




SUPYSSAVA

The Brazilian Indian



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SUPYSÁUA

SUPYSÁUA is a saying in
nheêngatu that means "Truth
and nothing but the Truth".



"EVERY TYPE OF SOCIETY, BELIEF
OR INSTITUTION, EVERY WAY OF
LIVING IS AN EXPERIENCE ENTIRELY
FULFILLED AND FORECAST BY A
THOUSAND YEARS OF HISTORY; AS
SUCH, IT IS IRREPLACEABLE."

CLAUDE LÉVI-STRAUSS



How can you tell a Brazilian Indian?

The Brazilian Indian is a descendent of pre-Columbian civilizations who, preserving the beliefs and customs of his tribes, possesses specific socio-cultural characteristics that are quite distinct from those of the rest of society. Even when he is not a pure Indian and lives like any other member of the Brazilian population, he retains a kind of loyalty to his ethnic identity.

How many Indians live in Brazil?

In the whole of Brazil the tribal population may be estimated at 150,000 Indians at the very least. Probably two-thirds of this total are to be found in Amazonia. The only states where there are no Indians at all are Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte, Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro and Guanabara. The state of Ceará has only a few left, mostly of mixed blood, and they have almost completely lost their true Indian traits. The causes of depopulation are many: intertribal warfare; contact with pioneer settlers; invasion of Indian lands; consequent disruption of tribal life and a shortage of food; the ravages of contagious diseases caught from the white man who carries germs and viruses against which the Indians have no antibodies (e.g. the common cold, measles, consumption and venereal diseases); intermingling with other ethnic groups, etc. Examples of indigenous populations with a steady rate of growth despite some centuries of contact with the neo-Brazilian peoples are the *Terêna* in Mato Grosso and the *Kaingang* in the south of the country — the latter being among the largest wheat producers in Brazil.

Where did they come from?

Nowadays anthropologists are pretty well in agreement that the American Indian is Paleo-Mongoloid, that is, originating from the ancient Mongoloid peoples. Modern theories on the peopling of the Americas exclude the concept of autochthonism and favor alienism, the most acceptable involving migration over the Behring Straits into the extreme Northwest, and a subsequent southerly and easterly advance over the rest of the continent. This penetration must have occurred in successive waves over a long stretch of time. In Brazilian territory, the oldest signs of occupation as yet discovered (Sambaqui or kitchen midden men) date back, according to a carbon 14 test, about 14,000 years.

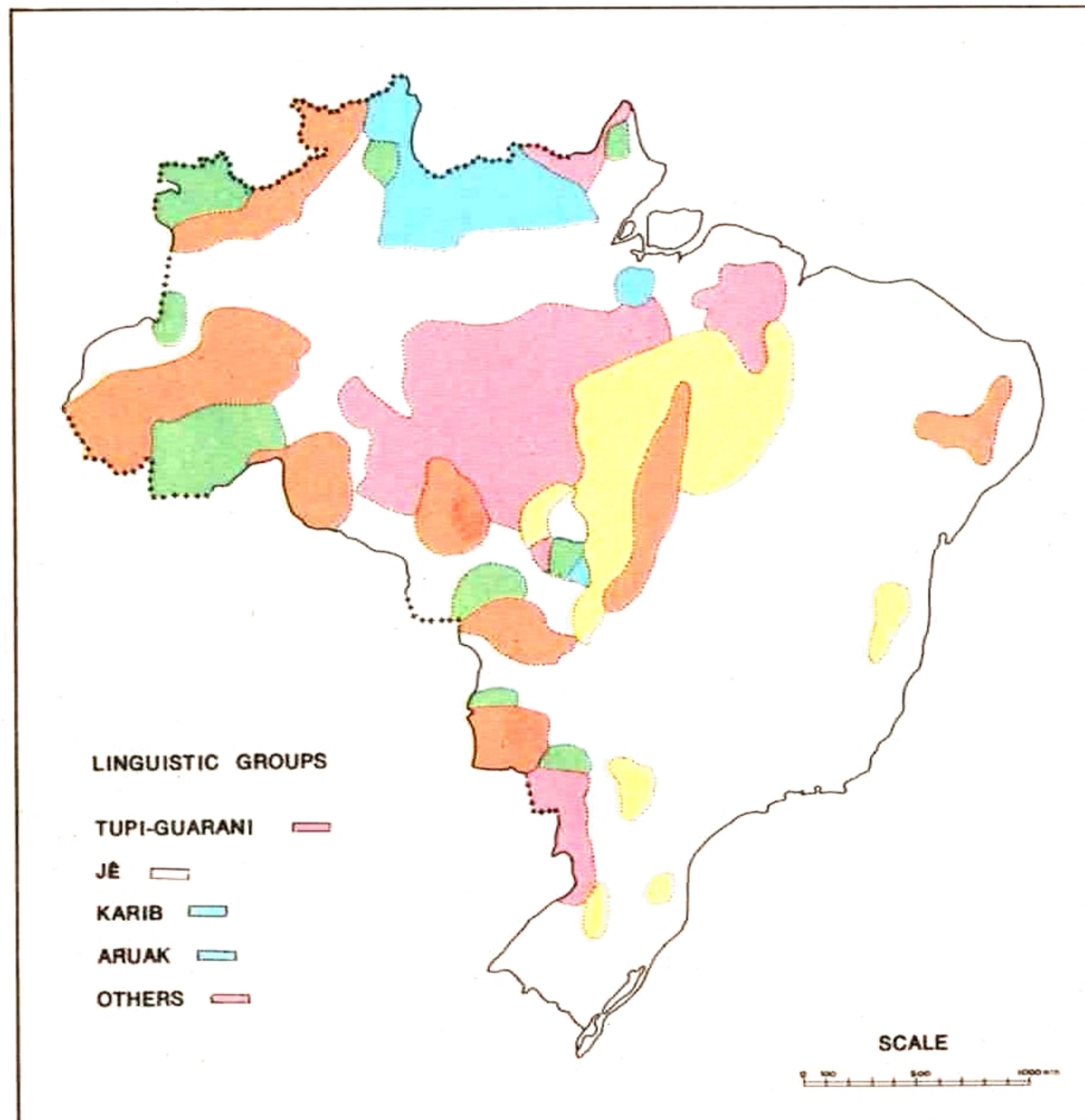


What do they look like?

Briefly we may describe the Brazilian Indian as being of average height, well built, with a healthy complexion and no beard, slanting eyes, a slightly flattened nose, and sleek black hair, coarse and thick. Some groups, such as the *Xavantes* are taller. Sometimes, mainly on feast days, he will paint himself white, black and red. What he most often uses is an orange-red dye extracted from the pulp surrounding the seeds of the annatto tree. This gives him a reddish appearance and as he usually wears no clothes, his skin is gradually tanned a deeper hue by the sun. For quite a time the indigenous population of America was thought to be made up of "redskins", but the idea of a red race has now been abandoned, since they would all seem to be merely a branch of the vast Mongoloid racial group.

What languages do they speak?

There are four great linguistic families: *Tupi*, *Aruak*, *Karib* and *Macro-jê*, not to mention the lesser groups such as *Pano* and *Xirianá*. These groups cover innumerable divergencies, and there are also certain allophylian languages that belong to no group at all, the *Trumai* for instance.

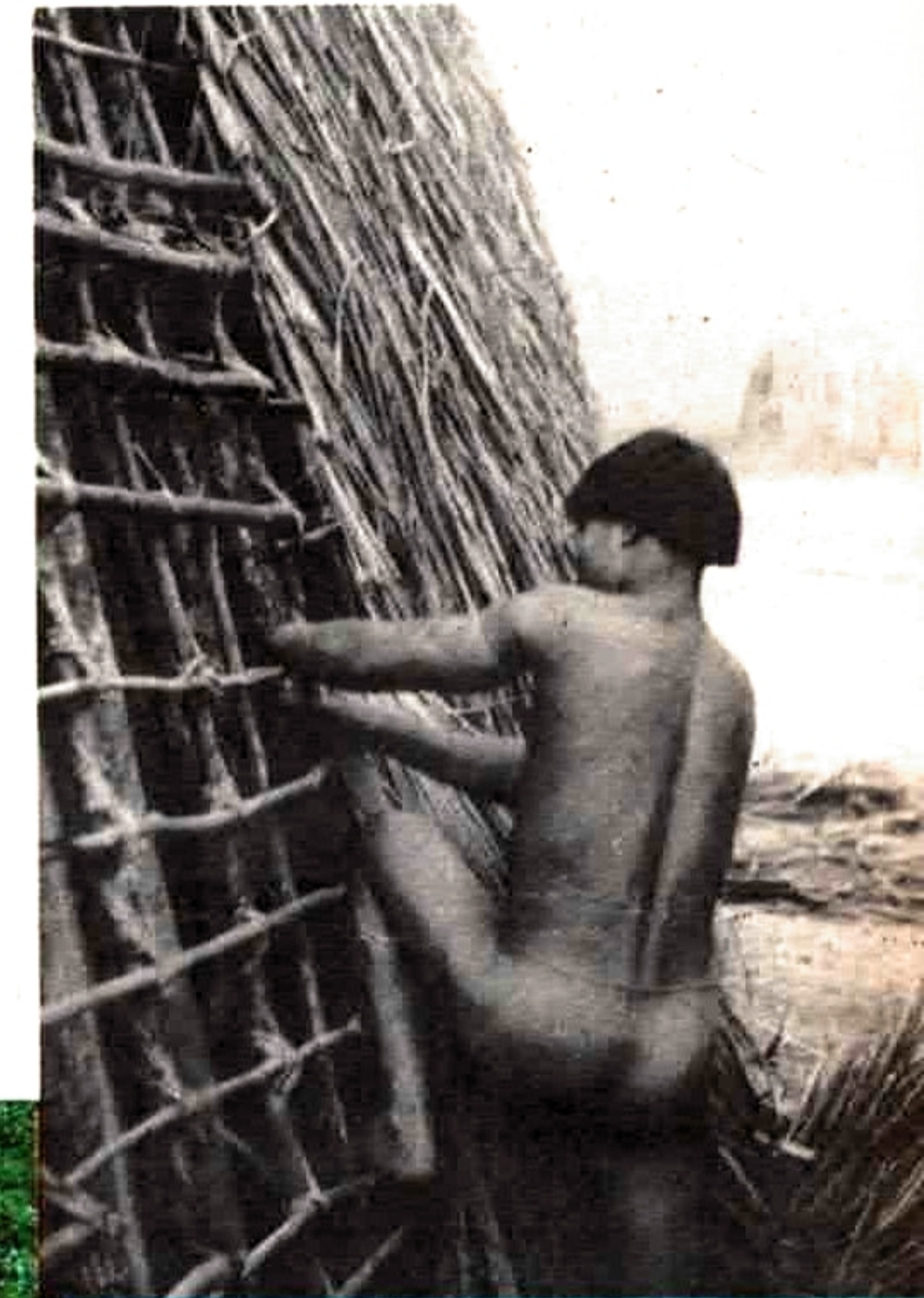


Do the Indians have any written language?

No. In several parts of Brazil, however, ideographic characters have been discovered but not yet deciphered and their origin is unknown. Brazil-Indian spoken languages have been studied by institutions such as the "Summer Institute of Linguistics", and vocabularies, dictionaries, grammars and bilingual primers have been prepared. It must not be forgotten that Amer-Indian has had considerable influence on the Portuguese spoken in Brazil, not only in morphology and phonetics, but predominantly in place names and those of birds, animals, plants and household objects.

What houses do Indians live in?

The traditional Indian dwelling consists of just one room, roofed with leaves, straw or sapé grass, the thatch being brought down low over a pitched or rounded framework. The size and shape vary from tribe to tribe according to social structure and degree of integration in the national community. The most common types have a rectangular base (*Guarani* in the south; *Baniwa*, *Tukano*, etc. in the extreme northwest of Amazonas), or are circular (*Waimiri* in Roraima). The oval huts of the Xingu Indian groups may be as much as 100 feet long, 75 feet wide and 40 feet high, and are built so house 50 or more people, men, women and children living together in families. The number of such communal dwellings to form a village varies a lot and may extend to four, five, six, seven or more units. The houses are either built in a line (as by the *Guajajara* in Maranhão and the *Fulni-ô* in Pernambuco) or scattered along streams or tracks (as in the case of the *Guarani* in São Paulo, Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul), or else encircle a large expanse of open ground devoted to games, feasts and other ceremonies (as is the custom of the *Mehinaku*, *Aweti* and *Waurá* in the Xingu area).



How about marriage among the Indians?

The Indian generally prefers to marry within the tribe and the manner of courtship and way of married life depend on the social organization he is used to. Sometimes a demographic imbalance forces the men of one tribe to seek wives among the women of another, as in the case of the *Txikão* who often kidnapped *Waurá* girls, at the expense of many an intertribal conflict. Except in rare cases, the marriage can be dissolved (divorce) upon the initiative of either or both partners, either being permitted to remarry. When this happens, the children under age usually remain with the mother. Upon the death of husband or wife, one of the types of secondary marriage commonly takes place: levirate, the widow marrying the dead man's brother (*Tukano*, *Manduruku*, etc.), or in some cases, sororate, in which it is the widower who marries the dead woman's sister (*Apinayé*). Among Brazilian tribal groups, monogamy is the rule, and in most of them it is considered socially unacceptable for a man to take another woman. Some tribes, however — such as the *Makuxi*, *Urubu*, *Xerente*, *Xavante*, *Kamayurá*, *Aweti*, *Mehinaku*, *Kalapalo*, etc. — do allow him to marry two or more sisters. The reverse situation, where one woman weds several men, is quite rare, as indeed it is all over the world. The only examples of polyandry are found among the *Tupi-Kawahib*, in Mato Grosso, and the *Xokleng*, in Santa Catarina. Again, if the woman bears no children after being married for some time, it is common in certain tribes for her husband to take a second wife so as not to deprive the community of the progeny he might not otherwise engender to enlarge it. The first wife, however, continues to live with the husband. In some tribes, it is customary for the man to gain possession of his woman by purchase or in payment for services rendered to his future father-in-law.





How does division of labor apply to Indian men and women?

In general, the man is concerned with intertribal warfare (today practically non-existent), the building of houses, clearing the forest, tilling and planting, making baskets and wooden tools, hunting and fishing. The woman makes pottery, does the weaving, prepares the food, tends the crops and gathers the harvest; she also ensures the water supply and carries burdens. As a mother, her many tasks include acting as a kind of walking cradle for her child and suckling it, often until it is seven years of age.

How does the Indian trace his family?

The composition of groups of kin is governed by rules of descent which, among Brazilian Indians, fall into three classes: (1) patrilineal descent, in which kinship is recognized on the paternal side, so that, for certain purposes, a man considers as his relatives only those recognized by his father (*Asurini, Fulni-ô, Kaiowa, Makuxi, Surul, Tukano, Xavante, Tukuna, Xerente*, etc.); (2) matrilineal descent, where, on the contrary, kinship is transmitted down the maternal line (*Borôro*); and (3) bilateral descent, according to which a man's relatives are held to be his family connections on both the father and mother's side (*Aweti, Bakairi, Mehinaku, Nahukuá, Waurá*, etc.). These rules originate, in actual fact, in the conflicting ideas of the different groups as to which sex should be attributed the predominant role in conception. Some tribes even adopt the custom known as "couvade" or "hatching", whereby the husband is treated as a convalescent when his wife gives birth to a child. It should be pointed out, however, that the wife is the object of similar ritual precautions



In what form of art do the Indians excel?

Indian art is limited to a few restricted fields: ceramics, feather arrangements, body painting and adornment, dancing and music, linked for the most part to the division of labor between man and woman.

The technical perfection and high degree of decorative skill shown in ceramics from the Marajó, Santarém and Tapajós areas are the delight of archeologists. Nowadays, however, artistic interest attaches more particularly to the work of the *Baniwa*, *Palikur*, *Karajá*, *Kediweu* and *Waurá* Indians, from the Xingu region. The pottery of each has its own distinctive features, strongly influenced by zoomorphism in the case of the last three tribes.

In feather design, the *Tupinambas* used to be past masters, creating royal "robes" entirely of feathers. At present, the most beautiful examples of featherwork are to be found among the *Urubu-Kaapor* Indians, and also among the *Borôro* and *Kayapó* groups in the southwest of Pará. The use of masks is always essentially ritual. They take the most varied forms, and many different materials are used in making them. The straw masks representing birds and other animals worn by the male dancers of the *Mehinaku* tribes are really beautiful and skillfully plaited. The *Rankokamekra* (Canela) dancers also use enormous straw masks covering them entirely from head to ankle. There are masks made of wood, some daubed with annatto and genipap dyes and bearded with straw, while others are decorated with feathers of different colors glued on with resin, as in the case of the *Tapirapé* Indians.

Body ornaments are of various types, and include bracelets, headdresses, armlets, leggings, earrings, nose skewers, cockades and labrets. With the exception of the cockades, which are made of straw, palm fiber, cotton and bark



(always with feathers attached), these ornaments vary considerably. The materials used may be shells, seeds, monkey or puma teeth, armadillo claws or deer hoofs, feathers, or simply thick fibers stripped from jungle plants. The "tombetas" piercing the lower lip or nasal septum may be made of a single feather, a slip of very light bark, tree resin polished after hardening, or rock crystal. The "batoque", a labret or disk worn in a perforation of the lip or ear, as used by the *Jé* groups such as *Suyá* and *Kayapó*, is made of light, strong wood painted with a design, generally black. Many different pigments are used for body painting, most of them derived from the annatto (red) or genipap (dark blue); black is obtained by mixing these dyes with ashes, while white is a blend of ocher with resin or with a plastic clay known as "tabatinga". On feast days, the *Kayapó* women paint dresses on their bodies, with sleeves and plunging necklines, giving an impression of woven material.

Dancing is also very largely ritual, though some dances are entirely for enjoyment. The dancers are most often women, but unless "integrated", i.e. absorbed into the Brazilian way of life, a woman never dances in the arms of a man. The Indians' music is not merely instrumental, or only for them to dance to. Singing in chorus is often a feature of solemnities, particularly funeral rites. The most widely used musical instruments are flutes, changing with each tribe, "boomers" consisting of a piece of wood of varying shape whirled around at the end of a string, maracás—generally gourds—containing dried seeds or pebbles and decorated with feathers and braided fiber, leg-rattles made of deer hoofs, and percussion instruments like those of the *Pakaá-Nova*, who stretch a thin skin of latex over a bowl of baked clay.



What do the Indians eat and drink?



Game, fish, a few agricultural products and forest fruit form the basis of the Indian's diet. The eggs of wild ducks and turtles are highly prized, and so are honey and also the wine of fermented pineapples, palm peaches, corn (maize), cassava roots or yams, according to the region. Besides gathering and harvesting, the Indian makes use of sophisticated methods of hunting and fishing, tipping his arrows with curare, a vegetable poison which fells the game by paralyzing the muscles without tainting the meat, and beating the water with timbó vines so as to release a substance that stuns the fish and kills them without making them unfit to eat. Some Indians from the Upper Xingu in Central Brazil extract a salt substitute from the dense carpets of floating islands of water lilies and other plants that coat the surface of the lagoons. These they collect and pile up to dry in the sun, afterwards allowing them to simmer in boiling water over a slow fire and then straining the concentrate to obtain a brown crystalline compound with a bitter taste which is 87% potash and the rest traces of minerals and impurities. This compound not only salts but seasons the food.



What is the tribal system of government?

In spite of the varying cultural traditions and the diversity of the Indians' way of life, it may be said that every tribe has a temporal chief and a spiritual chief. In the old *Guarani* organization, for instance, these authorities were represented by the "tuxaua" and by a kind of priest, the "pajé", a blend of sorcerer and medicine man who lived alone to inspire respect and strengthen the belief in his power of influencing the spirits, curing the sick, foretelling stormy weather and so on. The "pajé" is losing much of his prestige, and even tending to disappear, but it is still he who retains in his memory the legends of his people, presides over the ceremony of acceptance into the tribe, performs weddings, intones the opening measures of religious chants, and takes charge of the masks and sacred objects. Among the tribes in contact with civilization, the figure of the "tuxaua", now more commonly known as "captain", tends to merge with that of the "pajé". He it is that organizes the hunting, fishing and group festivals, and he also plans the strategy to be adopted in wartime. In the *Borôro* communities, the chieftaincy of the tribe is hereditary, though it does not pass from father to son but from maternal uncle to nephew. In other tribes, the "captain" may be chosen for his proven qualities, by majority acclaim. There are groups where the captain and the "pajé" are assisted by Councils (of Warriors, Elders, etc.), which the captain consults on important issues.



What are the Indian beliefs?

The Indian attributes the origin of his group and those of other men, his technical acquisitions, social organizations and ideological aspirations, to some ancestral or mythological cultural hero. Thus it is their vague "forefathers" who are thought to have endowed them with such gifts as the art of farming, fire, the use of canoes and paddles, the crafts of potter, weaver, basket-maker, etc. They are not worshipped as divinities, but referred to in legend as heroes of the distant past. The Indians believe that the Universe throngs with the souls of the dead, and with jungle and water sprites. The unseen in general is evil, and they need the help of the "pajé" or shaman to control these forces of nature. Among the most remarkable ceremonies are the *Kuarup* (festival of the dead on the Xingu), the *Fuini-ô Ouricui*, and the long, majestic *Borôro* funeral.



What is meant by Indian cultural areas?

They are clear-cut geographical regions, the fundamental aspect of which is cultural unity. In spite of the diversity of the Indian populations and their linguistic groups, a certain degree of cultural assimilation has developed through a process of aculturation on the intertribal and extratribal level (internal and external contact), that is to say, contacts among themselves and with the surrounding population of civilized Brazil. On these lines, the parts of the country where Indians live have been divided into eleven large areas, some of them with subdivisions.



What are the different degrees of integration of the Indian in Brazilian society?

Ethnologists usually classify the integration of Indian groups in the national community in four different degrees or stages: (1) *isolated* — infrequent accidental contacts with civilization; (2) *intermittent contacts* — occasional relations with the national community; (3) *permanent contact* — direct lasting contact with the national community; and (4) *integrated* — Indians incorporated into Brazilian society, as workers or producers of goods.

INDIAN CULTURAL AREAS (Prof. Eduardo Galvão)

- I The Amazonian North
- II Juruá-Purus
- III Guaporé
- IV Tapajós-Madeira
- V Upper Xingu
- VI Tocantins-Xingu
- VII Pindaré-Gurupi
- VIII Paraguai
- IX Paraná
- X Tieté-Uruguai
- XI The Northeast

SCALE



WHAT KIND OF CONFLICT IS THERE BETWEEN WHITE MEN AND INDIANS IN BRAZIL?

Conflicts between white men and Indians occur throughout the history of every American country where nations of predominantly European ascendancy have developed. The conquest of the land has always been a slow, laborious process, at times not unaccompanied by bloodshed, in which the Indians, the original owners of the land, have gradually been dominated or exterminated. In the case of Brazil, it was only a very special set of circumstances that prevented Europeans and Indians from becoming mortal enemies and irreconcilable elements. Rather did they come together as husband and wife, teacher and pupil, which is not what happened elsewhere. Strictly speaking, no racial question can be said to subsist between the "whites" (a term with cultural rather than racial connotation in Brazil) and the surviving Indians. Antagonism arises when the two cultural frontiers meet, and all the diversity of tendencies and interests of white men and Indians is thrown into strong relief, inevitably to the disadvantage of the technologically lower culture. It is to correct this imbalance unfavorable to the Indian that the Protection Service was originally conceived.

WHAT IS MEANT BY "PACIFICATION"?

Pacification is a word improperly used to designate an operation of approach, attraction or fraternization, by which a FUNAI team, specially trained for the purpose and headed by a man with years of experience in the backlands, intervenes to forestall or relieve clashes between whites and Indians in the isolated stage, encouraging the latter to live in peace and harmony with the national community. It is a true diplomatic mission, long-range and correspondingly expensive, in which months or even years may pass before any real success is achieved, often at the cost of heavy losses among the expeditionaries, for they always follow Rondon's well-known guiding principle: "Die, if need be, but never kill."



How is an approach made?

In his expeditions into the interior at the head of the Commission on Strategic Telegraph Lines from Mato Grosso to Amazonas, Rondon developed the classic techniques of approach that were later to be standard practice for similar undertakings. The first step is to recruit a team of workers from among the local population and place them under the leadership of "sertanistas", men who are used to operating in the "sertão" or backlands and dealing with the Indians. Use is made of acculturated Indians belonging to the same linguistic group to serve as guides and interpreters. When formed, the team moves to a carefully chosen location within the bounds of the tribal territory, but near ways of communication such as rivers or roads to ensure retreat and supply lines.

As soon as a temporary shelter for the Approach Post has been set up, a large clearing is made in which to build a well-protected house, preferably sheathed in corrugated iron and fenced around with barbed wire to ward off attacks and shield the team from the hail of arrows to which they are likely to be exposed. At the same time they till a stretch of land to grow food on for the group and to arouse the interest of the Indians. While this preparatory work is going on, the use of firearms is avoided, even when hunting, so as not to intimidate or antagonize the Indians.

During the first few days after the Post has been organized, the man in charge of the approach, or his immediate assistants, explore the surrounding jungle accompanied by interpreters. Along the trails and at the watering-places most used by the Indians, they put up small huts called "tapiris" where they leave knives, machetes, billhooks, scissors, glass beads and other gifts. When the Indians discover the Post, they begin to watch the approach team constantly, keeping well out of sight, but attacking any careless worker who gets separated from his companions.

This period of intense surveillance is followed by a phase marked by open hostility on the part of the Indians who, in successive attacks, do their best to get rid of the invaders. This is an important phase because it affords an opportunity of showing the friendly intentions of the expeditionaries and their firm resolution not to engage hostilities. It is, however, necessary to be firm as well as affable, and let the Indians know that the teamsmen have weapons and know how to use them (in hunting, for instance), are well defended, and do not attack because they have no desire to do so.

As a rule, after the first fruitless attempts to scare off the newcomers, they move their village farther back and return periodically to assault the Post at dawn. It takes months of efforts for them to realize that these white men are quite different from those others, their enemies, who made war on them. Only then do some bolder Indians venture surreptitiously into the clearing made to attract them. They draw nearer and nearer and no longer destroy the huts to make the acceptance of presents look like plunder, but begin to leave gifts of their own in exchange. The expeditionaries also grow more daring and when they sense the presence of the Indians, they come out of cover and talk to them with the help of the interpreters, urging them to make friends. "Flirting" is the name given to this phase of approach in which the Indians start to accept presents and even ask for more, leaving rough models of machetes or scissors to show just what they want. Any abuse of trust is extremely dangerous at this stage. A misunderstood gesture may trigger an outbreak of renewed hostilities, wipe out the efforts already made and even make it necessary for a time to abandon the enterprise.

How do the Indians interpret the approach?

In most cases the Indians think it is they who have tamed the white man. Many of the tribes approached were, in fact, anxious to come to terms with the whites, but they did not know how to set about it, and whenever they tried, they were received with bullets. It was often their own way of approach that led to misunderstandings. It was customary for the *Umutina*, for instance, when meeting a group of strangers on the Upper Sepotuba, to show their friendly intentions by staging as realistic an attack as possible, even drawing their bows and feigning to let go their arrows, only catching them back at the last moment. Naturally a group that does not share this strange form of politeness, is not likely to realize that so sudden and well-simulated an assault is by way of being a friendly greeting. When, however, it is accepted without retaliation, they consider they have pacified and tamed the white men.

WHAT KIND OF DIFFICULTIES LIE IN WAIT FOR THE SERTANISTA?

To attract the elusive Indians, the approach team has to overcome all sorts of obstacles, distance to start with and the size of the territory they occupy. Then there is the difficulty of how to use none but persuasive methods when meeting with the men of a warrior tribe like the *Kayapó*, armed with the .44 rifles they have managed to wrest from their enemies in the course of attacks suffered at the hands of the white man. The sertanista also comes up against the hostility of the nearby "civilized" population, often bitterly opposed to the Indians and unable to understand why the Government tries so hard to defend them. All these problems are aggravated by the greed of certain local inhabitants who, though considering themselves civilized, covet the land of the Indians and would be only too glad to see them decimated.



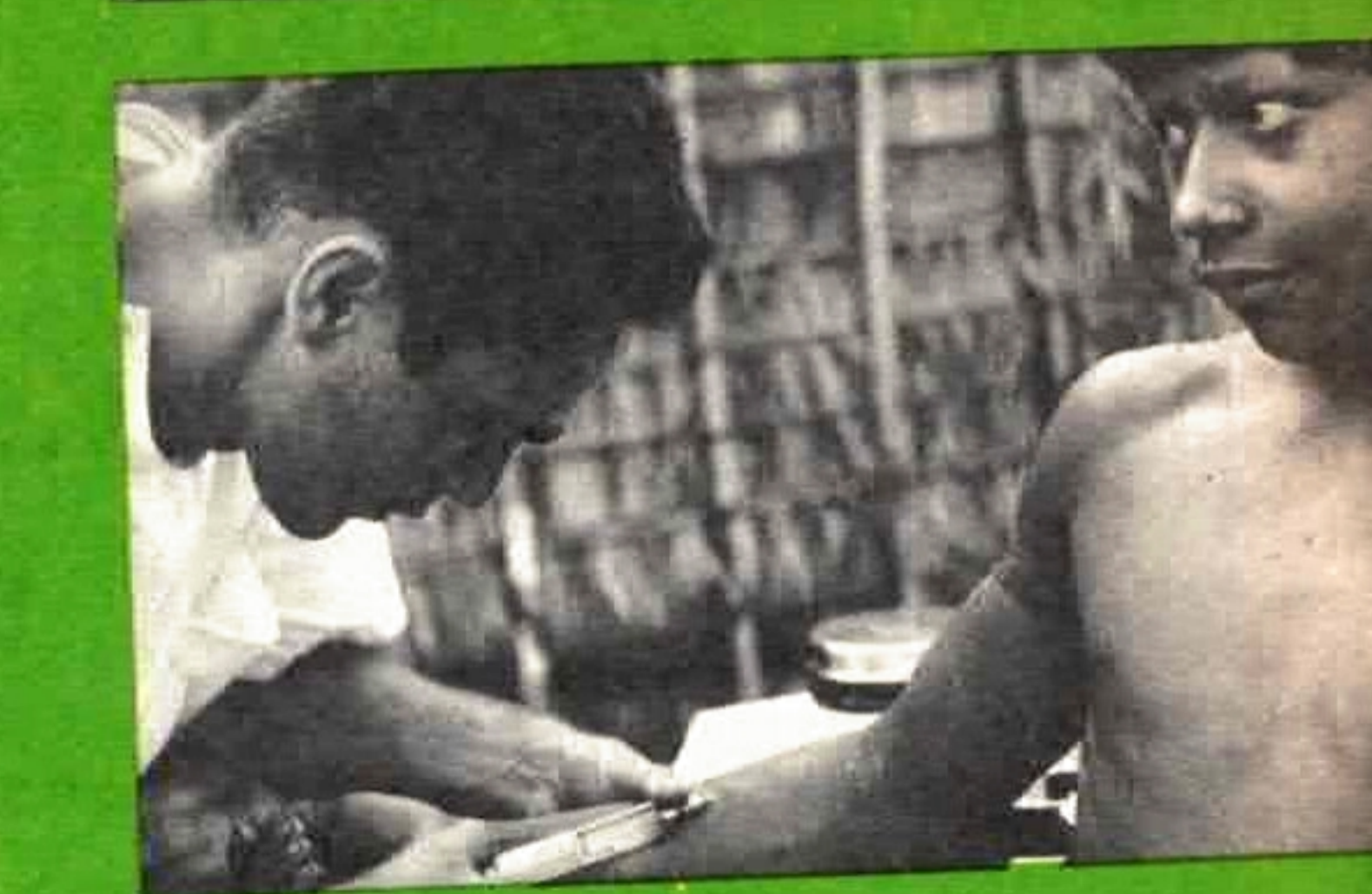
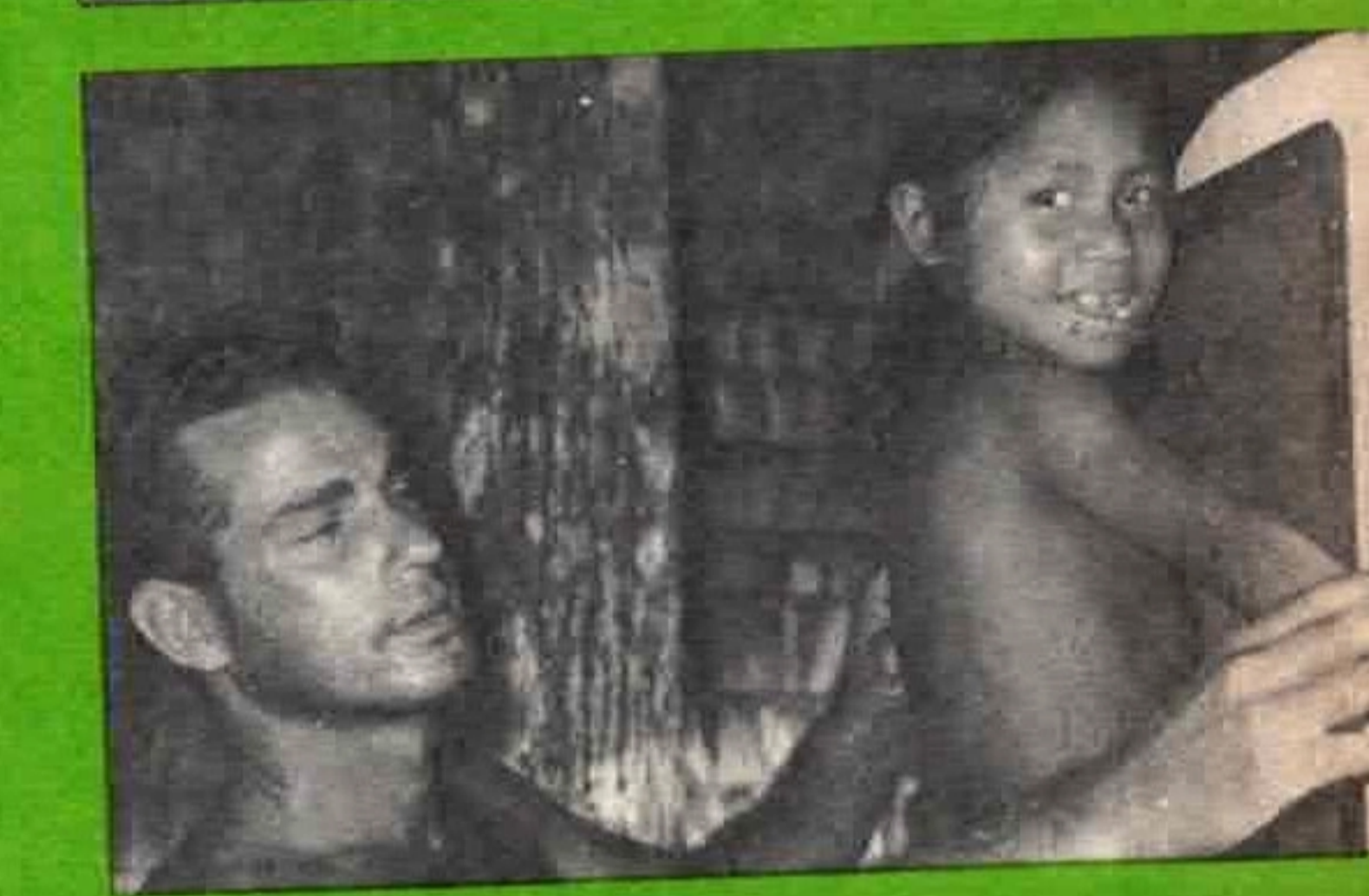
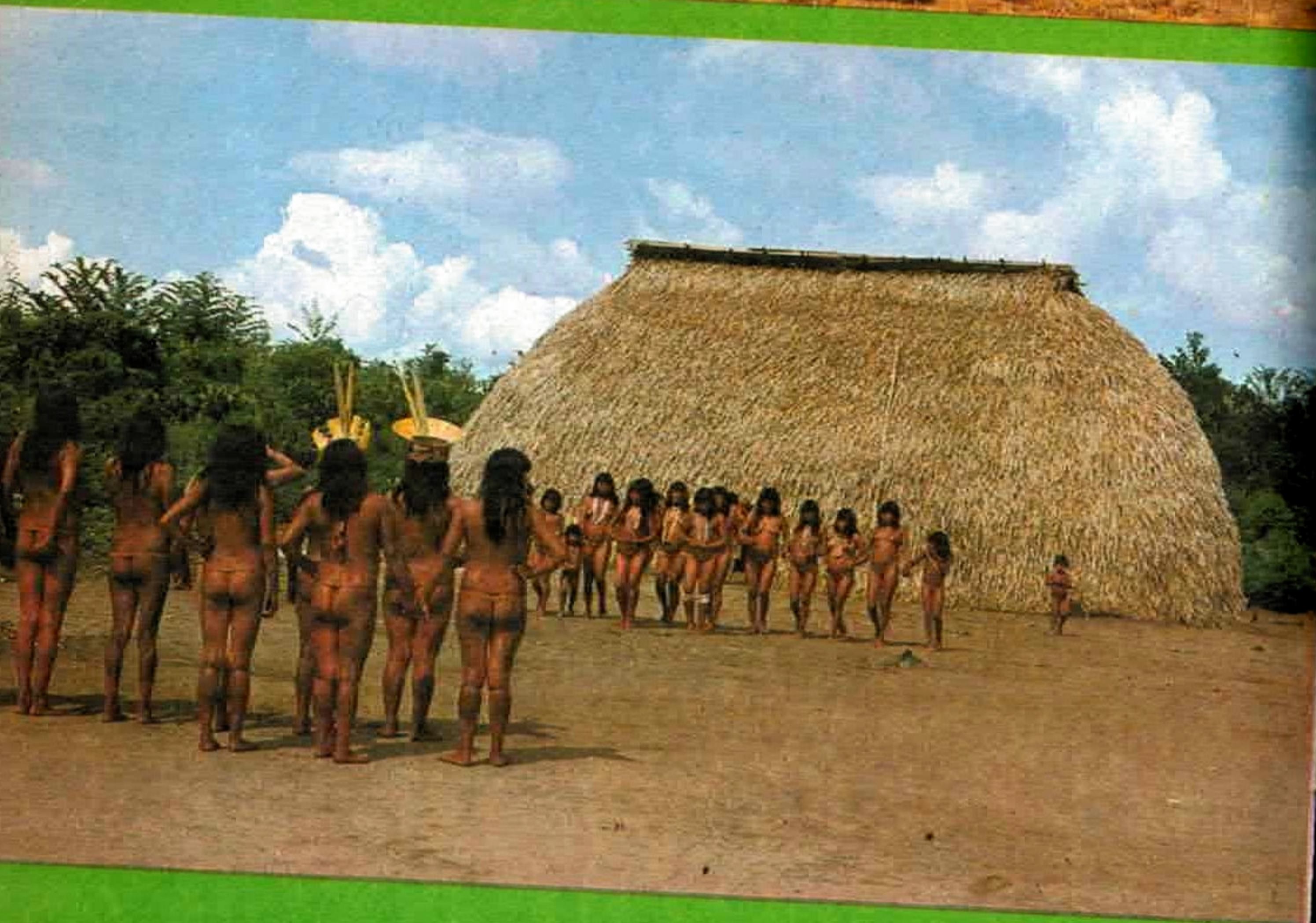
WHAT IS THE LEGAL SITUATION OF THE BRAZILIAN INDIAN?

The unintegrated Indian is considered by the Brazilian Civil Code to be relatively incompetent, and unable to perform certain acts of civil life without legal assistance. He is therefore a ward of the State, the responsible guardian being the National Indian Foundation (Fundação Nacional do Índio — FUNAI). However, once he is incorporated in Brazilian society, he enjoys the same privileges and is bound to the same duties as any other citizen, and is subject to the normal rule of law. At the various intermediate levels of culture, the rights and obligations of Brazilian Indians are defined in the Indian Statute (*Estatuto do Índio*).

WHAT ARE THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE INDIAN POLICY ENDORSED BY THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT?

Brazil's Indian policy, inspired by the precepts laid down by Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon, is based on the following principles: (1) respect for the person of the Indian and for tribal institutions and communities; (2) guarantee of permanent ownership of the lands they live on and exclusive use of the natural resources and all the utilities to be found there; (3) preservation of the Indian's cultural and biological equilibrium, in their contact with the national society; (4) protection of the Indian against spontaneous aculturation, so that his socioeconomic evolution can go ahead without sharp changes. To grasp the importance of these principles and the pioneering spirit in which they were framed in that far-off Brazil of 1910, it must be considered that in 1956 at Geneva the 39th International Labor Conference approved, as a Recommendation to guide the native policies of all the countries that have native populations, a document based to a major extent on Brazilian legislation, in which these same principles are laid down as the basic norms which should rule in all relations with the Indians.





The National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), set up by Law N.º 5.371 of December 5, 1967, merged the former Indian Protection Service (S.P.I.) with the National Indian Protection Council (C.N.P.I.) and the Xingu National Park, with the object of uniting the agencies entrusted with carrying out the Government's Indian policy. Its duties include the guardianship of the Indians and the management of their estate, while providing medical, sanitary and educational assistance, and in fact looking after their interests in every possible way, even exerting police powers when necessary.

Why was Funai created?

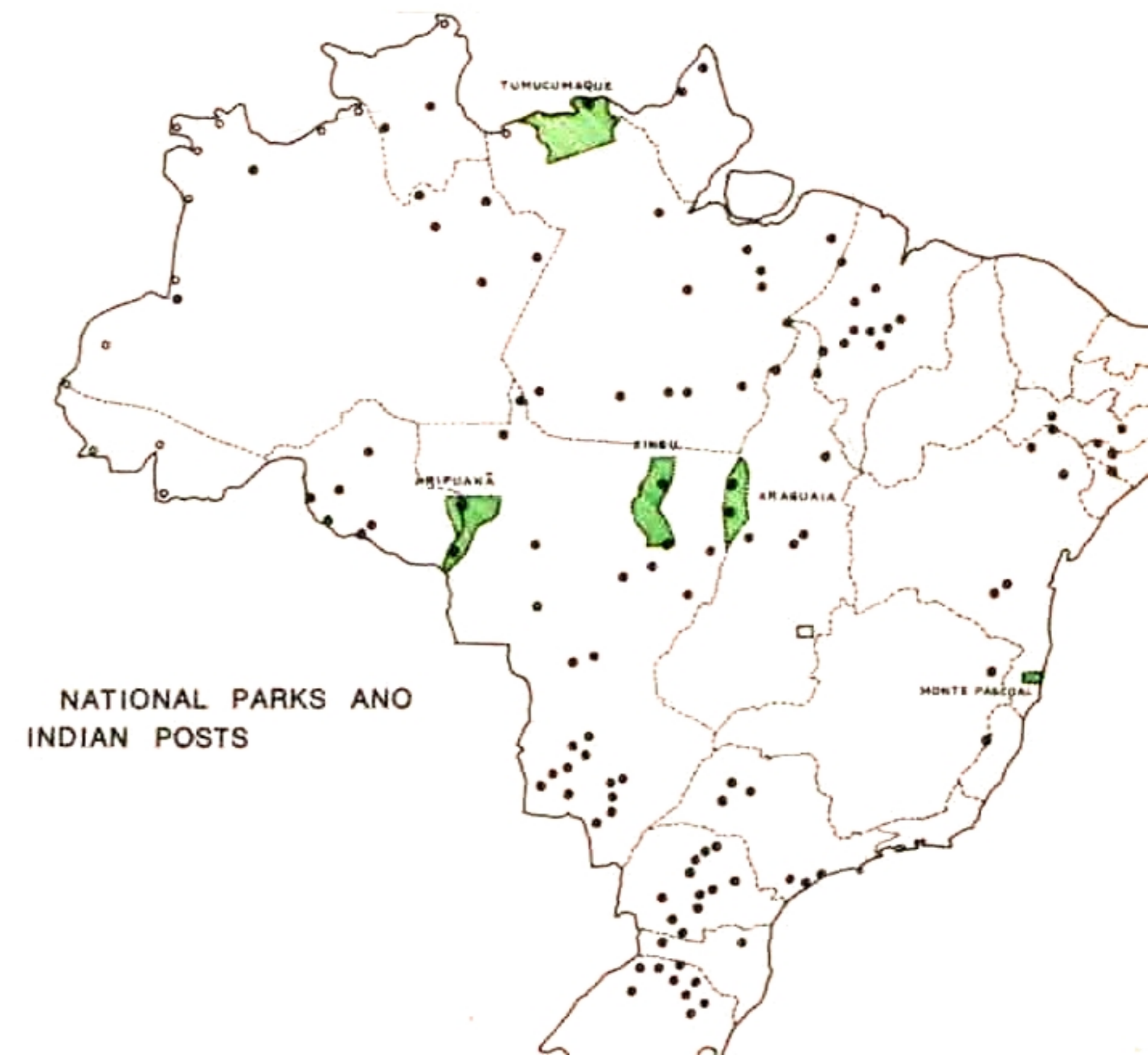
What is an Indian Post?



The basic unit of the FUNAI administrative framework is the Indian Post. It is, therefore, the Indian Post that actually carries out the government Indian policy.

FUNAI now has a hundred and forty-two Posts scattered all over Brazil. In each case responsibility for the unit devolves on the Head of the Post, whose foremost task has always been to keep the tribal community and the surrounding organized population on good terms with one another. The preparation of new men for work of a higher order at the Indian Post level has always been a matter of concern for FUNAI, and with this end in view, three Courses in Indianism (administered by experienced Anthropologists, Sanitarians, Agronomists, Veterinarians, etc.) have already been given to young people with the Indian cause at heart, selected from all over the country. The new Heads of Posts, thus thoroughly trained, have proved on completing the course to be able to do their work skillfully and scrupulously without being hampered in any way by the interests of the regional society.

The main objective of this reorientation is to introduce a scientific process of change designed to integrate the tribal communities in the national community. These promoters of community development, specially trained for the purpose, will bring education and medical care into the villages, guide the Indians in modern farming techniques of crop and stock raising, and encourage them to adopt healthier habits of eating and hygiene.



NATIONAL PARKS AND
INDIAN POSTS

What national and foreign organizations keep in touch with Funai?

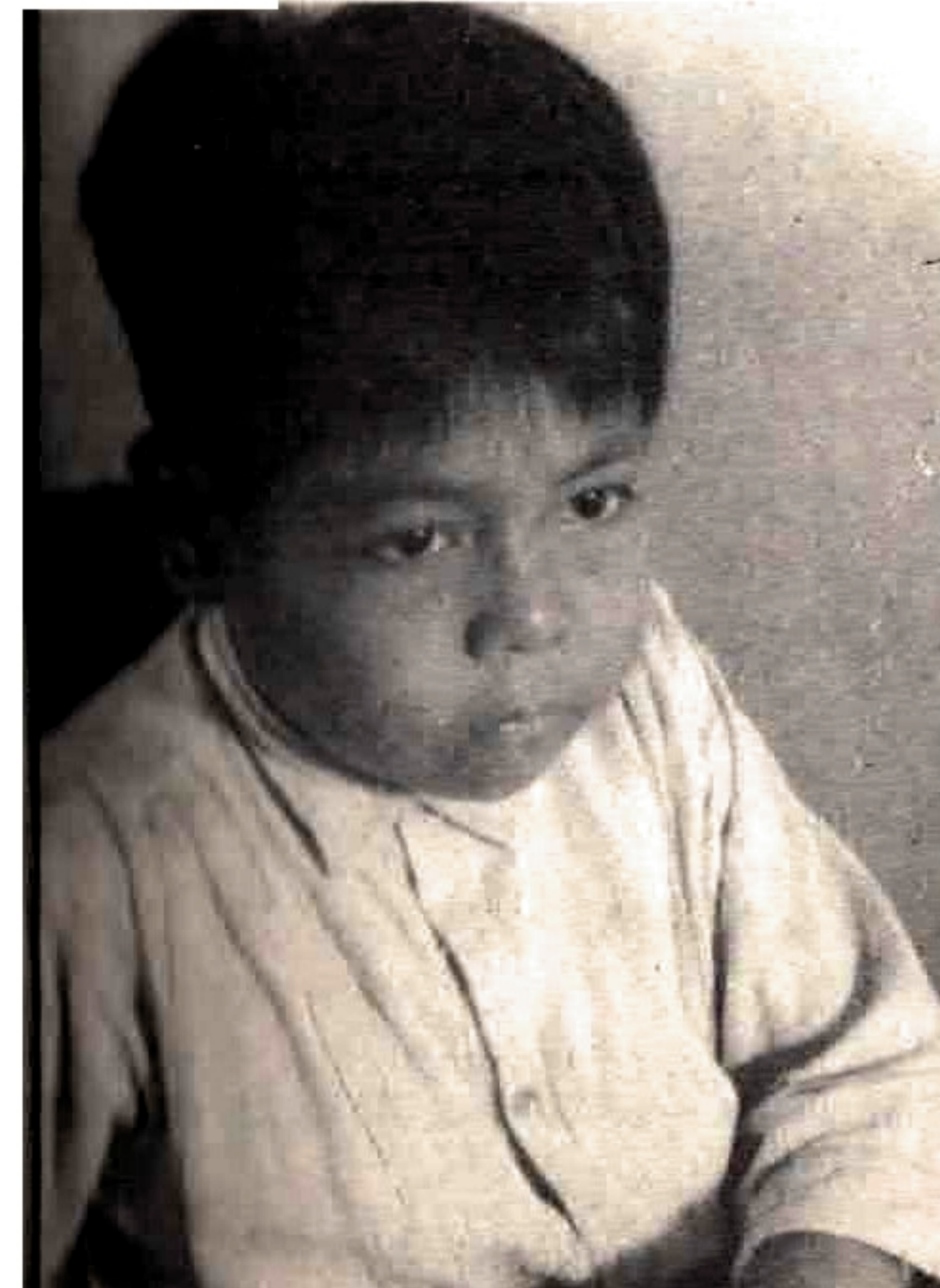
FUNAI receives considerable cooperation from the following government agencies: the Air Ministry, which runs an airmail service: the *Correio Aéreo Nacional*; the Navy, whose hospital launches sail up and down the Amazon and its tributaries; the Army, mainly through its frontier units; the Ministry of Health, which has a flying doctor service known as SUSA, and also sponsors a Special Public Health Foundation. Apart from these agencies, the following national institutions stay in contact with FUNAI: the Goeldi Museum, the National Museum, the Museu Paulista, Universities, and Religious Missions of various denominations. Foreign institutions include: Unesco, the Inter-American Indian Institute, the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Summer Linguistic Institute, the Smithsonian Institute, the Peace Corps, Religious Missions of various denominations, and a number of Scientific and Cultural Institutions.



HOW CAN THE INDIAN DEFENSE POLICY BE MADE TO SUIT THE INTERESTS OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

The technique of approach described above is the best way Brazilians have found of smoothing the advance of the white man's culture inland, a process that cannot be arrested, for it is the march of the Nation to come into its own. Therefore FUNAI, when tracing its lines of action, has had to bear in mind: on the one hand, the imperative of national integration and the ambitions of the Brazilian community, anxious to expand and indeed already expanding, sweeping aside any obstacle on the road to development; on the other hand, the just demands of the Indians, who cannot be violently changed, but must have their habits, religious beliefs and way of life preserved for so long as they need them if they are to survive. FUNAI is the intermediary, the link between two cultures, white and Indian, with constantly conflicting interests. FUNAI's new approach to the Indian question stresses the need of speeding up the execution of the plans for developing Indian communities,

so that the Indian may cease to be what was thought to be an obstacle, but rather become an *active factor in the development of the country*, able, more readily than any stranger to his habitat, to meet the challenge of contemporary life. To approach the Indian is not, therefore, enough. What is important is to help him, educate him, give him tools and teach him skills, abandoning once and for all the idea that he is an ill-found creature, afflicted with undesirable 'biological, mental and cultural traits that must be extirpated. Rather should we Brazilians accept the Indians as peoples that though different, yet stand before us by a quirk of History, and must pursue their destiny alongside our own until together we can set foot on the same trail, avoiding by this coexistence the possibility of ethnic kysts taking shape in direct aversion to the cultural tradition of our country.



What is being done for the health of the Indians?

The problem of health for the Indian, as serious as for the Brazilian population as a whole, is complicated by particular aspects that make the situation more drastic. Such are the poor genetic resistance he has, to oppose to the diseases peculiar to the peoples of western culture, above all, epidemics; the lack of suitable cultural habits; the very compulsions of a situation of interethnic friction; and the difficulty of access to many of his villages. This being so, FUNAI aims to attend the Indians in those villages, and to this end, ten flying squads have been organized, run by a General Assistance Department and made up of doctors, sanitarians, dentists and male nurses. It is their business to take preventive action on behalf of the healthy and promote recovery of the sick in the case of integrated groups in permanent or intermittent contact with civilization, and further to provide specialized medical assistance. In their travels over the vast Brazilian hinterland, the Health Flying Squads use whatever transportation may be available: planes, motor launches, rowboats, jeeps, pickups, horses and mules, etc.



WILL THE BUILDING OF THE TRANSAMAZONIAN HIGHWAY AFFECT THE INDIAN WAY OF LIFE IN THE REGION?

Long before work was started on the Transamazonian Highway and the first teams of surveyors arrived upon the scene, FUNAI took the precaution of sending in "penetration fronts", composed of sertanistas, male nurses, interpreters, social workers, etc., with the mission to contact the Indian groups living near the right-of-way of the future artery, so as to absorb in advance the interethnic shock wave liable to develop from an unexpected encounter. For this purpose, a detailed project for helping and educating the Indian was carefully worked out with the aid of social scientists from the Goeldi Museum and sanitarians from the Ministry of Health. As soon as the approach has been made, plans for the development of the Indian communities in that swathe of the Amazonian North will be put into operation, within the framework of the complex National Integration program recently created

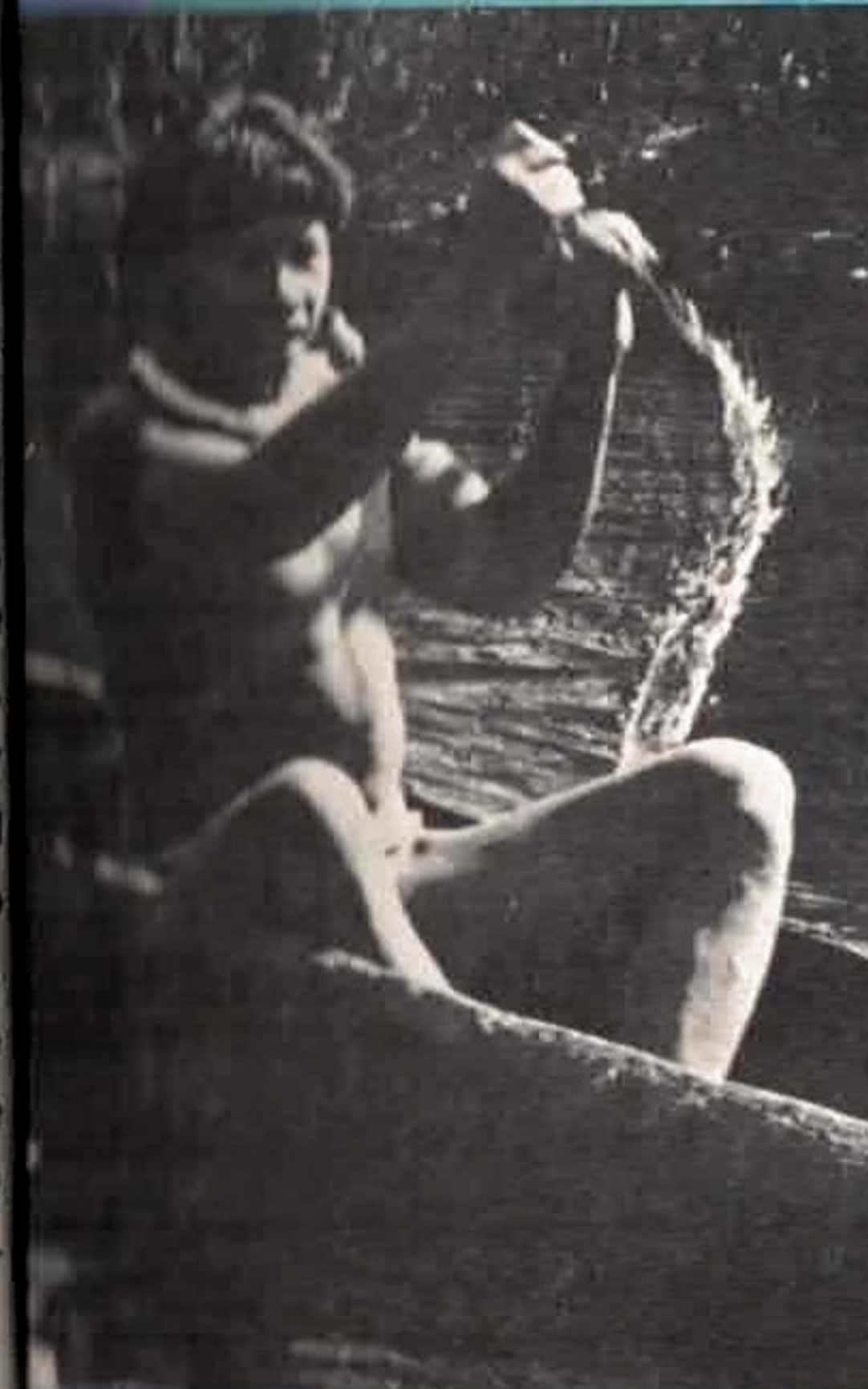


WHAT ROLE HAVE THE INDIANS PLAYED IN THE HISTORY OF BRAZIL?

The Indians were the first workers enrolled by the discoverers to colonize the new land. Portugal, poor in manpower and resources for a job of this scope, could not shoulder it alone. The Indians were in the main the builders of the first urban clusters: São Paulo de Piratininga, Rio de Janeiro and Niterói. It was the Indians who defended the captaincies, into which Brazil was divided, from the incursions of pirates and corsairs. Without the Indians, it would have been impossible to fell the brazilwood trees and ship the logs to Portugal, plant the first cuttings of sugarcane, pan or mine for gold. The Indian was guide, boatman, warrior, hunter and fisher on the pioneer expeditions up country that pushed the borders of the colony well beyond the Tordesillas line drawn by Pope Alexander VI. It was the Indians who helped frustrate the ambitions of the French, ward off the English incursions, drive out the Dutch invaders, and after Independence, in the days of the Second Empire, they contributed to the victory of Brazil and her allies in the Paraguayan War. It may be said that our nationality was conceived in the Indian womb, which gave birth to one of the richest experiences of miscegenation the world has ever known.

HAVE ANY INDIANS BEEN CONSIDERED NATIONAL HEROES?

Many, among whom might be mentioned: Tibiriça, conqueror of Espírito Santo and one of the founders of São Paulo; Coaquira and Grão Palmeira, heroes of the Tamoio Confederation; Mendicapuba, who fought bravely against the French in Maranhão; Tabira, the right-hand man of Jerônimo de Albuquerque, whose life he saved; Araribóia, who overthrew the French in Rio de Janeiro; Aimberê and Cunhambebe, the valiant opponent of Indian slavery; Jaguari and Poti, heroes of the Dutch War; and finally, in this century, Rondon, that world-famous figure, with Terêna and Borôro blood in his veins, a genuine hero of whom Brazilians are justly proud.



Indian influence has had a far-reaching effect on Brazilian social institutions and material culture, even invading the province of Law. A certain leniency in punishment for theft, for instance, may possibly reflect a degree of understanding on the part of the white man for the near incapacity of the Indian to appreciate the notion of this misdemeanor since, in Indian life and economy, everything is shared in common. Innumerable aspects of Indian culture have been incorporated in the Brazilian way of life: the use of the hammock to sleep in, as a cradle or as a means of transportation; the "jirau", a high, wooden bed like an upper bunk; thatching with sapé grass, timbó vines or leaves of the coconut palm; the mania for cleanliness that urges the Indian to bathe more than ten times a day; the habit of squatting on his haunches to rest; nomadic slash-and-burn farming ("coivara") cooking



Who
had
the
Indians
give
Brazil



based on cassava (manioc), corn (maize), Brazil nuts, heart of palm (palm cabbage), yams, "midibi", cashew nuts, and turtles; dishes such as green corn cakes (pamonha), homony (canjica); manioc pancakes (beiju), and fish or seafood cooked in palm oil (moqueca); guaraná, as a seasoning or a soft drink; kitchen utensils such as corn pestles, shallow earthenware bowls, fiber sieves, gourds, water dippers, round wicker baskets and fans; textile fibers from palms, vines and rushes (e.g. tucum, embira and junco); hunting and fishing gear, such as the sling-bow, the bird-trap, the pitfall or snare for game, the long-handled net for shrimp and small fish, the fish pound and various types of circular casting nets; the use of medicinal plants; a belief in supernatural beings in semihuman or animal form, like the bicho-papão, the caapora, the saci-pererê, the boitata and the iara, most of them malignant, which it is as well to propitiate. Finally, tobacco and rubber, used all over





Where can I find more about the Indians of Brazil?

All that has been said up to now is of general interest and designed to attract a wide range of readers, so as to satisfy the urge of curiosity we must all feel about the forest-dwellers, so essentially similar to their more civilized brothers, yet widely differing in culture and way of life. Many, however, will no doubt be eager to broaden their understanding of this world apart, and for this purpose a list of bibliographical references, as up-to-date as possible, has been added. For further convenience the original titles have been translated where necessary, and the list is followed by a transcription of the names of the more important magazines or institutions cited. It is hoped that this brief *bibliography* will serve as a guide for the studious or whoever may wish to learn more about the Indians of Brazil.

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| Antropologia, Revista de | Anthropology Review |
| Associação Paulista de Medicina | São Paulo Medical Association |
| Conselho Nacional de Proteção aos Índios | National Indian Protection Council |
| Difusão Européia do Livro | Brazilian Book Promotion in Europe |
| Ensino, Revista de | Educational Review |
| Informação Legislativa, Revista de | Review of Legislative Information |
| Instituto de Ciências Sociais da UFRJ | Social Science Institute of the Federal |
| (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro) | University of Rio de Janeiro |
| Ministério da Agricultura | Ministry of Agriculture |
| Ministério da Educação e Cultura | Ministry of Education and Culture |
| Ministério da Educação e Saúde | Ministry of Education and Health |
| Museu Nacional | National Museum |
| Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi | Emílio Goeldi Pará Museum |
| Museu Paulista | São Paulo Museum |
| Museu Regional Dom Bosco | Dom Bosco Regional Museum |
| Sociologia (Revista) | Sociology (Review) |

n. s. = nova série = new series

1.ª, 2.ª, 3.ª, etc. ed. = 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. edition

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