

# DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SITUATION OF BRAZILIAN TRIBAL POPULATIONS FROM 1976 TO 1982\*

*Greg Urban*

*University of Texas, Austin*

Since 1976 profound changes have occurred in Brazilian national society, changes that have implications for the tribal populations in Brazil as well as for those conducting anthropological and linguistic research among these populations. Many of these changes can be linked to the government policy of *abertura* (opening). This policy was begun implicitly under the regime of Ernesto Geisel (1974–79) and has been continued more explicitly by the current President, João Baptista de Oliveira Figueiredo, who is scheduled to remain in office until 1985. Perhaps equally as important at the infrastructural level have been the global economic changes that were largely linked to earlier increases in oil prices. These steep increases have severely shaken the Brazilian economy, causing annual inflation rates in 1980, 1981, and 1982 of approximately 100 percent.

For the tribal populations, the key components of their current situation are the civil society (itself internally differentiated), the Brazilian national government, and religious organizations. Any realistic understanding of the present-day situation must consider the complex dynamic of interaction among these components, whose long-range goals and intentions must first be understood. This essay will attempt to assess these goals and intentions on the basis of my experiences in Brazil in 1974–76 and 1981–82.

## THE CIVIL SOCIETY: "SUPPORT GROUPS" AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS

Civil society in Brazil, insofar as the tribal populations are concerned, consists of at least two distinct components: the "support groups" that have mushroomed since 1977 to aid the tribal populations

\*I would like to thank Professors Sylvia M. Caiuby Novaes and Lux B. Vidal of the University of São Paulo and Professor David Maybury-Lewis of Harvard for their numerous comments on earlier versions of this paper.

and economic interests such as ranching, lumbering, and mining that are engaged in utilizing land and resources in the interior of Brazil.

### *Support Groups*

An important development since 1976 has been the proliferation of groups and organizations working on behalf of indigenous peoples in Brazil. In May of 1977, the first Associação Nacional de Apoio ao Índio (ANAI) was formed in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul. Since then ANAI groups have proliferated in Bahia, Ijuí, Paraná, and Rio de Janeiro. In April of 1978, the first groups working under the name Comissão Pro-Índio (CPI) were formed in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Sergipe, Alagoas, Acre, and Maranhão. Other support groups include the Centro de Trabalho Indigenista (CTI) in São Paulo, the Grupo de Apoio ao Índio in Belém, the Grupo de Estudos sobre a Questão Indígena (GREQUI), and the Grupo Kukuro de Apoio a Causa Indígena, as well as groups focusing on more specialized problems, such as the Comissão pela Criação do Parque Yanomami (CCPY). It is difficult to keep track of all of these groups and their activities because the situation is still fluid, with new groups being formed as old ones disappear (see the appendix).

The proliferation of support groups was not a fortuitous phenomenon, however. It was at least to some degree part of a conscious strategy for dealing with a multifaceted reality. The nature of "Indian problems" in Brazil varies from region to region according to the degree and kind of contact with Brazilian national society; hence, the decision to create distinct regional ANAIs and CPIs. The different groups also focus on different aspects of the "Indian problem." For example, ANAI is more interested in legal issues, CPI in government policy, and CTI in formulating and carrying out projects of economic development in indigenous areas. Finally, the proliferation of support groups was important for diffusing the tensions that could have developed between the federal government, on the one side, and a monolithic tribal support group, on the other. This view does not suggest that no factionalism exists among the support groups themselves but that the decision to proliferate support groups represented an attempt to adapt to the complex social and political realities in Brazil at the time.

In nature these groups somewhat resemble international groups that already had appeared elsewhere in the world, such as the International Work Group for Indian Affairs (IWGIA), Survival International, Cultural Survival, and the Anthropology Resource Center (ARC), as well as Amazind and Indígena. But the Brazilian groups differ in being more intensely involved in the day-by-day developments in Brazil. Their membership consists primarily of anthropologists, former FUNAI

workers, doctors, and lawyers, with each group having its own headquarters, elected officials, and regular meetings.

To take an example with which I am most familiar, the Comissão Pro-Índio—São Paulo (CPI-SP) meets formally on a weekly or semi-weekly basis. It publishes a monthly bulletin to disseminate information to its members. The *Boletim* contains information about national and international developments affecting Brazilian tribal populations, statements of opinion by tribal leaders, and news of upcoming events. The CPI-SP also publishes a series of booklets (*cadernos*) for wider distribution that deal with key problems relative to the "Indian question." So far it has published three *cadernos* entitled *A Questão da Emancipação*, *A Questão da Terra*, and *Índios: Direitos Históricos*. These little volumes are invaluable for those interested in the current plight of tribal Brazilian populations because CPI-SP members are in constant contact with tribal leaders. Often interviewed by the press about issues affecting indigenous peoples, this group is among the most active and visible in Brazil.

The CPI-SP differs markedly in its orientation from the Centro de Trabalho Indigenista (CTI). Whereas the CPI sees its role in terms of publicizing or bringing to the national consciousness information about the Indian populations, especially their plight and their point of view on recent developments, the CTI takes the much more practical role of organizing projects of economic revitalization among the tribal populations themselves. Its members appear only infrequently on television and make few statements to the press, but they are more involved in the daily life of Indian villages because they spend a considerable portion of their time there. They seek to make tribal societies economically viable, and preferably autonomous, entities. They consider economic adaptation to changing conditions as the precondition for "cultural survival."

### *Economic Interests*

Differences among these "support groups" are minor, however, when contrasted with the economic interests operative in Brazilian society. Such economic interests view tribal populations as obstacles to their goal of exploiting the interior for profit. Because tribal populations are far weaker militarily than the larger Brazilian society, they obviously cannot wage a successful military campaign for independence and autonomy. Many of them nevertheless have tried, with attacks and counterattacks forming a constant of life in the interior. But insofar as national policy is oriented to economic interests in Brazil, the indigenous cause is already lost. Yet national policy is precisely what support groups inside and outside Brazil are attempting to affect. Insofar as these groups can convince the world that native cultures are intrinsi-

cally valuable, that tribal peoples have certain "historical rights" to their lands, health, and cultural integrity, in that measure can the support groups hope to influence policy. It is for this reason that the support groups come into conflict with economic interests, not because the latter have anything against tribal populations in principle.

During the recent period, the level of economic activity in the interior of Brazil has been striking indeed, at least as impressive as the level of activity of the support groups that are monitoring the situation. One has the unmistakable sense that the "frontier" is rapidly closing, that twenty, perhaps even ten, years from now there will be no tribal Brazilian populations in what Darcy Ribeiro termed an "isolated" state, that is, having no direct contact with the national society.<sup>1</sup>

During the 1976–82 period, the "economic miracle" described by Shelton Davis in *Victims of the Miracle* has given way to an economic crisis, fueled by the energy shortage. This crisis in turn has affected the activities of economic interests because the government is now supporting projects designed to produce alternative sources of energy. Such projects include producing alcohol as a gasoline substitute and exploiting the interior for exportable goods to use in diminishing the enormous foreign debt, which had reached some sixty billion U.S. dollars by 1982.

Three major developments are directly affecting tribal populations. First, the numerous hydroelectric dam projects are affecting various parts of Brazil.<sup>2</sup> Second, the Polonoroeste project, a massive development project funded by the World Bank for the state of Rondônia and western Mato Grosso, will construct paved roads and encourage the colonization of a vast area.<sup>3</sup> Third, the Grande Carajás project, another massive development undertaking, will involve southern Pará and northern Maranhão, an immense area circumscribed by the Xingu River, the Paranaíba River, the eighth parallel south, the Amazon River, and the Atlantic Ocean. It will entail large-scale mineral exploitation, steel and iron industries, lumber extraction, cattle raising, agriculture, and hydroelectric projects.<sup>4</sup>

The Grande Carajás project is of such an order of magnitude that it represents a wholly new kind of social entity. The Brazilian government estimates that it will require investments totaling sixty billion U.S. dollars,<sup>5</sup> a figure equal to the Brazilian foreign debt in 1982. Much of the rhetoric surrounding the Carajás project concerns claims that revenue from this project alone will be sufficient to retire the foreign debt. By way of comparison, the entire Polonoroeste project was budgeted for 1980–85 at 1.24 billion U.S. dollars. Carajás involves a level of planning, coordination, and financing previously undreamed of in the history of the interior of Brazil.

In sum, these projects have served as an umbrella for economic

interests, foreign and domestic, in their pursuit of economic gain, and the very existence of these projects indicates the general position of the national government in regard to the "Indian question." It should be added, however, that the support groups are having an effect here. The World Bank initially made funding for the Polonoroeste project conditional upon safeguarding the rights of tribal populations affected by the project. A similar stipulation may be in the offing for the Grande Carajás project.

#### THE GOVERNMENT

In practical terms, often no clear separation exists in Brazil between government interests and "economic interests" because many of the companies operating in Brazil's interior are actually government-controlled. For example, the Vale do Rio Doce, the principal corporation involved in Grande Carajás, is state-controlled. But the government should be considered an analytically distinct component in the present-day situation because it transcends economic interests in certain respects and is guided by a vision of Brazil as a distinct nation-state. In this regard, the tribal populations must perforce figure into the government's vision and impinge upon its actions, all the more so because the Indians make up a part of the image that Brazil projects to the rest of the world.

During the 1976–82 period, however, the government's vision has consistently been dominated by an image of Brazil as ethnically homogeneous, with all cultural and racial distinctions vanishing, presumably through intermarriage and acculturation, just as they did during the first centuries of Brazil's existence. This view assumes that the tribal populations must be "integrated." The important developments are not so much rapid change in the government's position as gradual evolution. Figueredo has continued Geisel's policies in two areas of central concern to the tribal populations: first, a commitment to rapid economic development, specifically to large-scale exploitation of resources available in Brazil's interior, a commitment currently being fueled by the foreign debt; and second, the acceptance of political abertura, or a lessening of repression, which has allowed for open political debate and specifically has made room for the support groups discussed above. Indeed, the existence of these support groups is predicated upon the absence of the total repression that characterized the pre-1975 years.

Upon examination, it becomes evident that tension exists between these two orientations when it comes to the "Indian question." On the one hand, development of the interior is occurring at an accelerating rate and is disrupting numerous tribal populations. On the other hand, the policy of abertura has supplied minimal conditions for dis-

seminating information about the plight of tribal populations, for mobilizing public opinion, and thus for opposing the headlong devastation of ecosystems occupied by tribal populations.

The fact that opposition has come in considerable measure from the anthropological community has occasioned a structural change in the nature of relations between the Brazilian government and anthropologists, a change manifested especially at the level of the Fundação Nacional do Índio (FUNAI), the government Indian agency. In some measure, the government has accepted the role of support groups and anthropologists as the "watchdogs" for Indian rights in the midst of economic development. At the same time, however, the government has accelerated its own efforts at "integration," seemingly not applying the minimal self-restraint that it could exert. Consequently, the anthropological community has been forced to spend exorbitant amounts of time and energy protecting the tribal populations from the very government organ that is supposed to be their "guardian." Developments occur daily, and the support groups seem hard pressed to keep up with the never-ending flow of government initiatives. As a result, much of the research that urgently needs to be done is not being undertaken.

#### *FUNAI and Anthropologists: Formation of the Support Groups*

FUNAI became the official government Indian agency in 1967, when it replaced the Serviço de Proteção ao Índio (SPI). To understand FUNAI's actions, it is necessary to understand its position within the government. FUNAI is part of the Ministry of the Interior, and FUNAI's president is subordinated to the Minister of the Interior, who is chosen directly by the President of Brazil. At the ministerial level, there has been continuity, with Costa Cavalcanti (1969–74) replaced by Maurício Rangel Reis (1974–79), who in turn was replaced by Mário David Andrade in 1979.

Although the president of FUNAI is a political appointee of the Minister of the Interior, FUNAI has been internally staffed, especially at lower administrative levels, by career persons, many of whom are actively committed to the concept of Indian rights. This staffing pattern has provided a structural basis for tension within FUNAI itself. With a constant bureaucratic administration, FUNAI could somewhat resist initiatives coming from above to "integrate" the Indian. Indeed, the principal developments during 1976–82 in the relations between FUNAI and anthropologists can be traced to the internal staffing of FUNAI, which encouraged the formation of the support groups.

In this context, the president of FUNAI is in a position to play a pivotal role, which seems to have been the case with Ismarth de Araujo (1974–79), who replaced Jeronymo Bandeira de Mello. Like his prede-

cessor, Ismarth was a general in the reserves, and he was guided by an overall integrationist view. But in retrospect, he seems to have been more of a mediator than his fellow presidents, as is suggested in a 1974 statement to the press: "Fala-se em parar o surto de desenvolvimento do país, com o argumento de manter o índio em estado puro. Porque não conciliar as duas coisas."<sup>6</sup>

Toward this end, Ismarth began contacting anthropologists from the universities. As a result, three professors at the University of Brasília decided to leave their positions and work full-time for FUNAI on projects in support of the Yanomami, Nambikwara, and Macú. Other anthropologists from the University of São Paulo and elsewhere began working on projects, although they did not give up their academic positions. But in 1976, undoubtedly because of pressure from above, FUNAI contracts with the three university anthropologists were terminated and cooperation between the universities and FUNAI was gradually phased out. In the FUNAI Brasília headquarters, however, there remained a sizable number of career persons, many of whom were trained as anthropologists, whose point of view coincided with that of the anthropologists.

Many of those involved agree that these events gave impetus to the formation of the support groups. Thus, the Comissão Pro-Índio—São Paulo and the Centro de Trabalho Indigenista, both founded in 1978, had their origins in an earlier group that began to meet sporadically in 1977. Many members of the earlier group had participated in FUNAI projects, and some actually had been on the FUNAI staff.

Whatever the origin of the support groups, their role as protector of Indian rights, especially in opposition to FUNAI, began to take shape quickly. The first fight occurred over the so-called "emancipation proclamation," which would have modified the Indian Statute of 1973 and made the tribal peoples ordinary citizens, with no special rights or protection. The support groups quickly perceived that such a change would leave the tribal populations wholly defenseless in the face of a steamrolling national society. Fortunately, they were able to muster enough opposition to persuade President Geisel in late 1978 not to sign the proclamation into law. Since then one struggle after another has ensued as the government has made seemingly endless attempts to accelerate the "integration" of tribal populations.

The relationship between FUNAI and the anthropological community deteriorated badly under the presidency of João Carlos Nobre da Veiga (1979–81), a colonel in the reserves who followed a civilian, Adhemar Ribeiro da Silva. The latter had replaced Ismarth in 1979, but he lasted only a few months in office before resigning, reportedly due to pressure from economic interests. In 1980 Nobre da Veiga accused unspecified "anthropologists" of inciting the Indians, whom he de-

scribed as “insuflados e orientados para fazer arrucas, por antropólogos e indigenistas, maus brasileiros que querem perturbar a vida nacional.”<sup>7</sup> About the same time, twenty-one members of the FUNAI staff signed a letter to the Minister of the Interior accusing the directors of FUNAI of incompetence. All twenty-one were fired in July of 1980.

At this point, FUNAI and the anthropological community were completely polarized, with all semblance of a dialogue having broken down. Conditions for research, as far as obtaining government authorization was concerned, were the worst that many anthropologists could remember. Researchers might have to wait as long as nine months to obtain authorization, only to have it terminated a few months after their arrival in the field. Toward the end of 1981, eighteen anthropological researchers were thrown out of indigenous areas. The problematic relationship between anthropologists and FUNAI was formally discussed at the April 1982 meeting of the Associação Brasileira de Antropologia.

In late 1981, Nobre da Veiga left office amidst insistent rumors of corruption. He was replaced by another colonel from the reserves, Paulo Moreira Leal, who remains in office at the time of this writing (January 1983). Although it is too early to tell, the situation seems to be improving under Leal.<sup>8</sup> But he has announced that he is prepared to resign if he continues to be pressured by officials of those states (especially Mato Grosso) where land demarcation is a key issue. These pressures undoubtedly originate with economic interests.

It is important to emphasize, however, that the problems in relations between anthropologists and FUNAI cannot be adequately understood solely in terms of the individual personalities involved because the problems are generated by the structure of the social relations being discussed. Within this structure, tensions between anthropologists, who are working to protect Indian rights, and the government, which is attempting to do away with the very concept of “Indian,” are inevitable.

#### *FUNAI and the Indians: Accelerating “Integration”*

Undoubtedly, the single key problem that continues to confront tribal populations is that of land, its demarcation and protection from invasion. Everywhere in Brazil, the remaining tribal populations are being hedged in as large-scale agricultural and cattle-raising interests move into central Brazil, settlers follow newly constructed roads into the interior, and massive development projects churn away, devouring whole ecosystems in Amazonia.

One important recent development here has been the formation



of an Extraordinary Ministry for Land Affairs. Because this ministry has final say over land issues, FUNAI's control over Indian lands—the common patrimony of Brazil's indigenous peoples—has been effectively curtailed. Thus the problem of protecting Indian rights to land has been removed to a higher level and is no longer tied directly to other Indian rights, whose protection still falls under the purview of FUNAI.

With regard to relations between FUNAI and the Indians, the key developments in 1976–82 concern not so much land in a direct sense as redefining the relationship between the land and the Indian in a more indirect sense. Government initiatives have been directed at “integrating” the Indian, that is, at eliminating the very category of person designated as legal heir to Indian territory. It is clear that the question basically revolves around land: who will occupy it, who will use it. Recent government strategy has revealed a tactical change, however. Instead of simply taking land away from the Indians, government emphasis has been placed on taking away from the Indians their very identity as Indians. The rationale is that if Indians are made into ordinary citizens, then the land they occupy is no longer Indian land but alienable property.

It is in this light that government actions during the 1976–82 period should be interpreted. This period has witnessed a three-phase attack from the government: first “emancipation,” then “estadualização” (or turning over Indian affairs to the individual states, such as Mato Grosso, Pará, Amapá, and so forth), and then the “criteria of Indian identity.”

“Emancipation” became a catchword in late 1975 and early 1976, but the initiatives for legal emancipation got underway only in 1977–78. Indeed, this issue was the first one around which the support groups crystalized. Anthropologists, former FUNAI personnel, and others quickly perceived that “emancipation,” a term with seemingly positive connotations, actually meant something negative: taking away from the tribal populations everything that was theirs, their historical rights to land, their protection under the law, their very identity as ethnically distinct groups. These issues are discussed in detail in *Cadernos da Comissão Pro-Índio Número 1: A Questão de Emancipação*. Only by marshaling public outcry were the support groups able to avert this catastrophe. In late 1978, President Geisel decided not to sign the proclamation into law, at least for the time being.

No sooner had one catastrophe been nearly averted than a new danger appeared on the horizon. This danger came in the guise of a process known as *estadualização*. Members of the support groups once again recognized the implications. Because state governments are even more subject to pressure from local economic interests than is the na-

tional government, *estadualização* would leave the Indians defenseless in the face of a predatory economy. Consequently, *estadualização* could be seen as another effort to do away with Indian rights.

While legal *estadualização* was averted in 1980, once again through the efforts of the support groups, it is important to note that some kind of regionalization might still be operating within FUNAI. Some observers believe that *delegados* (the heads of regional delegacies of FUNAI, who are responsible for administrative coordination of a number of distinct posts in a particular area) are being given more autonomy, that is, *delegados* are being regulated less by a constant bureaucratic administration in Brasília. Simultaneously, the number of delegacies has been multiplying. This development bears watching.

No sooner had *estadualização* been averted than the issue of the *critéria de Indianidade* (criteria of Indian identity) appeared on the scene. This effort by FUNAI was an attempt to define who could be considered to be Indian. The support groups saw this effort as a new version of "emancipation" because by employing these criteria, whole tribal populations could be judged to be ordinary Brazilian citizens, which is to say, non-Indians with no special rights to land. Indeed, the first attempts to apply these criteria have focused on demonstrating that certain tribal populations were non-Indian. Moreover, the criteria are of a crude and derogatory character, defining Indianness by such guidelines as possessing a "primitive mentality" or exhibiting the Mongolian spot. Such criteria make it a virtual stigma to be an Indian. As of early 1984, it is not clear just where this situation will lead.

Despite the fact that the major government initiatives from 1976 to 1982 have been directed toward "integrating" the Indian and that land questions cannot be resolved by FUNAI alone, the demarcation of land continues to be a key issue. Here the signals from the government have been mixed. For example, the Kre-Akahore, who were first "pacified" in 1973 when they appeared in the path of road construction, were in 1974 removed from their aboriginal homeland and relocated in the Xingú Park. This removal would seem to indicate a marked disrespect for Indian territorial rights. Similarly, invasion of Indian lands by settlers, *fazendeiros*, and others continues. At the other extreme, amidst great turmoil in southern Brazil over the invasion of Kaingang land, the government in 1978 removed all the intruders from the posts at Nonoai and Rio das Cobras. Yet elsewhere demarcation proceeds at a painstakingly slow rate. In 1982 the creation of the Yanomami Park was finally authorized, but efforts to guarantee a homeland for the Nambikwara, who lie in the path of the Polonoeste project, have ground to a halt.

This struggle for land may be likened to a gigantic chess game that was begun in the year 1500 and is being played across the entire territory of what is now Brazil. In 1500, 100 percent of that territory was

Indian country. Today, Indians remain in control of only 5 percent. It is no longer really a question of winning or losing, but rather of how many tribes can elude capture, and perhaps of whether the tribal populations can induce a stalemate. Across the Brazilian chessboard, skirmishes are taking place on each of the more than 160 remaining islands of Indian land. Unfortunately for the Indian cause, its support groups find themselves being run ragged in trying to monitor even a few of the skirmishes underway.

#### RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Missionary groups may still be divided along traditional lines into the two main kinds—Protestant and Catholic. Although there is a great deal of diversity among missionaries within the different Catholic orders (such as Salesian, Franciscan, and Dominican), and among the Protestant groups (from the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the New Tribes Mission of Brazil to those of individual sects), recent developments can nevertheless be best understood by differentiating Protestant groups from Catholic groups.

#### *Catholic Organizations*

It is difficult to overestimate the role that Catholic missionaries and the Catholic Church itself have played in the years immediately preceding the 1976–82 period. The Catholic Church was a major force behind the *abertura*, and Catholic missionaries fought in the front lines, so to speak, for liberalization and for Indian rights. Some of them actually died in this cause.

The general developments may be traced to Vatican Council II in 1965, which resulted in the Catholic Church taking the side of poor and underprivileged peoples throughout the world, those who could not adequately defend themselves. In Brazil this group included the *favelados* (or “ghettodwellers”) in the cities, the peasant farmers (especially in the poverty-stricken Northeast and in the interior), and the tribal populations.

In this spirit, the Conselho Indigenista Missionário (CIMI) was created in 1972, which formed an official part of the politically powerful Conselho Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil (CNBB).<sup>9</sup> Among other activities, CIMI began publishing in that year its *Boletim*, which contained material on Indian rights and the transgression of those rights in Brazil. In 1978 *Porantim* began appearing and in 1979 assumed its monthly newspaper format. *Porantim* is now indispensable reading for anyone interested in the current situation of tribal peoples in Brazil.

It is important to realize that the first CIMI bulletins began to

appear in the heyday of political repression in Brazil, in 1972 and 1973, before there was any hint of abertura. By 1973 CIMI was publishing information on the "land question," with maps showing how the department responsible for land allocation issues in the state of Mato Grosso was taking no account of Indian rights to land in its colonization plans. By late 1973, the Catholic missionaries and bishops of Brazil published the *Documento Y-Juca Pirama—O Índio: Aquele que Deve Morrer*, a statement of opposition to official government Indian policy insofar as it favored economic interests over the tribal populations.

CIMI also began the first efforts to make tribal leaders conscious of the plight of their peoples and of the need to organize. To this end, they organized in April 1974 the first Encontro de Chefes Indígenas, which was followed in subsequent years by regional Assembléias de Chefes Indígenas. Those meetings took place on some occasions despite resistance from FUNAI, and even from the Federal Police.

Given the repression occurring in Brazil at the time, it was obvious that some backlash was in the offing. In 1975 missionaries began to reveal specific cases of land invasion among the Kaingang and Bororo; in that same year, a French missionary named Padre Jentel was tried and expelled for his supposedly subversive missionary work. In 1976 Padre Rodolfo Lunkenbein, who had denounced the invasion of Bororo lands a year earlier, was murdered by the fazendeiros he had denounced. In late 1976, the coordinator of CIMI for all of northern Mato Grosso, Padre João Bosco Penido Burnier, was assassinated by the police.

Catholic missionaries may be said to have driven in the first wedge that brought about the political "opening" witnessed in the 1976–82 period. Simultaneously, many Catholic missionaries began to redirect their missionary work. Whereas before much work was directed toward transforming native cultures—teaching Portuguese to the Indians and encouraging them to forget their own language and customs—now many, albeit not all, Catholic missionaries are trying with equal fervor to bring about "cultural revitalization." Thus, although for eighty years the conservative Salesian missionaries attempted to extinguish Bororo ceremonial life, today an active effort is underway to get the Bororo to perform their traditional ceremonies.

During the 1976–82 period, missionary work on behalf of the tribal peoples has perhaps been eclipsed by the work of the secular support groups. But it is important to stress that the Catholic Church has continued to play a key role in the unfolding drama. In addition to publishing *Porantim*, the Catholic Church also supplies considerable funding for the Centro Ecuménico de Documentação e Informação (CEDI), although the latter is technically ecumenical. CEDI publishes

*Aconteceu*, a monthly information bulletin that republishes relevant newspaper articles that have appeared on Indians, workers, and peasants. This source is also indispensable reading for anyone wishing to keep up with the situation of tribal populations in Brazil today. In addition, CEDI is organizing a massive survey of Indians of Brazil today, and the first two volumes of a projected twenty-volume set have already appeared. This *levantamento* promises to be the single most valuable source of information on Brazilian tribal populations.<sup>10</sup>

In many ways, CEDI symbolizes developments in Brazil during the 1976–82 period relative to the Indian question because it represents a union between the sacred and secular spheres based on their activities on behalf of Brazilian tribal populations. Among those working in CEDI on the Indian question are anthropologists from the universities and former members of FUNAI, many of whom are also active in the secular support groups. CEDI thus serves as a bridge between the sacred and secular and represents one of the most important developments in Brazil during the recent period.

While the Catholic missionaries, many of whom are Europeans by birth, have taken a generally pro-Indian attitude in the recent period, their activities should not be confused with those of the Catholic Church per se. This institution has been since the founding of Brazil a largely conservative force that supports the prevailing social configurations. In some measure, it continues to be conservative, despite Vatican II and the activities of Catholic missionaries. Hence, newspapers not infrequently publish denunciations of missionary activity written by Catholic bishops. Nevertheless, missionaries occupy the front lines in relations between tribal populations and the Catholic Church, and their activities have achieved the greatest impact on the recent situation of tribal populations in Brazil.

### *Protestant Organizations*

Whereas Catholic missionaries have undergone a far-reaching change in goals and values in recent years, Protestant missionaries have maintained considerable consistency in their goals. The principal Protestant groups on Indian affairs are the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and the New Tribes Mission of Brazil. Both continue to be committed to the single overarching goal of translating the Bible into the native languages of Brazil. In pursuing this goal, they have been less destructive than were the Salesians, for example. Whereas the latter once attempted to expunge native languages and cultures, SIL has at least endeavored to preserve basic linguistic structures. It has also been more generally respectful of native cultures.<sup>11</sup> Neither SIL nor New Tribes

has played an active role in recent developments, however. Although the Work Group of Evangelical Missionaries (GTME) was formed, it has been overshadowed by CIMI and by the secular support groups.

An important development during the 1976–82 period has been FUNAI's 1978 termination of its agreement with SIL. As a consequence, SIL workers were removed from some forty indigenous areas. As of this writing, the agreement has not been reinstated. But in late March and early April of 1982, FUNAI began reauthorizing SIL workers to enter indigenous areas on a case-by-case basis. These missionaries are thus being treated much the way anthropological and linguistic researchers are treated.

FUNAI's decision to terminate official relations with SIL did not affect other Protestant groups. New Tribes missionaries continue to work throughout Brazil, which would indicate that the government is not endeavoring to move against Protestant groups as a category. Just what the government's motivation was in breaking with SIL remains somewhat obscure, although various interpretations have been proposed.

About the time it was expelled from Indian reserves in Brazil, SIL was also having difficulties elsewhere in Latin America. In Brazil SIL is staffed largely by North Americans, in contrast with the Catholic orders, which are staffed mostly by continental Europeans. SIL is clearly associated in the public's mind with the United States; indeed, SIL headquarters in Brasília resembles a small-scale version of the United States. It could be viewed as a symbol of North American presence in Brazil. Moreover, for many years SIL had its own radio system for communicating throughout Brazil with indigenous areas. There were even special SIL planes that flew in and out of Indian areas. In these and other ways, SIL was independent of FUNAI. It is thus possible to interpret the 1978 termination as an attempt by FUNAI to preserve its sphere of jurisdiction or perhaps as even an act of nationalism on the government's part.

Although Protestant missionaries have participated less than Catholic missionaries in the recent pro-Indian movement, some Protestant churches based in the United States and in Europe have contributed funds to the secular support groups in Brazil. One of these support groups actually receives its principal funding from Protestant coffers. The Protestant role in shaping the situation of tribal populations in Brazil today is thus considerably more complex than the activities of Protestant missionaries alone would suggest.

## THE TRIBAL POPULATIONS

The period from 1976 to 1982 is one of considerable significance because it was at this time that the tribal populations first began to see themselves as having certain common goals and interests that could be jointly pursued on a national level. It is true that the organizing was done by CIMI in initiating the Encontro de Chefes Indígenas and the regional Assembleias de Chefes Indígenas. But more recent evidence shows that tribal populations are continuing this organizing on their own.

For many years, Brazilian tribes existed separately, each with its own goals and intentions, each locked in rivalries with one another as much as with the Brazilian national society. This situation arose largely because contact in many cases has been so recent. Indeed, the Araras, whose territory lies within the area of the Grande Carajás project, were first peacefully contacted only in 1981. Other tribes exist that have yet to have peaceful contact with the "white man."<sup>12</sup> In any case, for many years the tribal populations were more subject to social forces than in control of them.

The historical actions of these various tribes reveal certain common interests. In many cases, tribal populations have resisted territorial encroachment. For instance, in 1910 the Kaingang of São Paulo attacked crews building a train line through their territory, just as the Kre Akahore attacked road crews in their area as late as 1973. The Kaingang are still defending their territory today from invasion by settlers, as in Nonoai and Rio das Cobras, where events culminated in the 1978 expulsion of settlers from tribal land. In September of 1980, the long "pacified" Kayapó Indians attacked and killed twenty "white men" in retaliation for devastating forests within their territory. In May of 1981, Shavante Indians invaded and sacked fazendas whose owners were encroaching upon Shavante lands. The Araras continued their resistance to invasion and to pacification for some eleven years until 1981; and the Waimiri-Atroari, near Manaus, continue to resist "pacification" efforts at the time of this writing. Thus land issues are a common interest for many of the tribes, even if the Guaraní of southern Brazil have no interest in land per se, preferring to wander in search of the "land where there is no evil," the earthly paradise.

It must be remembered that there are some 160 distinct tribes in Brazil today, averaging fourteen hundred persons per tribe and ranging from tribes with only a few members, like the Diahoi (13 members) and Karapana (35 members) of Amazonas, to the Tukuna (15,000) of Amazonas, the Yanamami (8,400) of Roraima, and the Shavante (4,300) of Mato Grosso. In most cases, these tribes were formerly politically autonomous, on the level of the "nation-states" of today, and were accus-

tomed to making their own decisions about their future.<sup>13</sup> When many of these tribes enter into contact with Brazilian national society, they naturally want to meet the chief of that society, the President of Brazil. This situation presents the enormous problem of trying to define common goals if the tribal populations are to address the Brazilian nation with a single voice.

The first moves in this direction have already taken place during the period from 1976 to 1982. Certain leaders have emerged on the national scene. Among the earliest were Mário Juruna of the Shavante, Angelo Kretã of the Kaingang, Domingos and Marcus Terena of the Terena, and Alvaro Sampaio of the Tukano. They entered the public sphere as personalities in their own right but also as speakers for the new "Indian cause." In late 1980, Mário Juruna was continuously in the news when FUNAI prohibited him from traveling to Holland to participate in the Russell Tribunal on ethnocide and genocide in the Americas. Although Minister of the Interior Mário Andreazza backed FUNAI, Juruna was allowed to go after a long legal battle, arriving only on the final day of the tribunal. At the time of this writing, Juruna has just been elected to political office, as a delegate from Rio de Janeiro.

As these leaders have emerged, conservative forces have organized in opposition to them and to missionary activities. Many indigenous leaders disappeared, were assassinated, or died in unusual circumstances. Among them was Angelo Kretã of the Kaingang, who was killed in a mysterious car accident in 1980. Some observers consider Kretã to have been one of the most rational and eloquent leaders of the still fragile Indian movement. The costs of organizing for the tribal populations are high indeed; on the other hand, if the tribal peoples do not organize, the costs may be higher still.

In 1980 an event of inestimable significance for the burgeoning Indian movement occurred—the first pan-Indian congress. It began as a meeting arranged by members of the support groups, but the Indian leaders decided to expel all non-Indians from the room and to form the União das Nações Indígenas (UNI).

Since then UNI has been beset with problems, as one would expect from the first attempt to bring order out of the rich diversity of tribal populations: internal feuding, the absence of certain key figures, almost nonexistent financial resources, open hostility from FUNAI, and more. Who can predict whether just one organization will be able to represent all of the Brazilian Indian "nations"? Yet UNI is significant precisely because it is the first attempt at an all-Indian organization. It reflects the consciousness, on the part of at least some tribal leaders, of certain common themes in the relationship between all Indians and Brazilian national society. It is true that the formation of UNI was made possible by the abertura, and by the indefatigable efforts of first CIMI,



then the support groups. But ultimately UNI is something wholly new and different: the Indian people speaking for themselves in their own voices, discussing their own interests, goals, and values, and trying to solve their own problems. The single event that best sums up the changes between 1976 and 1982 in the situation of tribal Brazilian populations is surely the formation of the first Union of Indian Nations.

At this point, no one interpretative overview can do justice to the complex developments of the 1976–82 period that have shaped the situation of tribal Brazilian populations. Important economic changes have accompanied the large-scale development projects and major policy changes have occurred with the abertura. It is during this period as well that the secular support groups were formed, the work of CIMI has come to fruition, and the tribal populations themselves have begun to organize and take an active role in national politics. Also during this period, FUNAI has made several attempts to curtail the rights of native peoples. The complex interrelationships among these developments and the rapidity with which they have occurred make it difficult for any one individual to grasp their totality. Thus this essay must necessarily be considered programmatic and its conclusions tentative. This important subject must await the kind of scholarship that, with the passage of time, will make the contemporary reality seem more comprehensible.

#### NOTES

1. Darcy Ribeiro, *Os Índios e a Civilização*, 1957, p. 8.
2. For information on the dam projects, see Paul Aspelin and Sílvio Coelho dos Santos, *Indian Areas Threatened by Hydroelectric Projects in Brazil*, published by the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), 1981.
3. For information on the Polonoeste project, see David Maybury-Lewis et al., "In the Path of Polonoeste: Endangered Peoples of Western Brazil," Occasional Paper No. 6, published by Cultural Survival, September 1981.
4. There is, as of this writing, no single best source of information on the Grande Carajás project. A great deal of information can be found in *Folhetim* no. 248 of the *Folha de São Paulo*, 18 October 1981. Continuous reportage has appeared in newspapers and magazines, including "Carajás" in the magazine *Istoé*, 14 April 1982, pp. 26–37.
5. "Carajás," *Istoé*, 14 April 1982, p. 26.
6. "FUNAI: Novo Presidente," *Veja*, 3 April 1974, p. 29.
7. From *A Gazeta* (Vitória), 22 July 1980. Reprinted in *Povos Indígenas no Brasil, 1980*, published by the Centro Ecumênico de Documentação e Informação (CEDI). For CEDI's address, see note 10.
8. Some observers localize the problem not in the presidency, but in the assistant to the president, Ivan Zanoni Hausen, who survived the transition from Nobre da Veiga to Leal.
9. For most of this information, I have relied upon the invaluable chronology put together by Fany Ricardo, "O Conselho Indigenista Missionário (CIMI): Cronologia das Transformações Recentes da Pastoral Indigenista Católica no Brasil: 1975–1979," in *Cadernos do Instituto Superior de Estudos da Religião (ISER)* no. 10, pp. 1–25.
10. Persons wishing more information on the levantamento should write to: CEDI, Le-

- vantamento das Populações Indígenas no Brasil, Avenida Higienópolis 983, 01238 São Paulo, SP, Brazil.
11. See the Debate section of *Religião e Sociedade* 7 (July 1981), which contains statements on the role of SIL by Yonne Leite, Anthony Seeger, and Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira.
  12. FUNAI estimated recently that there are some ten thousand Indians in Brazil still without contact. See "10 Mil ainda sem Contato," *O Estado de São Paulo*, 16 May 1982, p. 28. These include at least three small tribes in Rondônia (200–300 Uru-eu-uau-uau, 130–80 Zoró, and 60 Caripuna), where the Polonoeste project is underway, and 150 Guajá Indians in Maranhão, scene of the Grande Carajás project.
  13. For purposes of explication, I have simplified the "tribal model." In most cases, political autonomy is not at the level of the "tribe," which may consist of a number of distinct villages or bands, but at the level of the village or band itself.

## APPENDIX

### Associação Nacional de Apoio ao Índio (ANAI)

ANAI—Porto Alegre

Avenida Protásio Alves 556, ap. 301, 90.000 Porto Alegre, RS

ANAI—Bahia

Estrada de São Lázaro 197, Federação, 40.000 Salvador, Bahia  
Bulletin available.

ANAI—Paraná

Rua Bom Jesus 478, 80.000 Curitiba, PR

ANAI—Rio de Janeiro

Rua Maria Angélica 455, 22.470 Rio de Janeiro, RJ

ANAI—Ijuí

Rua Valdir Pochmann 82, 98.700 Ijuí, RS  
Bulletin available.

### Comissão Pro-Índio (CPI)

CPI—São Paulo

Rua Caiubí 126, Perdizes, São Paulo, SP  
Bulletin and publications available.

CPI—Rio de Janeiro

a/c João Pacheco de Oliveira, Museu Nacional de Antropologia,  
Quinta da Boa Vista, 20.942 Rio de Janeiro, RJ  
Publication available.

CPI—Alagoas

Rua Jangadeiros Alagoanos 1451, Pajuçara, 57.000 Maceió, AL

CPI—Acre

Travessa Epaminondas Martins, 141 Bosque, 69.900 Rio Branco, Acre

CPI—Maranhão

Rua 26 Quadra 06, Casa 13, 65.000 São Luis, MA

CPI—Sergipe

Rua Maroim 983, 49.000 Aracajú, SE

BRAZILIAN TRIBAL POPULATIONS FROM 1976 TO 1982

Centro de Trabalho Indigenista (CTI)  
Rua Fidalga 548/13, 05432 São Paulo, SP

Grupo de Apoio ao Índio (GAI)  
Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi, Caixa Postal, 399, 66.000 Belém, Pará

Grupo de Estudos sobre a Questão Indígena (GREQUI)  
Rua Montes Claros, 1200 B, Anchieta, 30.000 Belo Horizonte, MG

Grupo Kukuro de Apoio a Causa Indígena  
Caixa Postal 973, 67.000 Manaus, AM

Comissão pela Criação do Parque Yanomami (CCPY)  
Rua São Carlos do Pinhal 345, 01.333 São Paulo, SP  
Bulletin available.