (Von den Steinen - 1887, Herman Meyer - 1896 and 1899, Max Schmidt - 1900 - 1901, Vasconcelos - 1942, Fawcett - 1926, Dyott - 1928, Petrullo - 1931, and Buell Quain - 1938).
A more regular, through indirect, contact was established, also in 1884, by the meeting of the Bakairi Indians, of the Novo and Paranatinga rivers, with the Indians of the Batovi river. That meeting led to the moving of the Bakairis from the headwaters of Xingu river to the Paranatinga and to the introduction of objects of civilization and disease into the region. However, it was not until the 1940s that the Indians established closer contacts with non-Indians.

The Central Brazil Foundation, a federal body, was established in 1942 with the purpose of settling the central area of Brazil and of integrating its populations into society. To achieve its aim the Foundation started by constructing roads and setting up encampments in the area. The FAB was interested in opening up a more direct air link between Rio de Janeiro and Manaus, via the interior of Mato Grosso, and for this purpose organized its project together with the Foundation. As men sent by the Foundation slowly penetrated into the area they were to prepare airstrips for the FAB. The group of men who began that penetration, called the Roncador-Xingu Expedition, reached the region of the headwaters of the Xingu river in 1946 and, on one of its affluents, the Jacaré, they founded a "posto" (outpost) which they named after that little affluent. The expedition continued toward the north and finally reached Manaus in 1953, thus concluding the Rio-Manaus connection. After the expedition ended, the Foundation still kept some personnel at the "postos", although their activity extended only as far as Araguarás, on the Araguaia river.

The leaders of the expedition, the Villas Boas brothers, stayed in the "postos" they had founded - Jacaré and Diauarum - and tried to do some useful work there for the protection of the Indians. They did not wish to transform the Indians into civilized men nor even to integrate them immediately into Brazilian society; the only thing they aspired to was to guarantee the Indians' life and their own way of living it.

The experience of the SPI through a few decades of activity had clearly shown that it was not enough to establish assistance "postos" in order to guarantee survival for the Indians. The process of expansion of Brazilian society and the rapid advance of its pioneer fronts, although it did not exterminate the Indian immediately, faced him with a situation of contact in which he was neither biologically nor culturally able to survive.

The first step to be taken by the Villas Boas brothers was to effectively guarantee the Indian of the Upper Xingu the possession.
of his land, so as to prevent any reduction of his territory which
could endanger the performance of his traditional economy. There
was no doubt that if strict measures in this respect was not adop-
ted, the establishment of "postos" in the area would be of very
little use. Proof of this was to be found only a few years after
the Roncador-Xingu Expedition had passed through the area which,
although it had only marginal economic importance, acquired a cer-
tain distinction in Brazil, for it did not take long before the new
area became the target of real estate speculation. Under the very
eyes of the Foundation, the land was divided and sold to private
individuals. Only the energetic reaction of the leaders of the for-
mer Expedition and of the SPI managed to put a stop to the selling
of Indian land. Finally a more definite protection of those terri-
tories was achieved in 1961, when the Xingu National Park was cre-
ted, covering an area of 22,000 square kilometres.

When we speak of the Xingu Park activities from here on, we
are referring, in a certain manner, to the whole of the Villas Boas
brothers' activities since 1946. During those twenty years in the
area they upheld the same indigenous policy encharged by the expe-
rience of living together with the Indians over such a long period.

The purpose of the Xingu National Park is to ensure the survi-
val of the native groups which live in it or might come to live in
it and to preserve the wildlife resources which constitute a reser-
ve for scientific research. (2)

The Park has two "postos", similarly organized: the "Posto
Leonardo Villas Boas" which provides assistance to the Kalapalo,
Kuikuro, Nahukwá, Matipuhy, Waurá, Mehinako, Iawalapiti, Kamairú,
Aweti, Txicão and Trumai Indians, and the "Posto Diauarum", which does the
same for the Suyá, Kayabi, Juruna and Txucarramãe Indians. We shall
limit ourselves to describing the "Posto Leonardo Villas Boas"
which we had the occasion to study in greater detail.

The "posto" is located on the left bank of the Tutuarí river,
just above the southern border of the Park. Arriving there by plane,
one immediately sees a wide road connecting the airstrip with an
open space surrounded by trees, with a huge "Piquizeiro" tree in
the center. Around the open space are located the headquarters of
the "posto", the infirmary, the dentist's surgery, the engine room,
the houses for employees and Indians working at the "posto" and the
workshops.

The main activity of the "posto" is the care for the Indians' physical health. The assistance programme comprises disease and
epidemic control, as well as measures to increase food resources, and is aimed at improving the Indians' health and preventing depopulation. It is the practice of the dental and infirmary services always to be ready to carefully attend to patients, persuading them to come for consultation and treatment.

Normally Indians in need of medical care, come to the "posto". The medical team will go into a village only when there is an epidemic or when the displacement of patients is too difficult. On such occasions, and depending on the severity of the illness, Indians may be taken to the "posto" by air. Cases which require specialized medical treatment are sent to regional hospitals or even to São Paulo. The SUSU (Aerial Health Units Service) periodically visits the Park and submits all the Indians and employees to a medical check-up.

The "posto" also teaches health rules, which are all the more necessary now that contacts with civilization are more frequent. Furthermore it introduces new farm products and techniques which can help to increase food production and to enrich the Indians' diet. As part of its preventive measures the "posto" also controls the entrance of non-Indians into the area and their relationships with Indians.

However, these are not the only activities of the "posto". With the purpose of making the Indian familiar with some techniques of modern society and in order to prepare him to participate in the maintenance of the "posto", a simple system of practical training has developed. The training is done at the "posto" itself, at first in a rather unsystematic manner until its complexity requires a more formal framework. Indians from any group may participate in this training, but the Kayabi, who have had more contact with Brazilian society, supply most of the candidates. In 1965 there were twelve Kayabi Indians living at the "posto", three of whom had their wives and children with them; there were two Kamaiurá and only one each of the following groups: Suyá, Trumai, Txucarramãe, Waurá, Iawalapiti and Mehinako.

There are several levels of training for the Indians. The first one is kitchen work, where they start as helpers, then take over responsibility for the food supplies and finally become cooks, able to prepare dishes to cater for a white man's tastes. From there on they can choose the kind of work which interests them most: bricklaying, carpentry, machine maintenance, etc. Training continues as the degree of complexity of the task increases. Presently there are some young Kayabi men at the "posto" who are able to take care,
alone, of the working and maintenance of water pumps, generators, tractors; they are able to drive a jeep or a tractor and have a fairly reasonable practical knowledge of the functioning of such engines. When they reach that stage of training, they are made directly responsible for the machines they operate and as the equipment stock of the "posto" increases, some Indians are trained in the operation of it. The management of the "posto" believes that it will soon be able to rely upon teams of Indians to supervise the technical aspects of the Park's activities.

Less acculturated Indians go through a simpler training. Usually after the stage of civilized cooking they go on to the pharmacy and infirmary, and then return to their villages. As a general rule, these Indians only stay for a short while at the "posto". The nature of their links with the tasks they perform is definitely temporary. They are more like "students" who after finishing the basic course return home. Such a procedure seems coherent with the kind of life they lead in their villages and which requires from the youngsters that they participate in a series of ceremonies and training in group techniques.

An Indian father will let his son live at the "posto" and learn things from civilized men as long as that doesn't interfere with his education as an Indian. The period from childhood to puberty is the most appropriate for the training of young Indians at the "posto". During that stage of his life the young Indian, if he stays at his village, will participate only very occasionally in the activities of grown men and will spend most of his time on children's games rather than adult tasks. It is a period during which the child is already fairly free from his mother's protection but has not yet entered the men's circle; the young Indian boys gather in their own age-groups and, judging from what we saw of the Kamaiurá Indians, boys assume less social responsibility than girls of the same physical maturity.

Except for one Waurá Indian, married, and a Suyá boy who had already been there since 1965, the other Indians who lived at the "posto" in 1966, among the "less acculturated" category, were from groups whose villages were relatively close to the "posto". There were Kamaiurá, Mehinako and Iawalapiti. Possibly the smaller distance between a village and the "posto" is a positive factor in the decision to let a young boy leave his home, since communication between the "posto" and the village is easier. Although one of the aims of the "posto" is to make the Indian acquainted with some of the techniques of civilization, there is no systematic recruitment
of personnel. The Indian himself, if he is an adult, or those responsible for him, if he is still very young, are the ones who decide whether and when he is to enter an apprenticeship and when to leave it.

Living at the "posto" gives the Indian the experience of a new kind of life, which doubtless has many attractions. The use of clothes, access to new tools unknown to him, initiation into strange techniques and mainly the possibility of participating in a more active way of life, all these seem to be factors which induce the Indian to try the new experience. At the "posto" he can see planes landing every week, bringing people and goods; Indians from other villages pass through there and bring news; there is radio contact with São Paulo and Brasília offering a wealth of new sensations for those who have been used to a calm village life.

To live at the "posto" also means to establish closer relationships with the employees responsible for its administration and to participate, although indirectly, in the sphere of civilized power instituted in the area. Whatever his position, even as a mere kitchen-help, the Indian obeys the orders of the Park administration and, consequently, serves the "posto". For visitors he is part of the machinery which enables the smooth working of the organization and he relates to them as such. His responsibility toward the "posto" is above the emotional involvement which might result from his relationship with visitors.

During his stay at the "posto" the Indian becomes more fluent in Portuguese, thereby increasing his capacity to communicate with the civilized world and with other Indians who live at the "posto". When he returns to his village he can spread his new knowledge to his fellow men. He will be able to appreciate salt, macaroni or rice better than others and he will have more knowledge of the civilized man's life. When visitors come to the village, he is their natural guide and assistant. It is practically only on such occasions that he will be able to make use of what he has learned. Within traditional village life, little of the novelties he has brought home will endure. Except for the rules of hygiene which he has learned to value, there will hardly be a chance of putting into practice the remainder of what he has learned, due to lack of equipment and cultural motivation.

Training at the "posto" is more rewarding for the more acculturated Indians, especially the Kayabi. They tend to live at the "posto" with their families and show more interest in the tê's
they perform. Far away from the village lives they used to lead, they establish contact with the civilized world in a more decisive manner. According to the Park's plans, these Indians will in the future form the technical staff of the "posto", so that the presence of white men for technical jobs will be less and less necessary.

To ensure the survival of the Indians does not only mean to care for their physical health. Just as the Upper Xingu Indian was affected by disease brought by civilized man, he was also affected by metal tools. Firearms, axes, hoes, etc. obtained by barter, plunder or received as presents entered into the cultural pattern of Indian life and today are part of his working tools. In 1970 all the Kamaiurá handicraft was made with the aid of civilized tools. This has created new needs which cannot be satisfied with the Indians technical resources and therefore it now falls upon the "posto" to regularly supply all the Indian groups with the metal tools they need. Along with metal tools which are essential for the native's work, other articles have also reached the Upper Xingu populations and are today supplied by the "posto": porcelain beads, nylon fishlines, fishhooks, chemical dyes for cotton yarn, shaving blades, etc. A list of requests from Indians to the management of the "posto" in 1965 contained the following items: From the Mehinako Indians: large knife, hoe, ax, spade, scythe, hammer, thin fishline, hooks, sinker, gunpowder, primer, shirt, trousers, macaroni, umbrella, battery, flashlight bulb, matches, red cotton yarn, scissors, shaving blades, small knife, drill, adz, sugar, small bag. From the Kuikuro Indians: large knife, ax, hoe, scythe, matches, red clothes, comb, mirror, fishhook, fishline, scissors, shirt, shorts, large kettle and ammunition.

The Upper Xingu Indian depends on some of these items for his survival; he can no longer go without the large knife, the hoe, the metal ax. The efficiency of those tools has been proved by the increase in productivity and the consequent lesser effort needed for productive work. At the same time, the techniques which those Indians used years ago for the manufacture of stone tools have been disappearing and only some of the older men still retain fading memories of the kind of work their ancestors used to do. Metal has irreversibly substituted stone in the Upper Xingu Indian civilization.

Other items, though not directly necessary for survival, are nonetheless important for the prestige of native groups, e.g. red clothes, bags, etc. Little by little the Indians are becoming more
and more interested in articles of the civilized world thus creating needs which, as time goes by, must be filled regularly. To ask for an umbrella, today may seem an extravagant request, tomorrow it may be a necessity. The "posto" tries to meet the Indians' requests according to the importance of the items for the life of the group. Requests can be made individually by anyone; in practice, however, those Indians who have a greater facility in relating and communicating take the initiative and become spokesmen for their fellow people.

Some years back the "posto" used to distribute such articles before receiving any requests, but this practice seems to have caused a very rapid turnover of those items and little care for their maintenance. In view of this, the Park administration decided to distribute articles only on request. The Indians come up slowly to the administrator or his representative until their presence is noticed. After some greetings, they present their requests or claims. Any requests which can not be satisfied at the moment are noted down. When a request is impracticable the administrator handles the matter in such a way as to satisfy the claimant with some other substitute item. On such occasions the principle followed is to adopt a solicitous, gentle attitude, to try to satisfy the Indians expectations.

Generally speaking two basic concerns guide the "posto"'s activities. In the short run, it tries to ensure the survival of the indigenous populations by adopting preventive health measures and giving medical care. In this context it interferes, in a planned manner, even in the native food production activities, so as to strengthen the traditional diet. It also exerts a control over the contacts between Indians and Whites in order to prevent the entry of contagious diseases into the Indian villages, especially those diseases which are communicable through sexual intercourse. In the long run, it is trying to prepare the Indians to remain an autonomous people for the day when, in the unknown future, they will come into more direct contact with Brazilian society. For this purpose innovations are introduced slowly, while at the same time attempting to preserve the social cohesion within each of the native groups.

Following this line, the "posto" encourages the holding of the main native ceremonies and upholds the prestige of village leaders who have effective control of their groups. The administrators of the Park, while carrying out their activities in pursuance of the above mentioned aims, are also conscious of the dangers
which an abrupt change in the Indian's lifestyle can entail, i.e. disorganization and the loss of cultural identity of the native groups. The performance of their tasks requires of the Park's administrators a strong control over all those situations which involve not only the introduction of new articles but also the relations between civilized man and the Indians. The success of this new kind of enterprise lies in the identification and rapid intervention in any process which might cause profound disruption in the villages. The lesser the interference in the Indian's life which escape the control of the "posto" are, the greater will be the chances of achieving the desired results.

However, the Park personnel are not the only civilized men in the area. Within the borders of the Xingu National Park there is also the Brazilian Air Force base.

The air-strip was built in 1946 by the Central Brazil Foundation and in 1954 it passed under the control of the FAB with the purpose of serving as a radio-connection point on the route of domestic and international airlines. The FAB base is hierarchically linked to the Directorate of Air Routes and the Fourth Air Zone of São Paulo. The military personnel of the base, about 8 people, is directly recruited by the FAB in São Paulo. The civilian personnel, about 15 people, are engaged mainly from neighbouring areas and take care of farming work, construction and installation maintenance.

Contacts between Indians and FAB personnel are usually secret. The information which Indians supply on those contacts is always in the form of an accusation, telling about others who have gone to the base, in order to stress their own "correct" behaviour or that of their companions. In any case, such visits seem to be infrequent; according to what could be gathered from informants, their occurrence is due to fortuitous circumstances. FAB personnel does not encourage visits from Indians to the base, for several reasons. The isolation of the area and the difficulties of communication with supplying centers require a careful control of food supplies; Indians at the camp means spending extra food. On the other hand there is very little the Indians can do which cannot be done by the civilians at the base. Only the meeting of an Indian woman is a temptation for the civilized men at the base, but that kind of relation is punishable and strongly disapproved of. If such meetings do occur, they are fortuitous and infrequent.

For the Indian, the base is essentially a place where he can barter, a "market" far from the control of the Park's employees,
where he can get not only items which are not normally distributed by the "posto" but even those which are expressly forbidden. Ammuni-
tion and firearms, for instance, are items which the Park does not hand out freely, so the Indian goes to the FAB base for them. Al-
coholic drinks also, which are specifically forbidden for Indians, can be obtained from the civilian personnel at the base.

The Park employees and in particular those of the "Posto Leonardo Villas Boas" can only try to prevent the Indians from visi-
ting the base, since they cannot control the personnel working at the airbase. Indirectly, of course, they try to obtain assurances from the commandant of the base that he will apply stricter vigil-
ance over the relations of his subordinates with Indians, but they cannot prevent such relations.

The "posto" still has to control a further kind of relation-
ship between Indians and civilized men, i.e. between visitors and researchers and the Indians. These relationships are perfectly con-
trolled. A foreigner who comes to the Park, with the consent of the Park's authorities, is informed of the rules of behaviour he must follow in relation to the Indians. And the Indians themselves are warned how to behave when they receive a visiting researcher in their villages. On such occasions the same prohibitions apply: No sexual intercourse with Whites and no alcoholic beverages for the Indians.

The "posto" also exerts a disguised control over the kind of items visitors and researchers bring along as gifts for the Indians. Often these visitors are the channel through which new articles come into the native's life and thereupon create new needs. Since such visits from outsiders are short and sporadic, the "posto" then has to go on supplying those new items. For an outsider who visits the Park only a few times in his life, it is easy enough to present the Indians with such items as transistor radios, coloured fishing nets, mosquito nets, etc. For the Park, however, the in-
crease in the Indians' list of requests is a burdensome and useless charge, especially when they are articles which are not necessary for the native production activities. As the need for items from the civilized world grows, the responsibility of the Park for their supplying increases. However, since visitors and researchers must obtain the cooperation of the Indians during their short stays, the general tendency is to give guides and informants cer-
tain articles which already have a defined barter value for the Indians. This practice ensures the homogeneity of the kinds of goods introduced into the area.

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These are, generally speaking, the main problems the Xingu National Park authorities have to face in their efforts to control relations between the Indians and the civilized world.

It is today possible to assess the viability of the principles defended by the Villas Boas brothers:

1) Guarantee of land ownership

Until very recently the constant struggle of the Park's authorities for the preservation of the integrity of Indian territory was successful. During the first months of 1971, however, this territory was cut through by highway BR-080. In spite of the countless protests in the press and from national and international anthropological associations, the road was built through the Park.

So as not to mark the invasion into Indian territory too clearly, the limits of the Park were modified, the land north of the road being expropriated "so that the Park would not be cut through by the road" (O Estado de São Paulo", 13/7/1971) and a piece of land being added to the south of the Park in compensation.

2) The Indians' physical health

As regards the physical survival of the Indians, the age pyramids reveal considerable changes in the age structure of the Kamaiurá population between 1949 and today. (3)

E. Galvão's data shows a population characterized by a low percentage of under 14-year olds due to the high rates of infant and juvenile mortality, reflecting the final stages of a long and painful process of depopulation.

Our pyramid based on 1971 data shows a population growth and a natural growth in the younger age groups, from which it may be concluded that the health measures adopted have allowed the population to grow and have considerably reduced the infant mortality rate.

3) Cultural preservation

The implementation of a protectionist policy entails a deliberate interference in the Indian's life. Although the aims of such a policy are to preserve the Indian's culture, it can only be implemented by disciplining relations among indigenous communities and between them and civilized man. Measures which aim at ensuring the physical wellbeing of the Indians or peaceful relations among villages must necessarily lead to cultural changes, some of which are unforeseeable.
The following is a description of the changes that occurred among the Kamaiurá Indians, a group whose evolution has been followed by the author since 1965.

The Kamaiurá, like the other Upper Xingu Indians, did not escape the process of change and, although they have kept many of their traditions alive, they have suffered the consequences of contact with Brazilian society. The decrease in handicraft production, though moderate, has been considerable in some sectors; stone tools like the ax have long disappeared. Traditional hunting and fishing equipment today has practically no more than a symbolic value, as a consequence of the use of fishhooks, nylon fishlines, firearms, etc. This is also the case of the black-wood bow which, although it is still indispensable as a group symbol, is hardly ever used for productive purposes and practically never for protection. Barter between villages, which at some point in the life of any tribal group must have become an economic necessity, is nowadays more like a formalized occasion for two groups to visit each other. Exchanges between Indians themselves now seem to be an act of individual initiative rather than an organized group activity.

The "Posto Leonardo Villas Boas" has assumed the role of central supplier of production tools and the Indian goes there when he needs something. There is no need for any plans at village level to be made nor for the chief of the group to give his opinion about any request an Indian wishes to make to the "posto".

As economic relations between the Indian and the "posto" are progressively strengthened, i.e. as the Indian becomes more and more dependent upon the supply of "civilized" items, the importance of economic relations among the different groups of Upper Xingu Indians diminishes. In this way most of the indigenous production tools have been substituted by tools which permit a higher yield from work and ensure a greater dependence on the aid policy.

Other aspects of native life have also been affected by regular contact with civilization. Let us mention only the more obvious examples which reveal the degree of penetration of the new cultural elements into the world of the Kamaiurá. Some values and aspects of the Indian's explanation of the world system and the origin of man have been modified or widened to include "civilized man".

In the present versions of the myth of creation, civilized man appears as the work of the civilizing hero Mavutsinín; the objects brought by civilized men come into those myths as symbols of caraib (generic term for "civilized"). Sometimes the rifle appears as a representative element, sometimes it is the tape recor-
der. The aeroplane has been identified as apacani a character from
the mythological era of the Kamaiurá.

With the arrival of professional doctors at the "posto" the
medical powers of the pajé (medicine man) have diminished. Never-
theless, the Indians first appeal to him in case of need, before
asking for help from the "posto". The Indians' acquaintance with
modern medicines and the confidence in the efficiency of their re-
results, in some cases has singularly obscured the special rôle of the
"pajé".

The kuapy festival and the jawari game have already been held
as a tribute to the memory of Leonardo Villas Boas, who died some
years ago. In the first of these ceremonies, along with the tra-
ditional ritual carried out by the Indians, the "posto" executed
one of the profane rites: a show of fireworks. At the jawari fe-
stival, also held in tribute of Leonardo Villas Boas, it was plan-
ne to have several Upper Xingu Indian groups meet instead of the
normal confrontation of only two groups. It is not known whether
that change was suggested by the "posto" or whether it came from
the Indians so as to enhance the tribute. This reveals two chan-
ges in the usual pattern: the celebration of a feast in memory of
a civilized man and the meeting of more than two indigenous groups
at the jawari game. The "posto", by agreeing to this kind of meeting,
becomes an agent of changes in tribal traditions. It is worthwhile
pointing out that even if the "posto" had not agreed to such festi-
vities, its interference would not have been diminished.

Finally, together with the indigenous cultural values there
coexists values disseminated by the "posto". Without conflicting
with their traditional ethic values the Indians maintain a para-
allel framework of values. The "good" and the "correct" are manipu-
lated both within the purely indigenous context as well as in rela-
tion to the "posto"'s ethics. Situations such as "going to the FAB
base", "having sexual intercourse with civilized people", "quarrel
with Indians from other groups", etc. are "correct" or not, de-
pending on the context in which the Indian finds himself. It is inter-
esting to note that this double standard of values does not neces-
sarily cause conflicts. The two frameworks are parallel and there-
fore not mutually exclusive. The important thing is not to con-
found the two sets of reference: the one used among Indians them-
selves and the one used for good relations with the "posto". This,
however, seems to indicate a gradual process of adjustment and cul-
tural change.

The Kamaiurá Indian is linked to the "posto" by a state of
unilateral economic dependence. As the only regular donor of goods, especially working tools, the "posto" achieves the subordination of the Indians, which is necessary for it to apply its protection policy. The power exercised by the authorities of the "posto" and which is recognized by the Indians themselves, reveals itself both in clear prohibitions of indigenous behaviour which must be avoided and through paternalistic advice. At the head of the list of prohibitions is sexual intercourse between Indians and civilized people. Furthermore, the Indian may not leave the territory of the National Park. The visiting of Indian women to the FAB base, although not expressly forbidden, is strongly discouraged. The Park authorities believe that the presence of civilized men, usually rural workers engaged by the base, is a constant potential threat to the physical health and moral integrity of Indian women. The Indians are also advised not to steal, to keep the landing strip of their village clean and, finally, to respect a series of lesser rules on relations with civilized men and with other Indians. All this is an unwritten code to which the Indians submit and if they do transgress it some time, they do so secretly, without openly challenging the Parks power.

One of the characteristics of the present world seems to be the integration of smaller societies into larger ones. This kind of absorption causes changes in the power structure, i.e. it means the loss of autonomy of those who are absorbed. Consequently, cultural changes are practically inevitable. The Kamaiurá, in this instance, did not escape being absorbed by Brazilian society. In order to subsist, the economy of the group became dependent upon the supply of goods produced by foreign agents. The power which used to lie in the hands of indigenous chiefs became centralized and displaced outside the limits of the group.

In spite of all those consequences, some of which might not have been foreseen by the Park's policy makers, this process of change has not, until now, had any disruptive effects. The same can be said for the structural changes resulting from a dislocation of the power center, which have not caused the disorganization of the groups affected. This is due to the fact that the production patterns, which are the basis of the economic and social structure of the Kamaiurá, have been preserved, although the economic structure as a whole can only continue to exist through links of subordination to national society.

This account would be incomplete if it did not attempt to show what the Indian thinks about his situation. In a research survey
which the author is carrying out, it was possible, through a num-
ber of life stories of Indians, to obtain a fairly clear picture
of the Kamaiurá Indian's way of looking at life. From the accounts
gathered it is possible to distinguish three stages in the Kamaiurá
history: the mythical times when man was created; the days of the
grandparents during which the Indians did not yet have any contacts
with Whites; and the present time which lasts from the first en-
counters of the Indians with civilized man until the present day.
However, the present time still keeps the essence of tribal life as
it was defined in the mythical times.

According to the Kamaiurá an Indian is born, marries, works to
feed his family and to help his father-in-law as a sign of his re-
spect; he clears the forest, plants, fishes, hunts, creates goods;
he dances, sings, fights and dies. This order established by the
civilizing hero Mavutsinin defines the course of history for a Ka-
maiurá. The present way of life is understood as the implementation
of models previously created. New social experiences are considered
as secondary when compared to the preservation of traditional insti-
tutions which are the symbol of Indian society. Since the essential
part subsists and new elements are referred to the past which cla-
risfies everything, it is as though time were abolished. They live
today as they have always lived, even though metal has replaced
stone, bone and stick. The Indian continues to live as an Indian.
Without that kind of life the Indians disappear, their existence
as a people comes to an end. Brazilian society is considered by
the Indians to be extraordinarily rich. The great cities which
some of them have visited, the luxury of some objects brought in-
to the area by visitors, everything is evidence of the opulence of
civilized man. Therefore, the Indian believes it would be good to
barter with civilized man, to go into the cities and offer the in-
digenous products there: bows, arrows, baskets, necklaces etc. As
for the Park, it should stay where it is. It works as a good pro-
ector who supplies medicines and health care. It has already ta-
med many savage Indians and can also protect the Kamaiurá from bad
white men, like the civilized men who are now invading indigenous
lands.

As can be seen from this account of an Indian's view, the
Upper Xingu Indians, and among them the Kamaiurá, are feeling the
situation of life on a reservation, by virtue of the protectionist
policy. Freed from the direct impact of Brazilian society, they
nevertheless suffer some restrictions which were unknown to them in
previous times. They know only of reality what they are allowed to
know.

On the other hand, those Indians who live in the Park are temporarily freed from the class structure mechanism which has already engulfed hundreds of other tribal groups; they are free from the kind of civilization underdevelopment can offer them. Some people may object that geographical segregation, legal incapacity and economic and political dependence of those Indians in fact puts them into a kind of colonial situation. Formally the author would agree. However, it is fitting to consider also that the Xingu National Park tries to prevent direct involvement of the Upper Xingu Indian in a market economy system and, furthermore, does not exploit indigenous labor. (4)

Another important fact is that the Park exerts its power in the area with the purpose of maintaining the native groups and preserving their equalitarian society. This is a power which is exercised so as to guarantee the existence of those who are dominated. For how long this situation can be upheld does not depend upon academic arguments.

It is true that the Xingu National Park still remains a sore spot within the National Indian Foundation. Although its extinction has sometimes been advocated, it has not yet been feasible. The possibility of negative international repercussions has made FUNAI tolerate the existence of the Park for the time being, not without exerting certain pressures which it can easily apply.

The success of this kind of experience must not deceive us. Although the Villas Boas brothers may dedicate what is left of their lives to continuing in their relentless battle for the defence of some tribal groups, as the economic frontiers of the country progressively advance and a monetary economy develops in this area, it is very probable, indeed practically inevitable, that social class relationships will become established as the only way of integrating these Indians into national society, according to the State's reasoning and logic.
NOTES


2) The Xingu National Park was established by an Executive Decree in 1961 and began its activities with funds allocated by the Executive. In 1963 the Park fell under the responsibility of the MECOR and was allocated funds from that Ministry. At present it is under the Ministry of the Interior, through FUNAI, itself a body of that Ministry.

3) No data are supplied for the other Indian groups due to the lack of uniformity in the criteria used by various researchers who studied the subject.

4) It is pertinent to recall that the Statutes of the FUNAI, approved by Decree no. 62196, of 31 January 1968, provide in their article 4 that "The assets of the Foundation are constituted by ... (V) a tenth of the net annual income from Indian assets". Article 17 states that "income from Indian assets shall be managed by the Foundation with a view to achieving the following purposes: economic emancipation of the tribes, increase of productive assets and financing of assistance services to the Indians" (italics added by author).