

Development, Growth and Genocide

Development of the now affluent countries were historically due to an organic system of exploitation of the rest of the world—now called the Third World. Thus the growth of affluent societies of the world in centres of Western Europe and America is directly co-related to the active underdevelopment of countries in the periphery including Sri Lanka. In the now rich countries themselves, at an earlier stage their internal development was also due to intense exploitation of deprived groups in their whole populations. In the case of the early industrialised countries like Britain, industrial growth was at the expense and hardship of the workers in those countries. In countries like the United States, growth was at least partially due to exploitation and sometime: elimination of racial groups. The cases in question being Negroes from Africa and the original Indian inhabitants.

These same "models" of development at the expense of human misery and genocide are being carried on in many countries, according to reports, even at this stage of the 20th century. We give below two examples namely, in Brazil and Australia, where growth has been accompanied by genocide and suppression of local inhabitants—as discussed in a feature in the Black News Service.

If you happened to be one of those who felt affection for the gentle, backward civilisations—Nagas, Papuans, Mons of Vietnam, Polynesian and Melanesian remnants—the shy primitive peoples, daunted and overshadowed by the Juggernaut advance of our ruthless age, then 1968 was a bad year for you.

By the descriptions of all who had seen them, there were no more inoffensive and charming human beings on the planet than the forest Indians of Brazil, and brusquely we were told they had been rushed to the verge of extinction. The tragedy of the Indian in the USA in the last century was being repeated, but it was being compressed into a shorter time. Where a decade ago there had been hundreds of Indians, there were now tens. An American magazine reported with nostalgia on a tribe of which only 135 members had survived... too gentle almost to hunt. They lived as naked as Adam and Eve in the nightfall of an innocent history, catching a few fish, collecting groundnuts, playing their flutes, making love... waiting for death. We learned that it was due only to the paternal solicitude of the Brazilian Government's Indian Protection Service that they had survived until this day.

In all such monitory accounts—and there had been many of them—there was a blind spot, a lack of candour, a defect in social responsibility, an evident aversion to pointing to the direction from which doom approached.

It seemed that we were expected to suppose that the Indians were simply fading away, killed off by the harsh climate of the times, and we were invited to inquire no further. It was left to the Brazilian Government itself to resolve the mystery, and in March 1968 it did so, with brutal frankness, and with little attempt at self defence. The tribes had been virtually exterminated, not despite all the efforts of the Indian Protection Services, but with its connivance—often its ardent co-operation.

The service, admitted General Albuquerque Lima, the Brazilian Minister of the Interior, had been converted into an instrument for the Indians' oppression, and had therefore been dissolved. There was to be a judicial inquiry into the conduct of 134 functionaries. A full newspaper page in small print was required to list the crimes with which these men were charged. Speaking informally, the Attorney General Senhor Jader Figueiredo, doubted whether 10 of the Service's employees out of a total of over 1000 would be fully cleared of guilt.

Atrocities

The official report was calm—phlegmatic almost—all the more effective therefore in its exposure of the atrocity it contained. Pioneers leagued with corrupt politicians had continually usurped Indian lands, destroyed whole tribes in a cruel struggle in which bacteriological warfare had been employed, by issuing clothing

impregnated with the virus of small-pox, and by poisoned food supplies. Children had been abducted and mass murder gone unpunished. The government itself was blamed to some extent for the Service's increasing starvation of resources over a period of 30 years. The Service had also had to face "the disastrous impact of missionary activity".

Next day the Attorney-General met the Press, and was prepared to supply all the details. A commission had spent 58 days visiting Indian Protection Service posts all over the country collecting evidence of abuses and atrocities.

The huge losses sustained by the Indian tribes in this tragic decade were catalogued in part. Of 19,000 *Mundurucurus* believed to have existed in the thirties, only 1200 were left. The strength of the *Guaranis* had been reduced from 5000 to 300. There were 400 *Carajas* left out of 4000. Of the *Cintas Largas*, who had been attacked from the air and driven into the mountains, possibly 500 had survived out of 10,000. The proud and noble nation of the *Kadiwens*—the Indian Cavaliers—had shrunk to a pitiful scrounging band of about 200. A few hundred only remained of the formidable *Chavantes* who prowled in the background of Peter Fleming's Brazilian journey, but they had been reduced to mission fodder—the same melancholy fate that had overtaken the *Bororos*, who helped to change Levi-Strauss's views on the nature of human evolution. Many tribes were now represented by a single family, a few by one or two individuals. Some, like the *Tapaiunas*—in this case from a gift of sugar laced with arsenic—had disappeared altogether. It is estimated that between 50,000 and 100,000 Indians survive today. Brazil's leading social historian believes that not a single one will be alive by 1980.

Senhor Figueiredo estimated that property worth 62 million dollars had been stolen from the Indians in the past 10 years; cattle and personal possessions. He added, "It is not only through the embezzlement of funds, but by the admission of sexual perversions, murders and all other crimes listed in the penal code, against Indians and their property, that one

can see that the Indian Protection Service was for years a den of corruption and indiscriminate killings". The head of the service, Major Luis Neves, was accused of 42 crimes, including collusion in several murders, the illegal sale of lands, and the embezzlement of 300,000 dollars. The documents containing the evidence collected by the Attorney General weighed 103 kilograms, he informed newspapermen and amounted to a total of 5,115 pages.

In the following days there were more headlines and more statements by the Ministry:

"Rich landowners of the municipality of Pedro Alfonso attacked the tribe of Craos and killed about 100".

"The worst slaughter took place in Aripana, where the Cintas Largas Indians were attacked from the air using sticks of dynamite".

"The Mazacalis were given fire-water by the landowners who employed gunmen to shoot them down when they were drunk".

"Landowners engaged a notorious pistolero and his gang to massacre the Canclas Indians".

"The Nhambiquera Indians were mown down by machine-gun fire".

"Two tribes of the Patachos were exterminated by giving them smallpox injection".

"In the Ministry of the Interior it was stated yesterday that crimes committed by certain ex-functionaries of the SPL amounted to more than 1000, ranging from tearing out Indians fingernails to allowing them to die without assistance".

"To exterminate the tribe Beicos-de-Pau, Ramis Bucair, Chief of the 6th Inspectorate, explained an expedition was formed which went up the River Arinos carrying presents and a great quantity of foodstuff for the Indians. These were mixed with arsenic and formicides. . . . Next day a great number of the Indians died, and the whites spread the rumour that this was the result of an epidemic".

Amazonian Highway

With the coming of the dry season last July, large earth moving machines began work on the first section of yet another Amazonian highway, this one 2,500 miles long. As mapped, the highway will run from Macapa on the Amapa Coast to Boa Vista in Roraima, on to the town of Icana, then south to Benjamin Constant in Amazonas and thence to the town of Cruzeiro do Sul, where it will link up with the southwestern part of the Trans-Amazonic Highway proper, and finally with the town of Taumaturgo on the Peruvian border. Along

with a number of feeder roads, the northern highway (called the Perimetral Norte) will form a transportation bridge between Brazil and the neighbouring countries of French Guiana, Surinam, Guyana, Venezuela, Colombia and Peru. When finished, it will be the last episode in the now famous Brazilian "March to the West".

Estimated costs for road building alone are \$10 million per year and the first 1,300 mile section from Macapa to a point near the Colombian border is to be completed by 1976. Contracted to build the highway are some of the largest construction firms in Brazil: Construtora Mendes Jr., Andrade Gutierrez, Rabelo, Camargo Correa, Empress Industriale Technica, and Construtora Queiros Galvao. Senhor Sebastiao Camargo Penteado, owner of the largest Brazilian construction company (fifth largest in the world in terms of capital), is ecstatic about the new highway. "The Amazon region", he claimed to a reporter from *The Economist*, "is a blank space in the world. What is happening there now reveals completely unforeseen possibilities. . . ."

One element, totally forgotten by Sr. Camargo is that the Amazon region, and especially that part planned for the Northern Highway, is the aboriginal homeland of hundreds of independent Indian nations. This nasty fact, glossed over by the bureaucrats and the businessmen alike, is the human factor which lies behind the Brazilian "National Integration Plan" as it penetrates the vast jungle areas of the Amazon interior. Why does Camargo ignore the Indians' existence? The answer can be found in the other interests that Camargo has. Already he has one cattle ranch along the first Trans-Amazon road, and he and his associates have plans for other such projects along the new Amazon road. Tax rebates and loans for setting up these cattle ranches are only given if the land is classified as "cleared" of Indians. So, Camargo publicly ignores the reality of the Indians' existence—and kills them off privately by either direct methods or by the spread of disease.

The government goes along with this process as it is seen as necessary and is equated with progress. A sick joke now circulating among journa-

lists in Brazil is that FUNAI, the national Indian agency established in 1968 to "pacify" the Indian tribes along the new highway system, is totally ignorant of even the number of indigenous peoples and tribes who inhabit this immense area. According to the Estado do Sao Paulo, FUNAI has taken up the "number game" as a means of resolving the "Indian question" in Brazil. In most cases, the higher ranking FUNAI officials, noted for their anti-Indian attitudes, have estimated the total number of Indians in the Amazon way below the reality. This is their way of saying that the Indian is not important and that when destruction comes it will not be many people. "Just a handful of poor 'savages' lost out there in the wilderness".

On May 27th of last year, for example, the co-ordinator of FUNAI in Amazonas, General Ismarth Oliveira, said that there were 20,000 Indians along the proposed new highway. On the 15th July, after numerous contradictory FUNAI reports, a FUNAI anthropologist argued that there were no less than 160,000 Indians living between Amazonas and the Territory of Roraima in only three of the five sections of the Northern Perimeter Highway. It is a known fact that there are closer to 270 tribal groups in this area of the Amazon, rather than 52 tribes as claimed by FUNAI. According to the Brazilian anthropologist, Eduardo Galvao, these groups are distributed in two major culture areas composing the most densely populated Indian region of Brazil. What will be the fate of these peoples as the new northern highway chops across their aboriginal territories and lands?

The effects of road building projects in other areas of the Amazon provide a tragic premonition of what will inevitably happen with the construction of the new northern highway. In 1971, the Paracana tribe was "pacified" along one stretch of the Trans-Amazonic Highway by FUNAI workers, and claimed to be a model case of "integration" into rural Brazilian society. When 40 people were immediately stricken with gripe and tuberculosis, the Paracana painted their bodies in black urucum paint as a sign of mourning for the entire tribe. Then, highway workers invaded the village, gave presents to

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the men and raped a number of Indian women. Thirtyfive people came down with venereal disease, and eight Paracana children were born blind.

Similar conditions are also reported to exist among the Txucarramae tribe, at one time safe within the protected confines of the Xingu Indian Park, but recently left homeless by the invasion of one section of the Santarem-Cuiaba highway. At the time of this highway invasion, Orlando and Claudio Villas Boas, the directors of the Xingu Park, predicted that within a year we would hear reports of the death and extermination of the Txucarramae tribe. Now this prediction is a reality. An Associated Press release of November 16, 1973 states that "Four Txucarramae Indians have died this month from the disease (measles), 20 others are in 'danger of losing their lives' and 70 more are interned in a filthy government-run Indian hospital". A photograph accompanying the report showed several Txucarramae Indians lying on mattresses on the hospital floor, covered only with sheets.

Perhaps the best account of what will happen to the hundreds of Indian tribes who find themselves in the path of the new northern highway was provided by the independent Brazilian weekly *OPINIAO*, before its censorship and closure last March. "If FUNAI has other plans for the Indians of the Perimetral" the journal states, "no one knows about them. What is known for certain is that within a short while, at Macapa and other points, the tractors will begin to roll. Thousands of men will swarm along the road. It will surely be the last caravan. And will this ultimate caravan be any different from the others?"

Aboriginal Health: Slow Genocide

If everyone knew the basic facts about the drastic situation of aboriginal people which has arisen out of the historic socio-economic suppression of 200 years colonisation, it would motivate the general-community to create dramatic improvements. Awareness and action can reduce the aboriginal infant mortality and morbidity rates to a degree where they will become non-existent.

In June 1971, a meeting was held at the South Sydney Community Aid Centre. Interested members of the Black Community, Mrs. Dulcie Flowers, Prof. F. C. Hollows, and John Russell were at the meeting. Out of this came the Aboriginal Medical Service, an idea which had its genesis with the Black Community who, through their Council and Management Committee, direct the activities of the Aboriginal Medical Service. In addition to this, the Aboriginal Medical Service is dedicated to self-help, and where possible, members of the Black Community are employed as staff, and the only white persons involved are those who have skills not found amongst the members of the Black Community.

It is well known that the life expectancy and general health of the Black Community is in all respects significantly worse than that of the general population of Australia. The findings of the A.M.S. with regard to the high incidence of infant mortality, malnutrition leading to physical and mental subdevelopment, gastrointestinal diseases, eye diseases, chronic respiratory infections, acute and chronic ear infections, are indeed, a true picture of the common health problems encountered in the Black Community today, and while the A.M.S. findings are largely based on conditions in the urban area of N.S.W. such findings can be proven to be existent in practically all urban and country areas in Australia.

At this stage, however, it is important to bear in mind that no problem of the Australian Black Community can be viewed or treated in isolation.

It must also be remembered that the deplorable picture of ill-health of the Black Communities in Australia is a picture created by the coming of white men into this country, and that previously a general standard of good health was enjoyed by the Black inhabitants of this continent. Eating food native to this part of the globe, and living in harmony with nature and the weather patterns of this continent, the Black population had managed to exist through the ages for something like a period of 30,000 years.

The white man's arrival however, brought to the indigenous people alien diseases from far-away countries, e.g. T.B., infectious diseases of

childhood, V.D., diseases and bacteria to which, in many cases, the carriers themselves had, through centuries of their own contact with them built up a tolerance or immunity to them and often they also brought with them the cures for such diseases. However, in most cases, while the disease itself was transmitted to the indigenous people, the available treatment was not made available to the new sufferers.

Further to this, the creation of a different life-style, the building of a completely new environment (urban, suburban), and the eradication of many of the native creatures which provided the life-food of the indigenous people—without creating possible avenues of access to alternative foodstuff—was, in fact, the basis of the ill-health of the Black Community as we see it today.

In today's complex and sophisticated society, access to nutritious food is forged to access to employment. Employment, in most areas, is denied to Blacks.

Employment, racial prejudice aside, is closely linked with access to formal education. Formal education in the past has been denied to the Black Community for various reasons, and even where direct access has to some extent been available, external educational requirements, such as a healthy housing situation, a home atmosphere conducive to study, basic food requirements to minimize brain damage effects to the student, have in fact been denied to the Black Community—therefore making it impossible for the community to avail themselves of the education opportunity. The ill-health, negligible employment, and lack of decent housing illhealth syndrome, has—and does—perpetuate itself, and while the key is, in itself, education of a two-way, black and white nature, education for the Black Community cannot become a reality until a reasonable standard of general good health is enjoyed by the Black Community, in the same way in which it is today enjoyed by the white community, in the same way in which to make it practicable for the members of the Black Community to absorb education, free from the dreadful effects of diseases and malnutrition—brain damage.