

OUR INDIANS IN OUR AMERICA

Anti-Imperialist Imperialism and the Construction of Brazilian Modernity

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Abstract: Indigenous peoples have been used and imagined as guardians of the Brazilian frontier since at least the mid-nineteenth century. This association was central to the foundation of the Indian Protection Service (Serviço de Proteção aos Índios, or SPI) during the early 1900s and culminated with the Amazonian Vigilance System (Sistema de Vigilância da Amazônia, or SIVAM) at the turn of the millennium. Throughout the period, the abiding desire to establish defensive dominion over disputed national territory subjected individuals and groups identified as “Indians” to the power of overlapping discourses of scientific progress, national security, and economic development. A trinity of Brazilian modernity, these goals interpellated native peoples primarily through the practice and rhetoric of education, which grounds their historical relationship with dominant national society. Drawing on SPI records, government documents, journalism, personal testimonies, and visual media, this article traces the impact of this modernist trinity on indigenist policy and in the lives of those who have been affected by its tutelary power. By transforming private indigenous spaces into public domain, Brazil’s politics of anti-imperialist imperialism propagated a colonialist, metonymic relationship between “our Indians” and “our America” into the twenty-first century.

FORMER INTERNATIONAL RESERVE OF AMAZON FOREST

The image in figure 1 has been circulating as part of an Internet chain letter since the year 2000. Alleged to be an excerpt from a geography book used in U.S. middle schools, it outlines the Amazon on a map of Brazil and neighboring countries. The text explains in poor English that the “most important rainforest in the world” has been seized from the “illiterate” and “primitive” peoples of South America, appropriated for safekeeping by the United States and the United Nations, and renamed the Former International Reserve of Amazon Forest (FINRAF). The supposed author, neoconqueror David Norman, justifies the confiscation of national

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Figure 1 "An Introduction to Geography."

territory from the "irresponsible, cruel and authoritative [*sic*] countries" of Latin America by urging protection of the "world's lungs" and referring to the rainforest as patrimony "of all humanity."¹ Titled "A Amazônia é nossa!" this anonymous e-mail message led Internet users throughout the Americas to believe that U.S. schoolchildren have indeed been studying the "necessary" takeover of Brazilian territory and its conversion to

1. The Normans conquered territories from Hastings to Syria between the eleventh and the early thirteenth centuries. The historian David Nicolle (1987, 4) associates them with military prowess, ruthlessness, "business sense," and "appreciation for money."

FINRAF. Between 2000 and 2005, the bogus e-mail persuaded so many people that the U.S. State Department (2005) and the Brazilian Embassy in Washington were compelled to post disclaimers on their respective Web sites attesting to the falseness of its allegations.²

As have other perceived infringements of national sovereignty, spurious or otherwise, FINRAF draws on a telluric anti-imperialism that pervades dominant Brazilian culture and has associated the country's interior with the heart and soul of Brazilianness since long before the declaration of the First Republic, in 1889. From nineteenth-century Indianist fiction (Treece 2000) to twentieth-century Amerindian symphonies (Béhague 2006) and political cartoons "commemorating" Brazil's colonization at the turn of the millennium (*Bundas* 2000a, 2000b; Devine Guzmán 2005), the Amazon and its inhabitants appear repeatedly in national cultural production as a patriotic trope to represent the whole or imagined essence of the country. In policy initiatives and the popular imaginary alike, patriotic responses to looming violations of territorial sovereignty—like FINRAF—have triggered the preemptive takeover of "virgin" Amazonian lands that are deemed lacking of state occupation, control, and ownership.³ But of course, the original "owners" of these territories have "occupied" and "controlled" them for thousands of years.

Here I consider these Amazonian imaginaries, the ongoing processes of Brazilian modernity, and anti-imperialist articulations of national identity in relation to those whose fate has been implicated in all three sets of discourse: "the Indians," real and imagined.⁴ I argue that the imperialist logic of rightful possession reflected in the bogus geography textbook is, paradoxically, analogous to the Brazilian state's own historical rationale of interior occupation and border defense.⁵ This discourse dates to the

2. Ambassador Rubens Antônio Barbosa attributed the fabrication to retired military personnel and the anonymous Web site Brasil, Ame-o ou Deixe-o (a slogan associated with the 1964–1985 dictatorship). Paulo Roberto de Almeida (minister-counselor of the Brazilian embassy in Washington) documented the circulation of the rumor in Brazil by university professors and members of Congress, in addition to countless outraged citizens. Having condemned the uncritical embrace of the message and its accompanying ultranationalist discourse by the same intellectual left that had once opposed the military dictatorship, Almeida was charged by both sides with support for U.S. imperialism (see <http://www.pralmeida.org>).

3. Consider, for example, the imagery of sexual possession used in popular media responses to George W. Bush's October 2000 suggestion that third-world debt be traded for valuable rain-forest lands (*Bundas* 2000a, 2000b).

4. I acknowledge here the constructed nature of "Indianness" and the difficulty of relaying its complexity in language and through translation (on this, see Ramos 1998, 13–59). In general, I use the terms *Indian* and *Indianness* to invoke ideas and images and *indigenous* and *indigeneity* to evoke people and lived experience. These referents, of course, sometimes overlap.

5. By invoking the state, I refer primarily to the institutions, organizations, and policies that interpellate indigenous peoples inside national borders.

mid-nineteenth century, when transportation and communication technologies first opened up the hinterlands and the Terena and Guaicuru peoples were conscripted as scouts and spies in the National Guard during the Paraguayan War (1864–1870) (Berthold 1922; Ferreira Vargas 2003; Summerhill 2003; Taunay 1923, 1931; Marcos Terena, personal communication with the author). Notwithstanding the anti-imperialist sentiment behind the Internet letter, the logic of the fictitious FINRAF initiative in fact echoes a century of Brazilian indigenism—also an anti-imperialist doctrine, but one that sits at the opposite end of the political spectrum and has been implemented precisely through the realm of education or tutelary power (Souza Lima 1995). It is therefore ironic that the masterminds of FINRAF and the fake book sought to rouse anti-imperialist sentiment by inventing an educational discourse positing all Brazilians as “primitive” beings in need of “civilized” guidance and enlightenment. This is what much of dominant Brazilian society has been saying about the native peoples of the Amazon for nearly two centuries.

Both indigenist discourse and the invented international plot to take over the Amazon invoke the role of indigenous peoples in the processes of Brazilian modernity by positing the superiority of “modern” knowledge and reason over “backward” tradition and myth to impose new and specific configurations of time and space. Though touted as “objective” and “scientific,” this temporal and spatial reorganization presents a colonialist rendering of the physical world under the guise of universal truth and in the name of “all humanity.” In both cases, “superior” cultures are meant to supplant “inferior” ones by bringing with them what Anthony Giddens (1990, 18) called the “consequences of modernity,” which foster relations between peoples, institutions, and ideas that in premodern times may have never crossed paths. Thus was the thrust of Brazil’s indigenist enterprise, which—like the fictitious FINRAF takeover—was meant to reconfigure “primitive” places both through tutelage (protection) and positive images of that tutelage.

The goals of educating “underdeveloped,” “illiterate,” and “primitive” peoples and equipping them with books, technology, and weapons to safeguard national territory stemmed from national development policy beginning in the early twentieth century. The push to modernize the interior manifested as the *Marcha Para o Oeste* of President Getúlio Vargas during the 1930s and 1940s and the *Cinqüenta Anos em Cinco* initiative of President Juscelino Kubitschek, culminating in the inauguration of Brazil’s hypermodern capital (Brasília) in 1960.⁶ In the midst of this development flurry, Vargas’s vice president, João Café Filho, charged a committee

6. Although the “*Marcha*” began officially in 1940, the push westward was marked by the founding of Goiânia in 1933 and the establishment of the Departamento Nacional de Estradas de Rodagem (DNER) at the outset of the *Estado Novo*.

of “indigenist experts” with a feasibility study for a new indigenous reserve in the then-unified state of Mato Grosso: the Parque Indígena do Xingu (PIX).⁷ The committee concluded that Xingu would facilitate the protection of the nation’s “indigenous factor” in “human, animal, and plant forms” and emphasized the value of fusing technological, security, and economic interests with the state’s indigenist mission:

[U]ma vez assistido de forma adequada [o índio] encontraria seu lugar na sociedade brasileira. . . . No PIX, a F.A.B. [Força Aérea Brasileira] e a navegação aérea comercial . . . teria[m] um ponto de apoio da maior importância estratégica e de grande relevância para a segurança do voo. Os trabalhadores científicos ganhariam a segurança de uma reserva do Brasil prístino onde poderiam . . . continuar contribuindo para um conhecimento mais profundo de nossa terra e nossa gente. E a nossa geração se redimiria das espoliações que em nosso tempo, se vêm fazendo à natureza brasileira, reservando um recanto onde ela se conservaria intocada [sic].⁸ (“Ante-Projeto de Lei” 1952)

Equipped with landing strips and radiotelegraph stations, the Xingu reserve pushed the nineteenth-century association between indigenous protection and the militarized takeover of native lands into the second half of the twentieth century. This postindependence desire for defensive dominion over the prized but “empty” landscape (Pratt 1992, 61) thus relegated its native peoples to human capital to be exploited in the interest of technological progress, national security, and economic development. A trinity of Brazilian modernity, these overlapping goals would interpellate “Indians” primarily through education—a rhetoric and practice of anti-imperialist imperialism that I argue grounds the entire historical relationship between indigenous peoples and dominant Brazilian society.⁹

Although indigenous peoples have become increasingly empowered to represent themselves in politics and through various forms of cultural production,¹⁰ the colonialist tendencies to “vanish” them into nature (Berry

7. These officials included the indigenist functionary Raimundo Vasconcelos Aboim; the National Museum director Heloisa Alberto Törres; the *sertanista* Orlando Villas Boas; and the ethnologist Darcy Ribeiro. For a history of PIX (now Terra Indígena do Xingu), see Garfield 2004; Pires Meneses 2000.

8. I have maintained the original spelling and accentuation of primary sources.

9. Early “indigenous education” adhered to nineteenth-century norms, which mandated that rural schooling be technical rather than academic (Romanelli 1999, 45). Regional intellectuals and nation builders considered “educação para o ócio” to be detrimental to national development (Romanelli 1999, 44). The Peruvian González Prada (1946, 212), for example, railed famously in his 1904 essay, “Nuestros Indios” against “cerebros con luz y estómagos sin pan.”

10. See, for example, the Instituto Indígena Brasileiro para Propriedade Intelectual (<http://www.inbrapi.org.br>); the Vídeo nas Aldeias project (<http://www.videonasaldeias.org.br>); the indigenous teacher-training program of the Ministry of Education of Bahia (http://www.sec.ba.gov.br/aplicativos/noticia.asp?acao=5¬icia_id=541); and Ramos’s collaborative work on “Indigenizing Development” (*Poverty in Focus* 2009, 305). In contrast, there

1960) or subordinate their agency to the idealized imaginings of “hyper-real” Indians (Ramos 1994) have not abated. The nationalist critique of imperialism represented by the FINRAF facade is, in fact, still premised on an imagined but powerful metonymic relationship between “our Indians” and “our America.”¹¹ Simply put, the idea of Indians (and not indigenous peoples) is used to stand in for a subaltern Brazil and vice versa. In what follows, I trace the influence of these modernizing discourses (science, security, and development) on the rhetoric and practice of indigenism and in the thought of people interpellated by it—indigenous and nonindigenous alike. My aim is not to re-create the indigenist (or indigenous) past but to show how imperialist discourses—real and imagined, foreign and domestic—have used the idea, practice, and image of indigenous education to reconfigure traditional notions of time and space as part of the construction of Brazilian modernity. Under the guise of protection, these discourses in fact facilitated exploitation by helping transform the Amazon from a traditional “place” into a modern “space” (Giddens 1990).

FROM PIX TO SIVAM: WHO IS DEFENDING WHOM?

The seeds of indigenist modernity planted during the early twentieth century would flower decades later as the Sistema de Vigelância da Amazônia (SIVAM), characterized by its Brazilian and U.S. infrastructure providers as the largest environmental monitoring program and largest law enforcement system in the world” (Grupo Schahin 2002; Raytheon 2009).¹² A massive configuration of surveillance radars, environmental sensors, airborne systems, and on-ground coordination centers, SIVAM was the technological infrastructure for monitoring 5.2 million square kilometers of Amazonian rainforest (Raytheon 2000). The Brazilian Air Force and the U.S.-based Raytheon Corporation, which won the contract in an international bid to provide the Brazilian government with hardware and technological expertise, developed the project between 1994 and 2005 with the collaboration of Brazilian companies Embraer and ATECH. With a price tag of US\$1.395 billion, SIVAM was initiated during the administration of Fernando Henrique Cardoso but was borne of a Vargas-era desire to control Brazilian airspace, which intensified under military rule in the 1970s and early 1980s (Bonalume Neto 2005; Departamento de Controle

is at present no indigenous representation in the national congress, and a self-identifying indigenous person has never led the state’s indigenist bodies.

11. I refer to José Martí’s 1891 anti-imperialist manifesto of pan-Latin Americanism, “Nuestra América.”

12. SIVAM was the infrastructure-implementation phase of what is now the Amazonian Protection System (Sistema de Proteção da Amazônia, or SIPAM). The transfer took place in April 2006. See <http://www.sipam.gov.br/>.

do Espaço Aéreo [DECEA]).¹³ As allegations of corruption surrounded its thorny passage through Congress for approval of international financing, the project brought scandal to Cardoso's government that led to an official investigation (Comissão Parlamentar de Inquérito, or CPI) and the dismissal of four top officials.¹⁴

Shadowed by this controversy, SIVAM advocates pitched the project to the general public as a means to protect valuable and endangered national territories. Their rationale justified this effort at protection with language that, perhaps not coincidentally, resonates with the fake textbook's justification of FINRAF. Thus read the governmental Web site:

Na década de 80, a Amazônia era considerada o pulmão do mundo, e nós, brasileiros, os incendiários que estavam acabando com o oxigênio do planeta. Os outros países, de olho em nossas riquezas, diziam-se preocupados com a saúde da Terra e queriam dar palpite em tudo que acontecia na Amazônia. Naquela época, existiam na região rotas de tráfico de drogas, ocupação desordenada, invasão de áreas indígenas, contrabando, ações predatórias . . . e a ocorrência de uma série de outros crimes. Na verdade, com as dificuldades de comunicação e de controle da região, ficava difícil para o governo brasileiro saber a real situação da Amazônia. (Comissão para Coordenação do Projeto do Sistema de Vigilância da Amazônia [hereafter Comissão], 2006b)

The assertion that SIVAM might deter countries with their "eyes on Brazilian wealth" was contradictory, however, considering that foreign sources financed 97 percent of the initiative. Earning 8.5 percent interest on nearly \$1.4 billion in loans over two decades, the "other countries" in question would in fact manage to accumulate massive amounts of Brazilian "riches" with the approval of the Brazilian Congress.¹⁵

Although there have been a handful of studies addressing the technological aspects of SIVAM and its significance as part of a regional history of military and environmental defense, scant attention has been paid to the social and cultural implications of the project. I was therefore drawn to the educational campaign used to promote SIVAM between 1997 and

13. Brazilian territory is divided into four integrated air-traffic-control and air-defense centers (*centros integrados de defesa aérea e controle de tráfego aéreo*, or CINDACTAs). The area CINDACTA I (Brasília, Rio, São Paulo, and Belo Horizonte) dates to 1973. The area CINDACTA IV covers the Amazon and began functioning with SIVAM technology and infrastructure in 2006 (DECEA).

14. Chief of Protocol Júlio César Gomes; Air Force Minister Brigadier General Mauro Gandra; head of the Federal Police's Operations Center, Mário Oliveira; and director of the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA), Francisco Grazziano. The judicial body that oversees public financing (Tribunal de Contas da União) concluded that the contracts in the case were legal, whereas the CPI found evidence of bribery and "influence trafficking" (Taylor and Buranelli 2007, 73–74; see also *NotiSur* 1995; Ramos 1998, 240–241).

15. The governmental Web site documented financing as follows: U.S. Export-Import Bank, 73.3 percent; Raytheon, 17 percent; Exportkreditnämnden, 6 percent; and Vendor's Trust, 3.4 percent.

2000 as part of a communications operation to improve public opinion regarding what had come to be known in the mainstream press as “o projeto dos escândalos” (Lima 1998, 5). Brainchild of the SIVAM project coordinator Brigadeiro Marcos Antônio Oliveira, the pedagogical undertaking originated in Rio de Janeiro with members of the Social Communications Advisory Team, who decided to represent the government’s technological security initiative with a cartoon image (figure 2) of an Indian boy they called “little SIVAM” (Lima, interview with the author, August 8, 2008, Rio de Janeiro). The promotional materials explained: “Esse indiozinho simpático é o Sivamzinho, o mascote do projeto SIVAM. Ele é o amigo número um das crianças da Amazônia” (Comissão, 2006d). A light-skinned, monolingual Portuguese speaker sporting shorts, a T-shirt, and a Yanomami-looking haircut, the “nice little Indian” was the centerpiece of 1,028,000 pieces of pedagogical material distributed to schoolchildren and teachers throughout the region, including twenty-three locales targeted as installation sites for SIVAM infrastructure (Lima 1998, 17).¹⁶

The 115 tons of notebooks, posters, calendars, rulers, and pencils—all showcasing the SIVAM mascot—aimed “to generate a legion of Sivamzinhos” throughout the Amazon who would identify with the “little Indian’s” “spirit of adventure” and “love of the land” (Lima 1998, 14–17; see also Comissão 2006e). Part environmentalist and part spy, Sivamzinho was also the protagonist of a series of educational comics that depicted him protecting the rainforest, advocating for sustainable development, and turning over wrongdoers to the federal police. In two such comics, “O garimpo que não deu certo” and “Estão levando os animais,” he caught smugglers as they sifted protected gold and trafficked protected animals deep in the heart of the rainforest. Other editions showed Sivamzinho preventing deforestation, river pollution, and improper fishing practices, and praising the enhanced production levels and quality of life brought about by SIVAM technology (Comissão 2006d). With an emphasis on individual and communal responsibility in policing the hinterlands, Sivamzinho served as the metaphorical eyes and ears of the state and a poster child (literally) for a century of “indigenous protection.” He was *the* “educated Indian”: authentic (enough) in his abilities and interests but sufficiently whitened by the knowledge he had gleaned from dominant society and sought, in turn, to impart to his less-enlightened brethren. Above all, Sivamzinho was a patriot who embraced the responsibilities of national citizenship. Five hundred thousand “educational notebooks” circulated through Amazonian schools depicted him hoisting the Brazilian flag and singing the national anthem (Comissão 2006a).

16. For a list of the sites, see Comissão 2006c.

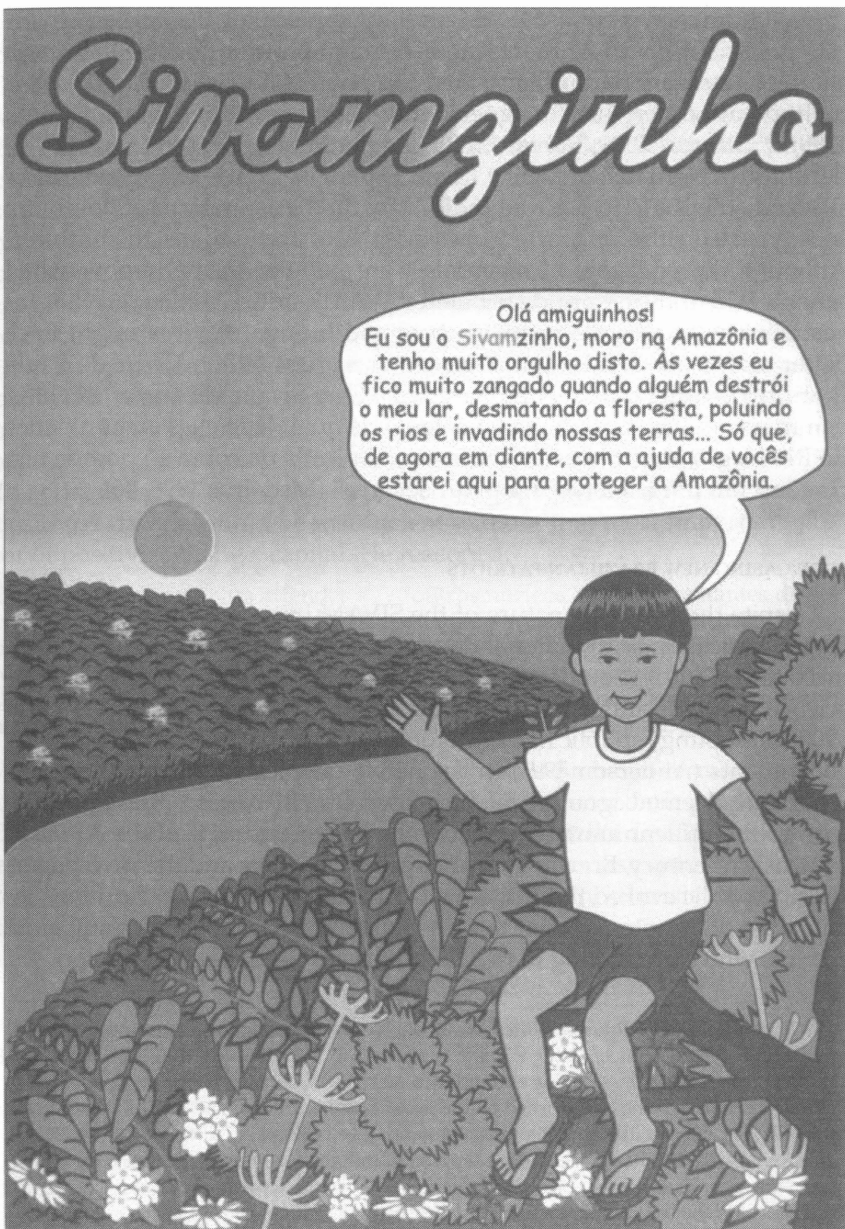


Figure 2 Sivamzinho "Educational Notebook." Courtesy of Filipe Bastos.

As a human symbol of SIVAM and mouthpiece for the national interests it was supposed to represent, Sivamzinho put a positive spin on a complex international initiative that the public had reduced to the eternally popular idea that foreigners were taking over the Amazon (Lima 1998; *O Carnaval* 2009; Rohter 2002).¹⁷ At the same time, the “mascot” reflected the colonialist tendency to put expedient words in the mouths of silenced others and to place an Indian face on the aspirations of dominant society—all in the purported best interest of the Indians themselves.¹⁸ Although the pedagogical materials were popular in the impoverished schools where they were distributed, SIVAM’s critics contended that investment in small-scale infrastructure and human services might have better served the local population. As the priest Nilton César de Paula from São Gabriel da Cachoeira argued, “Se o Sivam vai trazer satélites, que traga também radiofonia e telefonia de qualidade. Nas comunidades do Rio Negro, muitas pessoas morrem de picada de cobra só porque não contam com um telefone para pedir socorro” (Medeiros 1998, 46).

SHOWCASING NEW BRAZILIAN PATRIOTS

Despite the futuristic nature of the SIVAM initiative, the conflation of Indian education with national development and the technological militarization of indigenous lands is an old phenomenon. By placing soldiers, science, and “desirable” settlers into frontier regions during the early 1900s, the young republic had been forced to confront its most “imagined” constituents (Anderson 1991) in the native peoples who lived there and who were deemed ignorant of their own Brazilianness.¹⁹ Presaging the turn-of-the-millennium anxiety over the precarious state of the Amazon by nearly a century, Brazil’s civil and military leaders and the newspaper-reading public evoked the “illiterate,” “unintelligent,” and “primitive” inhabitants of remote national terrain to justify its takeover by indigenist patriots who were willing to risk their lives for the sake of the nation.

17. Rumors circulated that satellites would enable foreigners to target untapped mineral wealth. U.S. Marine officer Peter Witcoff suggested in a 1999 study that “SIVAM might benefit U.S. national security interests in Latin America” (Witcoff 1999, xix–xx). In 2008, a Raytheon employee who had worked on the project could offer no evidence of U.S. military use of SIVAM. Clearly, the technology has potential for positive collaboration or abuse.

18. Ramos (2000, 3) has argued, “The tapping of indigenous knowledge and selected cultural features as bait in advertising campaigns has meant profits to non-Indians the dimensions of which the best informed Indians were, until very recently, unable to fathom.”

19. On “desirable” immigrants, see Diégues 1980; Lesser 1999. Abolition in 1888 created a need for rural workers and spawned intense immigration when the government conceded unoccupied lands to new settler colonies. Vargas established immigration quotas before banning immigration entirely in 1932. The ban was lifted in 1934, and the 1937 Constitution limited newcomers annually to 2 percent of each national immigrant population (Diégues 1980).

In the aftermath of the Canudos War (1896–1897) and a series of bloody confrontations between indigenous peoples and settlers infringing on their lands, a young military officer of Bororo descent named Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon established the Serviço de Proteção aos Índios (SPI) in 1910 to lay a more enlightened path on which the country might continue its jarring passage into modernity.²⁰ Driven by the motto “Morrer se preciso for, matar nunca,”²¹ Rondon aimed to “pacify” indigenous communities, organize them into indigenous posts, and place them under the protective arm of the state. During the first decades of the twentieth century, the SPI established more than one hundred such posts, each designed to carry out the twentieth-century version of the civilizing mission.²²

In 1925, the senior-level SPI functionary Luiz Bueno Horta Barbosa explained in a newspaper interview that the indigenous posts were micro-models of national modernity, equipped with electricity, new agricultural technologies, innovative infrastructure, and dedicated staff (*O Paiz* 1925). To address the particular needs of each community, however, the tools of positivist change would be insufficient without that most important motor of positivist change: capital. He reasoned:

O que se faz mister, para atender a . . . outros núcleos ainda periclitantes da esparsa gente selvagem é o deferimento de uma verba proporcional às exigências de um tão útil de oneroso empreendimento. Assiste-lhe à sabedoria e à competência do Congresso estudar com mais reflexão o quasi resolvido problema [do índio], fornecendo ao Serviço os meios de que não precinde para levar a bom termo a sua grande, pia missão de humanidade e civismo [*sic*]. (*O Paiz* 1925)

The indigenist mission was thus couched in financial terms and tied indigenous education to the Indians’ capacity for economic productivity. Because foreign investment partially financed Brazil’s development projects (as with SIVAM, many years later), the indigenous posts would have to become self-sustaining to survive the global financial crisis looming on the horizon.²³

20. On the origin and function of the SPI, see Diacon 2004; Garfield 2001; Hemming 2004; Souza Lima 1995.

21. “Die if you must” but “never kill” was a directive for indigenists to sacrifice themselves, if necessary, to protect indigenous lives.

22. These posts were grouped under *inspetorias* in Manaus, Belém, São Luís, Recife, Campo Grande, Cuiabá, Curitiba, Goiânia, and Porto Velho, and they functioned according to local needs. Attraction posts contacted “unpacified” tribes. Frontier posts served populations in Acre, which was once Bolivian territory, had three lives as an independent republic, became part of Brazil in 1904, and gained statehood in 1962. Residents of ranching posts raised livestock for consumption and commerce. Literacy and nationalization posts facilitated the economic integration of people in “advanced stages of de-Indianization” (Secção de Estudos do Serviço de Proteção aos Índios 1942).

23. Berthold (1922, 26–27) argued that U.S., German, and French shareholders financed Brazil’s communication lines with North America, Europe, and West Africa before

As Horta Barbosa had feared, the 1930s plagued the SPI with severe budget reductions.²⁴ On July 12, 1934, President Vargas removed the SPI from the Ministry of Labor, Industry, and Commerce and transferred it to the War Ministry, where it became part of the Special Inspectorate of Borders. He then authorized the revision of SPI legislation to address the overlapping problems of border defense and nationalization (Vargas 1934).

Propaganda films produced by the SPI after these changes highlighted the educational work carried out on indigenous posts under the militarized scheme. Microcosms of positivist humanism, the “hygienic and comfortable” posts were said to accommodate the “aspirations and customs” of those destined by “order and progress” to live on them (Secção de Estudos do Serviço de Proteção aos Índios 1942). The film *Curt Nimuendajú e Icatú* explained:

[E]m meio de zona outrora agitada por lutas contra o índio que se defendia contra invasão das suas terras, está hoje localizado este posto com seus índios . . . apaziguados. [É] a primeira habitação construída por civilizados em terras de índios, iniciando a mais árdua tarefa e que tem nas crianças os elementos indígenas que mais depressa aceitam os costumes dos civilizados. A pecuária é . . . um ótimo veículo para introduzir a noção econômica entre os índios. . . . [A] agricultura . . . organiza o trabalho, ensina técnicos, produz renda, ensina os costumes civilizados e encaminha o índio para a civilização rural brasileira. . . . [A] escola . . . introduz hábitos novos e socializa os pequenos indígenas. Muitas vezes na mesma escola aprendem índios e civilizados, iniciando a comunhão social que o posto vai intensificar entre os adultos. (Secção de Estudos do Serviço de Proteção aos Índios 1942)

Emphasizing the relationship between Indian vocational training and the consolidation of a modern economy, the film made little distinction between people and livestock residing on the posts but promised a “new” and “productive” life to Indians who “worked happily and satisfied, alone or in groups.” In keeping with SPI founding principles, technology and capital would enable the indigenists to integrate *neo-brasileiros* socially and economically into dominant society while harnessing their innate, untapped industriousness to help build the nation.

As the propaganda film revealed, the educational thrust of the state’s development initiative conflated the indigenous “problem” with the ongoing struggle between man and his environment, positing both in terms of the regional, postindependence interrogation of “civilization and barbarism” (Sarmiento 1986). A final scene depicts Kaingang women in discrete Western dress weaving traditional cloth as uniformed pupils hoist the Brazilian flag over their school under the approving gaze of their white teachers. The narrator exclaims:

Brazilians at opposite ends of the country were able to use similar technologies to communicate with one another.

24. Regarding the impact of the financial crisis on the SPI, see Hemming 2003, 210–211.

A Índia . . . obedece à tradição da tribo, trabalhando tenazmente num tecido que vai fazer parte de um cerimonial. Seus dedos não cansam, e sua habilidade é deveras impressionante. Na sua fisionomia calma e serena, há de perpassar as velhas recordações da vida de outras épocas, felizmente esvanecidas. A civilização abriu-se em esperanças!

The camera moves in to show the hands of a woman tugging adroitly on a few of the thousands of threads comprising her giant tapestry—a reminder of the immense challenge of creating a single nation from so many ethnic, cultural, and social strands. Staring forlorn into the distance, she suddenly breaks a smile and glances at the flag raisers. The narrator raises his voice over a crescendo of classical fanfare and concludes: “O SPI, sob o pátio do pavilhão nacional, espera cumprir seu sagrado dever de proteger e civilizar os índios brasileiros.” We are left with the image of schoolchildren—one line for boys and another for girls—gazing up at their flag as it waves in the winds of felicitous change.²⁵

Throughout SPI discourse, this paternalism interpellated indigenous people of all ages, who, according to the Civil Code of 1916, were “legal minors” in need of state supervision.²⁶ The colonialist trope of perpetual infancy and its accompanying tutelary apparatus thus has long curtailed the possibilities for self-representation by equating Indianness with relative incapacity.²⁷ Similar rhetoric has been used to rationalize the marginalization or “underdevelopment” of indigenous (and other) subalterns ever since Simón Bolívar, on the threshold of American independence, depicted colonialism itself as a state of “permanent childhood.”²⁸

25. As of 2005, there were fifteen Kaingang living in Icatú (founded as an indigenous post in 1919) and 28,830 throughout Brazil (Veiga and Rocha D’Angelis).

26. The 1973 Indian Statute kept this practice in place. The 2002 Civil Code likewise specified the exceptionalism of the indigenous condition but only after explaining the “relative incapacity” of adolescents, drug addicts, the mentally handicapped, and the financially insolvent. Article 4 of chapter 1 states: “A capacidade dos índios será regulada por legislação especial.” See the Web sites of the Presidência da República and FUNAI, respectively, http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/LEIS/2002/L10406.htm and http://www.funai.gov.br/quem/legislacao/estatuto_indio.html.

27. The 1988 Constitution altered the legal condition of native peoples to make “Indian” a permanent ethnic category rather than a transitory phase in the process of becoming Brazilian, but the protective authority of the state remained in place. As a result, “Indians and communities who are not already integrated into the national communion are subject to the tutorial regime established in the Law” (chap. 2, art. 7). In the late twentieth century, legal ambiguity created opportunities for some individuals and groups to gain special rights as “posttraditional” Indians (Warren 2003, 19). As Hoffman French (2009, 69) argued in the case of one such community, the imprecise nature of the law has made it an “expandable and prismatic phenomenon” subject to “post-legislative negotiation.”

28. See his 1815 “Carta de Jamaica.” Following Bolívar, ideologues of American independence, including Andrés Bello, José Enrique Rodó, Franz Tamayo, José Carlos Mariátegui, José Vasconcelos Calderón, and Ernesto “Che” Guevara, referred to the region’s “infancy” and the need to bring it to “maturity” through education. On postrevolutionary Cuba, for

In 1945, three years after the film was produced, President Vargas instituted National Indian Day to formalize state recognition of the indigeneity within Brazilianness. In his commemorative address, the head of SPI's Educational Sector, Herbert Serpa (1945), tied the messianic indigenist mission to the physical integrity of the nation:

É para os índios que devemos voltar de coração e espírito, agradecendo-lhes as heróicas defesas que primeiro praticaram do solo brasileiro. É para os índios que devemos volver o pensamento quando alçamos o pendão da América livre que eles perfeitamente simbolizam. . . . [P]ara que a natureza formidanda não lhe vençesse a luz da inteligência humana, [Rondon] desencantou o homem selvícola, para que, ouvindo pela primeira vez a voz e o chamamento da pátria, surgisse de dentro da mata, e punhando o auriverde pendão, como a dizer às gentes das fronteiras: "Aqui começa o solo da pátria brasileira" [*sic*].

Until 1967, when the military regime dismantled the SPI and replaced it with the Fundação Nacional do Índio (FUNAI), this prophecy of racialized modernity would have neo-brasileiros hoisting the flag over the Amazon to consolidate national power over precious metals, gems, minerals, timber, rubber, petroleum, and other potential sources of wealth therein.²⁹ This was the precedent to Sivamzinho raising the national flag and guarding the Amazon in 1999. In both cases, the protection at hand was, for the most part, fiction.

Because, according to SPI doctrine, Indians in frontier regions near Bolivia and Peru had to be seduced from nomadism, settled, nationalized, and trained to secure contentious borders, indigenist education was also a question of national security. Following Foucault (1990), modernization and its burgeoning capitalist order were overlapping projects of biopower that relied on the seizure and controlled insertion of human beings—in this case, as individuals and communities—into an increasingly globalized and foreign-owned machinery of production. Brazilian modernity meant not only the appropriation and transformation of traditional indigenous places—a process that the anthropologist Antonio Carlos de Souza Lima (1995, 131) characterized as “a massive siege of peace”—but more succinctly, what Foucault (1990, 140) might have called “the calculated management of [indigenous] life.” The process of interior development was thus twofold. On the one hand, it meant the demarcation, takeover, and settlement of traditional indigenous territories. On the other hand, it

example, Guevara (1979) wrote, “La sociedad en su conjunto debe convertirse en una gigantesca escuela (7). . . . [T]odavía estamos en pañales (11).”

29. Renato Ignácio da Silva (1970, 334) characterized the struggle over Amazonian riches as a Cold War conflict, asserting that Brazil was “cobiçado por dois lobos que rondam o mundo inteiro.” Although covetous explorers hailed from many countries, North Americans were the most egregious: “[P]rocuram levar tudo, inclusive minérios atômicos! . . . [F]izeram o levantamento aerofotogramétrico da região em 1965 (e de todo o território nacional!) como se nós os brasileiros vivêssemos em 1500!” (da Silva 1970, 333–334)

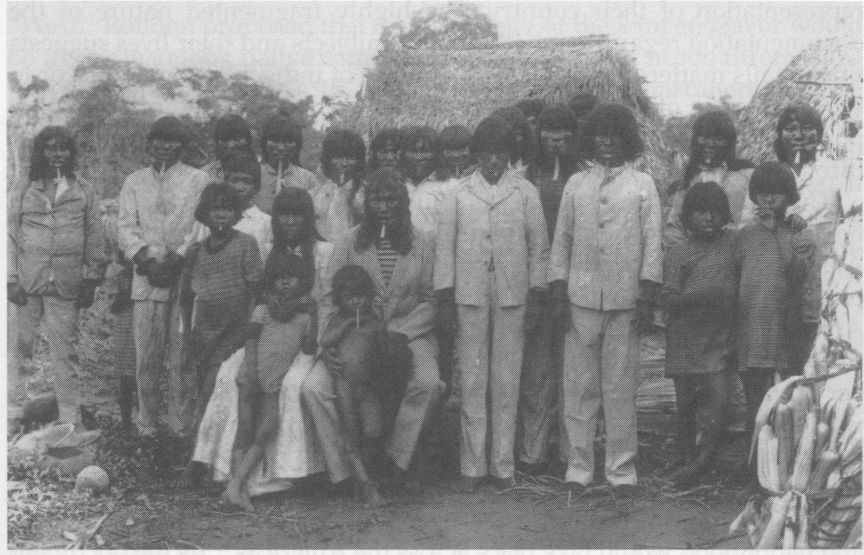


Figure 3 Community unidentified in SPI records (circa 1930). Courtesy of the Museu do Índio/FUNAI Archive.

meant the demarcation, takeover, and settlement of indigenous bodies, which were squeezed into uncomfortable clothes, national consciousness, and imaginary citizenship through a system of production and positivist propaganda that, at least in retrospect, evokes the slave labor that Brazil had officially abolished more than a half century earlier.

The staging and visual documentation of these efforts point to the ways in which, as Deborah Poole (1997) has studied in the case of Peru, fictions of racial progress circulated physically and ideologically inside and beyond national borders. Through the still-burgeoning arts of photography and film, the SPI documented its heroic arrivals to distant lands and the transformative power of its influence on the people living there. Hundreds of after shots reveal “improved” Indians posing under the invasive gaze of their photographers, whose Orientalizing images became essential blocks of the racialized nation-building project under way. As Walter Benjamin (2007) argued shortly after this picture (figure 3) was taken (in a prophetic nod to Giddens), the mechanical reproduction of this imagery had the power to disrupt familiar configurations of time and space. Passing through the hands of indigenists and newspaper readers alike, carefully staged photographs helped make nameless Indians and their exotic, parallel world personal and familiar, shattering the Amazonian aura of romanticized alterity and replacing it with uncannily modern subjects who could be reimagined and inserted into the dominant majority’s preferred

representation of their country. The highly fragmented nature of the documentation regarding photographed subjects and their lives suggests that details mattered little to the architects of indigenist modernity or to the consumers of their imagery. More important was the message that positive (and positivist) change was possible and could be accomplished through that most modern of republican institutions: the school.

The goal of making Indians “useful” through schooling was, however, not unique to Brazil, and in fact reflected a central component of the pan-American indigenist initiative that flourished during the early twentieth century. This supranational indigenism culminated in the First Inter-American Indigenist Congress of April 1940 in Pátzcuaro, Mexico, and the formation of the Instituto Indigenista Interamericano (III) in December of the same year.³⁰ Even at the regional level, then, Indian usefulness was tied to civic responsibility and to economic productivity. By linking indigenous peoples to their self-appointed protectors, the III helped institutionalize (and imagine) an international educational apparatus as a central mechanism through which geopolitical mappings of Indianness and nationhood would take place across the Americas.³¹ As the documentation from these schools reveals, indigenous pupils were expected—like the legion of Sivamzinhos, many years later—to internalize and reproduce the very knowledge by which they would be marginalized.

In 1940—the same year that the III held its first congress and seven years after Gilberto Freyre (1973) published his foundational manifesto (*Casa Grande e Senzala*) in praise of Brazilian miscegenation—Rondon made a public address to President Vargas, who had just completed a widely publicized visit to Karajá communities on the Ilha do Bananal (Tocantins).³² On behalf of the SPI’s newly formed governing body, the general used his speech to pose a rhetorical question—“Que é o índio?”—and offered his rhetorical response: “A preciosidade maior que encontramos na ‘Marcha para o Oeste’” (*O Radical* 1940). Conflating the indigenists’ goal of protecting and developing Indians with Vargas’s desire to protect and develop the

30. The proceedings read: “Los países de América deberán proporcionar a sus masas indígenas una educación que les permita, más tarde, participar en forma directa en la vida y el desenvolvimiento de sus respectivos países” (Instituto Indigenista Interamericano 1940, 23). As a result of budgetary constraints, Brazil did not ratify the early III Convention (Oliveira 1946) but became a signatory in 1953. Nonetheless, Edgard Roque Pinto participated in the 1940 meeting (*Correio da Manhã*) and Rondon corresponded with his regional counterparts, including the III’s director Manuel Gamio and U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs representative John Collier (Gamio 1946; Rondon 1947).

31. Now affiliated with the Organization of American States, the III supports collaborative policy to promote “indigenous development” across the region. Current members include Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela. The United States was a member until 2000.

32. Once Northern Goiás, Tocantins gained statehood in 1988.

"West," Rondon proposed that a key strategy of the joint endeavor would be to create among native communities new material needs through the provision of modern tools, thereby turning them into consumers and producers of new wealth.³³ The market logic of modernity therefore allowed indigenous peoples to be reconfigured from within the indigenist imaginary by modifying their status as obstacles to national progress to vital, if perhaps unwitting, agents of the same. In the overlapping processes of the modernist incursion into the Amazon, victims would be warriors, commodities would be customers, and slaves would be citizens.

"CIVILIZAÇÃO PARA OS ÍNDIOS DA AMAZÔNIA!"³⁴
(AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE?)

At the outset of the SPI's crisis decade, a Guaraní man named Inhanderu sought an interview with a major newspaper in the capital. "Mario Cardoso," as his "civilizers" called him, had been expelled from his community in Avahy (Paraná) because of his "defense of and love for his race" (*A Noite* 1931). Alleging mistreatment at the hands of SPI functionaries, the young man appealed to the minister of agriculture to intervene on behalf of his people. He decried the impunity with which the organization approached its mission and claimed the subjects of protection were not the Indians but the indigenists: "Os funcionários do Serviço de Proteção . . . são uns verdadeiros algozes de índios. Obrigam-nos a trabalhos forçados, e à menor queixa, mandam-nos agarrar e metter no calabouço. . . . O índio não tem direito a nada. . . . Trabalham elles, de sol a sol . . . e em troca só recebem maus tratos e prisão [sic]" (*A Noite* 1931). Inhanderu's testimony thus reiterates not only that the SPI brutality documented in horrendous detail by the Figueiredo Commission in the 1960s had in fact been taking place for over half a century but also, more important, that at least some victims had long sought redress from the state on their own behalf.³⁵ His allegations cast a grim light on the cheery images of Indian labor that the indigenist apparatus showcased as national progress.

A generation later, Lyrio Arlindo do Valle, self-declared "cacique dos índios Tembés," echoed Inhanderu's claims in a letter written to Getúlio Vargas, in which he claimed to speak for "all the Indians and rural poor living in the *sertões*."³⁶ "I come," he explained to the president, "to solicit

33. Darcy Ribeiro (1970, 496–503) identified this dependency as a stage of "ethnic transfiguration," which would transform "tribal Indians" into "generic Indians," but never "de-Indianize" them.

34. This is the title of an article published in *A Noite* (Rio de Janeiro) on June 12, 1947.

35. The commission, set up by the military regime to discredit the SPI, found it complicit with rape, torture, murder, and genocide (see Hemming 2003, 227–234).

36. The document, also studied by Seth Garfield (1997), is typewritten on Ministry of Agriculture letterhead and titled "Memorial do Sr. Lírio Arlindo do Vale, diretamente ao

your protection." Identifying himself as a "civilized Indian" from Pará who had studied with Catholic priests, served in the navy, and supported the revolution that brought Vargas to power, Valle claimed to have worked for years as an SPI functionary, often under coercion and without remuneration. Frustrated with the broken system but eager to "redeem his fellow Indians" and make them "useful to the fatherland," Valle pleaded for the dissolution of the SPI: "Para a verdadeira proteção é preciso uma nova organização [sic]." Reiterating Inhanderu, he added, "Peço não aceitar enformações da falsa proteção aos índios, como eu não aceito, porque o S.P.I. é de proteção aos brancos e não aos índios [sic]." For whatever else it might have been, this effort—and Inhanderu's before it—must be seen as part of the larger and ongoing struggle for legitimate political representation.

A radical suggestion thus accompanied Valle's admonition: "Vossa Ex sabe quem pode dar proteção ao índio é o proprio índio, índios çivilizados que querem ser aproveitados [sic]." Reasoning that Rondon, old and tired, had "forgotten the Indians," Valle made the case for indigenous leadership (his own) of a new public enterprise of indigenist advocacy. His desire for this "new beginning" was, however, remarkably in line with the existing regime of state tutelage. Likewise, his revolutionary proposal for indigenous leadership of the state's indigenist apparatus (a proposal yet to be realized)³⁷ invoked the long-standing trinity of national modernity (science, security, and development) through the familiar rhetoric of education. Valle made it clear, for example, that, if appointed to a leadership position, he would establish schools to train Indians in agricultural and ranching technologies. Regarding national security, and as a testament to his willingness to counter the audacity of "foreign invaders" and fight for a "free Brazil," he likened himself and his sons (both soldiers), to colonial legend Poti, whose spirit they carried in their "blood and minds."³⁸ Finally, as was Sivamzinho, the Temb  leader was mindful of his civic duty and eager to see Indians driving Brazil's capitalist engine into the future. He promised: "Se Vossa Ex. estiver disposto a nos ajudar, no decorrer de

Sr. Dr. Get lio Dorneles Vargas." It is dated September 1945 but has a distribution date of October, and it contains many errors and spelling inconsistencies, including in the author's name. Although Valle claimed to have written the letter, SPI functionaries may have typed (or retyped) it. At best, then, Valle's enthusiasm for Vargas's policies offers insight into the ambiguous nature of "neo-Brazilian" thought. At worst, it is another instance of the indigenist appropriation and manipulation of indigenous subjectivity.

37. The current FUNAI president, M rcio Augusto Freitas de Meira, originally from Par , is a nonindigenous Brazilian with academic training in French, history, and anthropology. As of June 2010, members of the Brazilian Indigenous Movement were campaigning intensely for his removal and for the election of indigenous leadership.

38. The Potiguara warrior, immortalized by the novelist Jos  de Alencar in *Iracema*, fought alongside the Portuguese against the Dutch during the first half of the seventeenth century.

dois anos, apareçera em belem do Pará os primeiros produtos dos índios do Brasil que mesmo poderá enfluir na economia nacional [sic].”

Finally, Valle’s plea was made in the context of successful state penetration of the hinterlands, which he argued had reined in the illicit exploitation of land and people—especially *seringueiros* (rubber workers). For this progress, the cacique expressed enthusiasm: “[Agradeço] em nome de todos os seringueiros do Amazonas, porque foi Vossa Ex que acabou com os traficantes de çearensse para os sertões amazonicos. . . . Esses seringueiros que hoje rendem gratidão a Vossa Ex estão retribuindo de melhor forma possível, porque Vossa Ex acabou com a escravidão do soldado da borraça [sic].” Valle thus condemned the flawed execution of indigenist policy but not the hegemony of its imperialist rationale or the assumption of native backwardness on which it was premised.

“CIVILIZAÇÃO PARA OS ÍNDIOS DA AMAZÔNIA!” (AN IMPERIALIST PERSPECTIVE?)

In 1947, the same year that Valle wrote to Vargas, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) undertook a study of basic education in the Hylean Amazon.³⁹ Led by Bernard Mishkin, a naturalized, North American anthropologist, military officer, and businessman (Wagley 1955), and under the auspices of the International Institute of the Hylean Amazon (IIHA),⁴⁰ the survey considered obstacles to educational programs serving indigenous and caboclo populations in the Amazon Basin. The Brazilian press hailed the project as the advent of “civilization for Indians of the Amazon” who were living “a primitive existence comparable to that of [their] Stone Age ancestors” (*A Noite* 1947). Mishkin’s report, presented later that year in Mexico and France but (as far as I have been able to determine) never analyzed elsewhere, offers a unique perspective on indigenous schooling in relation to national and international modernizing discourses. Notwithstanding its bias, the document serves alongside the testimony of Inhanderu and Valle as a coun-

39. *Dicionário Aurélio* explains that Alexander von Humboldt and Aimé Goujaud Bonpland used *hylea* (from the Greek *hylaia*, meaning “of the forest”) to refer to the Amazon during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. NB: This is not the oft-cited 1952 UNESCO study of race relations led by Charles Wagley, Thales Azevedo, Roger Bastide, Florestan Fernandez, Luiz de Aguiar Costa Pinto, and Renée Ribeiro. On that report, see Chor Maio 2001; Ribeiro 1997.

40. A model of international collaboration established in the spirit of postwar diplomacy, the IIHA had its headquarters in Rio before moving to the Amazon. Though staffed with Brazilian scientists and led by National Museum director Heloisa Alberto Tôres, the organization was accused of marginalizing national science, turning the country’s natural wealth over to foreigners, and threatening national sovereignty (*Diário do Congresso Nacional* 1949).

terpoint to the government documentation so often used to tell the story of Brazil's native peoples.

The background for Mishkin's report (1947b, 4–5)—that indigenous protection was consistently inconsistent—may ring familiar: Although some indigenist leaders were efficient and dedicated, others were “hopelessly corrupt” or “usually drunk.” Although some respected Rondon's minimal intervention policy, others aimed to “implant the concept of productive labor [and] educate the Indian to work” (Mishkin 1947b, 3). In Amazonas State, where most people eked a living from the various extractive industries available to them, SPI functionaries established lumber camps and auctioned wood off of indigenous lands (Mishkin 1947b, 2). Mishkin (1947c, 6–8) corroborated the abuse of *seringueiros* that Valle had noted and depicted as precarious the lives of other Amazonians who were perpetually overworked and chronically undernourished.

Notwithstanding the breadth of his observations, Mishkin's primary task was to surmise the state of the educational system that the government was hailing as a crowning achievement of the SPI and the enduring promise of the indigenist nation-building enterprise. He observed that schools were not located in native villages and that most indigenous children in fact had no access to education at all. The limited instruction available to them was offered only in Portuguese, and indigenous authorities had no say regarding the programs targeting their own communities. Mishkin (1947a, 3) offered these observations of Bororo schooling on the indigenist post of Córrego Grande (located approximately 155 miles from Cuiabá):

It is difficult to estimate the number of days per year the school actually operates I would guess . . . two mornings a week for one reason or another—the students do not appear; the teacher is indisposed and wants to catch up on her housework. . . . The textbooks used . . . are 1st year—*Meu Livro*; second year—*Meus Deveres*; third year—*Minha Pátria*. All three books have been prepared for instruction in the City schools and make as much sense to the Indian as the atomic bomb. . . . The few Portuguese words the students learn in the school they forget in a few weeks.

Mishkin's (1947b, 28) findings that schooling was “alienating” and lacking “connection with the life of the Indian” thus contextualize the iconographic documentation and upbeat activity logs that SPI administrators and teachers maintained during the same period.⁴¹ As did his indigenous contemporaries, the anthropologist impelled his readers to question the efficacy and justice of teaching Portuguese grammar and civics to mono-

41. Even in more urbanized areas, however, “exhausted and malnourished” students sat in “badly lighted, crowded rooms” to receive instruction from “tired teachers through hopelessly outmoded, inadequate texts.” The 1933 Vargas Report cited by Mishkin (1947b, 9) had concluded that only 3 percent of the national population had an elementary-level education.

lingual indigenous children who would never enjoy the full rights of national citizenship.⁴²

Shortly after completing this study, Mishkin (who would later be placed under investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as a possible communist spy⁴³) published a controversial critique of the good-neighbor policy in the *Nation*. Contrary to what one might expect from the author of the UNESCO reports, he called not for a softening of political and economic imperialist practices but for their intensification:

Any attempt to save democracy in South America would put the United States in the position of a doctor who rushes into a house to discover that the patient not only is not ill, but does not live there. In none of these countries is there a democratic basis of government. . . . The continent was compelled to stew in its own juice. A juice whose salient characteristics were and are a backward economic structure, feudal mentality, poverty, . . . ignorance, illiteracy, . . . and acute despair. . . . [S]outh America is made for exploitation, gets a living from it, precarious though it may be, and is unprepared for any other kind of existence. The exclusion of foreign imperialism at this point would bring disaster. . . . [These] are the first principles of a revolution calculated to break up an anachronistic social system whose continued survival is inimical to the interests of the United States. (Mishkin 1949, 510–515)

Considering that these comments—more seemingly written by a David Norman than by a communist sympathizer—were published just fifteen years before the U.S.-supported coup ousted Brazil's democratically elected government, it would seem that some in Washington were indeed sympathetic to Mishkin's critique. As is well known, the military regime that would come to power made the industrial exploitation of the Amazon and its peoples a cornerstone of national development policy, planting the seeds for SIVAM (and FINRAF) along the way.

CONCLUSIONS: FROM PRIVATE PLACES TO PUBLIC SPACES

Anthony Giddens (1990, 19) argued that the advent of modernity brought about a radical reconfiguration of traditional temporal and spatial relations and the "dislocation of space from place." If social practices in "premodern" societies were tied to a particular location and a specific moment, he explained, in conditions of modernity, those ties are undone

42. The year the SPI was dissolved, the teacher Angelina da Silva Vicente (1967) from the indigenous post Capitão Vitorino documented lessons on the national anthem, Independence Day, "respecting the flag," voting, and elections. On the content SPI schooling, see Devine Guzmán 2003. On the question of indigenous citizenship, see Ramos 1998, 89–118.

43. Documents that the anthropologist David Price (2004) secured through the Freedom of Information Act place Mishkin in Brazil during the late 1940s as an employee of the Nesco Company. They do not mention his work for UNESCO or the documents examined here. Accusations regarding Mishkin's political activities remain inconclusive (Price asserts his requests for CIA documentation were ignored) and warrant further study.

and reestablished according to myriad additional influences—many of them distant in space and time. Like the “reflexively applied knowledge” that in modernity comes to question its own certainty and restructure itself accordingly, fixed relationships between particular ways of being and thinking and their supposedly “proper” locations are undone in and by modernity to become “free-floating” (Giddens 1990, 39). *Place* thus refers to an identifiable location on the map where most of the social dimensions of life were once carried out. *Space*, in contrast, invokes the broader and potentially infinite social dimensions of modernity—dimensions that include forces that might exercise their influence from afar. Place and space can therefore coincide, and oftentimes overlap, but the consequences of modernity make such coincidence and overlap increasingly infrequent. As a result, “[w]hat structures the locale is not simply that which is present on the scene; the ‘visible form’ of the locale conceals the distanced relations [that] determine its nature” (Giddens 1990, 19).

From the SPI indigenous posts to Xingu, and from the UNESCO study to SIVAM (and FINRAF), the ongoing reconstruction of national modernity through indigenist thought and practice helped convert the Brazilian hinterlands—like the Amazon—from places to spaces. Through its real or perceived power to alter traditional configurations of time and space, indigenous schooling was a key mechanism through which native communities were reconfigured as modern and national—or in any case, always on the threshold of national belonging. As I’ve argued here, the ongoing consolidation of Brazilian modernity brought with it a politics of anti-imperialist imperialism. After all, FINRAF primarily reiterates the neo-colonialist gesture of a century of state-backed indigenist initiatives (e.g., SPI, PIX, III, FUNAI, IHA) through a hyperbolic rendering of SIVAM, which represents a real and ongoing initiative to restructure the Amazon and the existence of the people who live there.⁴⁴

The processes of disjuncture that convert places into spaces are useful for thinking about the social transformations impelled by indigenist policy through the biopolitical ordering of individual and collective bodies. The disembedding of knowledge, culture, and social praxis from modern

44. Since this article was written in 2008, indigenous communities in the Amazon have come to face a new collective threat: the government’s plan to build the third-largest hydroelectric dam in the world in the south of Pará. A cornerstone of the Growth Acceleration Program (Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento, or PAC), the dam would divert the flow of the Xingu River, flood indigenous lands, dislocate the town of Altamira, and destroy the livelihood of those who depend on fishing. The designation *Belo Monte* is particularly unfortunate, as inhabitants of the tragedy-stricken community of Canudos at the end of the nineteenth century used the same name—the vast majority were killed by the Brazilian army in 1897. As of June 2010, indigenous organizations across the country were staging an intense and extended protest of the Belo Monte initiative.

centers of political and economic power, and their violent insertion into communities still organized according to precapitalist modes of production, provided the political, social, and economic mechanisms through which the private places of indigenous life were usurped as a public space that, in turn, was appropriated to represent the nation—or at least, the community imagined as national (Anderson 1991).⁴⁵ This manipulation has enabled generations of nationalists, regardless of political orientation, to equate the Amazon with Brazil and “the Indian” with “the people.”⁴⁶ Never mind that only 8 percent of Brazilians reside in the Amazon or that “the Indians” represent over two hundred ethnic groups speaking more than 180 languages, yet comprise less than one-half of 1 percent of the overall population.

On the verge of the SPI’s institutional crisis many years earlier, the interim director José Bezerra Calvacanti alluded to the institutionalized appropriation of Indians and their lands:

Antes de tudo, tratamos de amparar os nossos silvícolas onde quer que eles estejam. . . . [N]ós os congregamos em pontos convenientes e ahí os ensinamos a trabalhar e a economizar os frutos do seu trabalho. . . . [E]m matéria de ensino . . . o principal intento é ministrar-lhes conhecimentos . . . dos officios mais ao alcance da inteligência delles. . . . Para isso foi o território nacional dividido num certo número de inspetorias [sic]. (*Jornal do Brasil* 1929)

Each *inspetoria* was then divided further into the network of *postos indígenas* studied here, where lives were not so much protected as they were managed according to the regional, national, local—and inevitably—personal interests reflected in the indigenist agenda at hand. Forty years before the Figueiredo Commission documented SPI abuse of the populace it was meant to safeguard, Calvacanti cut to the heart of the agency’s fatal contradiction by inadvertently disclosing a de facto open-visit policy operating under his supervision, leading his interviewer to an exultant conclusion: “[Q]ualquer pessoa pode, em qualquer dia e sem necessidade de licença especial, visitar qualquer dos estabelecimentos do Serviço de Índios [sic]” (*Jornal do Brasil* 1929). This assertion contradicts decades of official indigenist policy regarding the mission to safeguard indigenous peoples precisely by safeguarding their territories.

Long before its precipitous decline, the state’s indigenist apparatus was already flawed—not only by paternalism or the quixotic mission of trying to turn people into something they were not but also by its vulnerability to unpredictable, and at times, arbitrary administration. By making private indigenous places public—physically, as in the case of Xingu; rhetorically, as according to Calvacanti; and ideologically, through the notion

45. Giddens (1990, 21) explains “disembedding” as the removal of “social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space.”

46. As Antônio Torres (2000, 11) put it: “O índio é o povo.”



Figure 4 Rondon at an SPI school (circa 1922). Courtesy of the Museu do Índio/FUNAI Archive.



Figure 5 Students from São José dos Marabitanas receive Sivamzinho notebooks (1998). Courtesy of Leila S. R. Guzmán.do Índio/FUNAI Archive.

of education—the indigenist apparatus was implementing precisely the opposite of protection. As is known, this ambiguity would be a harbinger of dark days to follow. In continuity with the imperialist pulling apart of time, space, and place that hailed modernity, the work of indigenism and “Indian schooling” went hand in hand with the slicing up, parceling out, and consumption of native peoples and their lands. As in David Norman’s imaginary world, where impunity reigns and the Amazon is subject to the whims of power, the undoing of “primitiveness” in the name of science, security, and capital was the patriotic task of the hour. And the question at hand: how to turn a profit off of our *educated* Indians in our *modern* America?

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