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THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS

I consider it a matter of urgency that the somatological surveys which the Indian anthropologists, Dr. B. C. Guha and Dr. S. S. Sarkar, initiated early in 1948 among the last Önge tribes on Rutland Island and the surviving indigenous inhabitants on Little Andaman¹ should be continued. There are probably now not as many as 50 representatives of the Önge tribes still surviving on Rutland Island. They and the indigenous inhabitants of the neighbouring islands could certainly furnish much valuable information concerning the racial and cultural characteristics of their stock and thus provide valuable material for a general study of the racial history of India and the surrounding region. I happen to know that the above-mentioned anthropologists had to abandon the field research they had undertaken, merely because they could not obtain the requisite financial resources.

Unfortunately, very little material is available on the somatology of the Andaman islanders. It is therefore all the more regrettable that (as I found out privately) the large amount of anthropological material that Baron E. Von Eickstedt collected among these natives in January 1928 was lost in the last world war.

Of the few suggestions put forward in this paper, I consider the most urgent tasks to be somatological research among the original inhabitants of Little Andaman, and a comprehensive investigation of the true pygmies whom I discovered in the Schrader Mountains of New Guinea.

THE TASKS OF THE ETHNOLOGIST AND THE LINGUIST IN BRAZIL

DARCY RIBEIRO

A study of the reactions of Brazilian Indian groups in the face of advancing civilization over the last fifty years, and of their prospects of survival, leads inevitably to the conclusion that tribal languages and cultures are gradually disappearing in modern Brazil. Only the variations in the degree of development of the different regions, and the patchiness and irregular density of civilized occupation of Brazilian territory, have enabled so large a number of tribes to survive to the present day on a footing of linguistic and cultural autonomy.

We find the same contrasts of parallel anachronistic ways of life in many other sectors of present-day Brazilian society; examples are the African cultural survivals and the 'prototechnology' of certain areas and their ideological reflections in the shape of notoriously archaic beliefs and practices. How much

1. B. S. Guha, 'Report of a Survey of the Inhabitants of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands during 1948-1949', *Bulletin of the Dept. of Anthropology*, Calcutta, January 1952, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 1-7.

longer will these anachronisms survive and what factors are responsible for their preservation?

In view of the rapid course of industrialization and urbanization, the growth of the means of communication and transportation and the rise in the Brazilian population, it can be foreseen that they will disappear in a very few years. With them will also go, inevitably, the independent Indian languages and cultures which cannot continue as parallel systems in an increasingly homogeneous industrial civilization.

Owing both to the smallness of their numbers (none of them has more than 5,000 members and the great majority have less than 200) and to their cultural diversity (reflected in the existence of about 35 separate languages, subdivided into over a hundred mutually unintelligible dialects), the Indian tribes of Brazil have no prospect of developing on their own lines by adopting modern technology so that they can exist as independent peoples.

Official conservationist action is the only factor favouring the maintenance of the original cultural patterns, through a contrived interaction with civilization which, on occasion, it succeeds in imposing. This it does not do through zeal to conserve tribal ways of life but rather because it is concerned with saving the Indians simply as human beings, and also in deference to the practical consideration that the survival of the Indians appears to depend in many cases on a lowering of the rate of cultural change. Supposing that this policy is maintained—so that those groups now entering into regular relations with Brazilian society, and, later, those currently still preserving their isolation, are placed under official protection—it is possible that Indian languages and cultures can continue to exist for a while longer in their original forms.

Even so, however, it will be a mere postponement, fully justifiable and eminently advisable for the salvage objectives dictating it, but simply a slowing down of the inevitable break-up of the tribal system.

In the face of these facts we must realize that, if we consider that records ought to be made of the tribal languages and cultures subsisting in Brazil, this needs to be done soon, because whatever is not done in our own generation will not later be possible. The saving, by recording, of dozens of independent Indian languages and cultures—the last remnants of the thousands which have disappeared as a result of European expansion—is a task of the highest scientific importance.

In other words, our task consists in salvaging a proportion of what has been left from a world-wide attrition process which has blotted out most of what man has developed in the way of systems of verbal communication and cultures for the satisfaction of human needs. If we attach importance to the scientific description of zoological and botanical species in nature, if we value geological classification and many others, what estimate can we put upon this task of putting on record languages and cultures, which are the most individual products of man's genius and, moreover, the last languages and cultures which have preserved themselves up to now unaffected by influences from our own university-standardized types?

This is the task which challenges our generation of ethnologists and linguists.

There follow a few notes on the subjects which appear to the writer to deserve priority, on the resources which can and should be mobilized, and on certain guiding principles which are felt to be appropriate for the accomplishment of this work.

EXPLORATORY SURVEY

As a matter of first priority, a survey should be made covering all those parts of the country where tribal groups survive, or at the very least those about which our ignorance is greatest, so as to afford us an up-to-date and comprehensive picture of these tribes as a basis for the planning of a programme of detailed studies. It should include the investigation of certain fundamental questions, such as, the identification of the demographic structure, types of relationship with the Brazilian community, degree of acculturation, culture and language of every tribe in Brazil. For the last-named purpose, use should be made of a key vocabulary, proved in practice, such as that by Morris Swadesh which, in addition to serving the ends of genetic classification, has other advantages. The cultures would be illustrated by collections of their artifacts and by films and sound recordings of the language and all the aspects of group life suited to this kind of documentation which could be dealt with in the course of a general survey.

This would not only yield material allowing of the recasting of the existing linguistic classifications—all of which are unreliable owing to the incompleteness of the vocabularies on which they are based—but would also provide a fuller and more up-to-date conspectus of the ethnology of Brazil. As there is very little likelihood that we will succeed in accomplishing all the priority intensive studies quickly enough, the material yielded by this general survey will in the future probably become our principal fund of information on the ethnology and linguistics of the tribes of Brazil.

From its very nature and the material it may be expected to provide, it seems likely that the survey will be of interest to a number of museums and universities throughout the world, to various international institutions for the encouragement of scientific research, more particularly in the Americas, and also to the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations such as Unesco and the International Labour Office which have shown a concern for this kind of question. The direction of the actual survey could be entrusted to an inter-institutional committee empowered to act for the various sponsors and to enlist the necessary personnel for the field-work. The latter should consist preferably of experts who have already worked in certain areas; they would be afforded an opportunity for a preliminary meeting to decide on uniform work methods. In Brazil itself a good number of ethnologists and Indianists could be found who would be interested in participating in a programme of this kind.

ETHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH

However, the essential task of the ethnologist is the detailed study of individual cultures, particularly those which retain their autonomy. In the light of our earlier analyses, the considerations pertinent to the practical operations and the priorities which should be given to each type of study appear to be as follows.

Isolated Tribes

Although these tribes are the truest to type, existing conditions among them generally preclude the conduct of research, having regard to the normal

requirements of personal safety and the intimate and continued association required for a detailed ethnological investigation. However, it has already become practicable to carry out direct investigation of certain groups, living in accessible regions, which are merely shy. Examples are the Aruak-speaking Xiriãna, the Waiká¹ and the Pakidái² on the upper reaches of the Demeni, Marauiá and Cauayboris rivers and the head waters of the Catrimani and Uraricoera, and the Salumá and Tirió Indians around the sources of the Cuminá and Trombetas rivers on the Brazilian frontier with Dutch Guiana.³ Others which can be included in this category are two Tupí groups on the left bank of the Tocantins, the Asuriní and the Parakanân,⁴ for which we do not even possess vocabularies since it was only about two years ago that the Serviço de Proteção aos Índios (S.P.I.) made contact with certain sub-groups of these tribes. A steadily growing number of other groups should begin peaceful relations with civilization in the coming years, affording new opportunities for research.

Tribes in Intermittent Contact

These tribes afford ideal research conditions, because they have not yet been affected to the point of losing their basic cultural characteristics and also because at this stage it is possible to find the full traditional way of life being pursued. Although the dissociative effects of epidemics and other factors are already beginning to touch them, obliterating certain aspects of their culture, it is still possible to reconstruct these from information obtained from individuals who participated in them. For these investigations a command of the tribal language is usually indispensable. Lack of this requirement and the difficulties of reaching the groups owing to the remoteness of their habitats are serious obstacles to research. It is perhaps for these reasons that up to now we possess so few studies of groups at this stage.

Particularly suitable subjects for investigation in this category are two Kayapó groups, the Xikrú and the Kubén-kran-kegn in the south of Pará State, pacified respectively in 1954 and 1952 by the S.P.I.⁵ Also suitable are the Xavante (Akwé), finally pacified in 1949; these are one of the most conservative Jê-speaking groups and, with the still hostile Gaviões, are the tribes of this linguistic family which would best repay ethnological investigation. Among the Tupí in intermittent relations are the Aré (Xeta), a small group recently discovered in the forests of the Serra Dourados, in Paraná State, in a region which is being rapidly taken over by coffee planters. It is to be noted that these Indians still use stone axes and appear to be one of the most conservative groups in Brazil. As a result of a rare combination of circumstances they have been able to maintain their isolation, even in an area so accessible, and to preserve much of their traditional culture.⁶ Other Tupí groups at a

1. Otto Zerries has carried out field investigations of the Waiká Guaharibo and Xiriana, on which he submitted a preliminary paper to the thirty-first International Congress of Americanists at São Paulo in 1954.

2. Studies of these are in preparation by Hans Becher but not ready for publication.

3. Information from Frei Protásio Friel who has visited the region and investigated certain aspects of the ethnology of these Indians.

4. Carlos de Araujo Moreira Neto is at present studying the forms of Brazilian expansion in that area, of which he is carrying out an ethnological survey.

5. The Kubén-kran-kegn are at present under investigation by Alfred Métraux. Researches on particular aspects on their culture have been carried out by Horace Banner (mythology) and Simone Dreyfus-Roche (musicology.)

6. As soon as the first contacts with them were made they were visited, and José Loureiro Fernandes is still pursuing a careful study of them, particularly from the point of view of ergology.

similar stage of integration are the Kaapor (Urubus) on the right bank of the river Gurupí, who, living in a economically marginal zone, preserve the essentials of the traditional culture,¹ and the Kayabí, who are at present moving away from the valley of the Teles Pires river to tributaries of the Xingu river to escape the persecution of the pioneers of the extractive industries invading their former territory and to seek the kind of protection which the S.P.I. is affording to the Xinguano groups. This community has not as yet been the subject of ethnological study; it is, incidentally, the Tupí group whose study could contribute most towards throwing light on certain basic problems of Brazilian ethnology.

Other groups on the Xingu are the Kamayurá and Awetí. Like the Trumai and the Aruak and Karib groups, they will however be dealt with separately, as they have undergone a process of inter-tribal acculturation which has produced an extensive range of common features in their cultures.

Others who should be placed at the same level of priority for research are the Nambikuára² of the north-eastern Mato Grosso, the Xirianá, a linguistically isolated group on the Uraricoera river, and the Javaé of the island of Bananal. The last-named are a Karajá sub-tribe which, having remained more isolated than the rest, appear to be a specially good subject for detailed ethnological investigation.

To the foregoing can be added the Kaxuiána of the middle reaches of the Trombetas, the Katawian and Sikiana of the Cafuini river and the Waiwai³ and Parikotó of the upper Mapuera, while further to the east, on the Jari river, are the Apalaí.

Tribes in Permanent Contact

Although they already exhibit profound modifications brought about by the cumulative effect of the ecological, biological, economic and cultural pressures to which they have been subjected, the tribes in permanent contact with Brazilian civilization have special off-setting advantages and attractions for the purposes of ethnological study. The first of these is the fact that many of their members are bilingual. Moreover their cultural disintegration itself has its advantages, for it allows the group, or individual informants, to deal objectively with aspects of their culture, discussion of which would formerly have been barred either by taboo or by sheer vexation, while yet another advantage is that the group itself has acquired greater awareness that customs are relative and with it a more objective view of its own customs.

There are at least eight Tupi communities in this relationship with civilization—the Tapirapé⁴ of Goiás, four small groups living along the right-bank tributaries of the Guaporé,⁵ the Munduruku⁶ and the Juruna. The last-named are represented by a small community living near the confluence of the

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1. The writer is in the process of completing a detailed ethnological study of the group, having been in their villages in 1949 and 1951 when he had sound recordings and films made of those aspects of their culture that lent themselves to it.
 2. Research on them has been carried out by Roquette-Pinto (1912), by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1936) and more recently by Kalervo Oberg.
 3. Their tongue is the subject of the only linguistic study, by W. Neil Hawkins, which fully meets modern scientific requirements.
 4. Investigated by Herbert Baldus, Charles Wagley and Eduardo Galvão.
 5. Among them only the Tupari have been the subject of a detailed study, as yet unpublished, by Franz Caspar.
 6. A detailed study of these Indians, still unpublished, has recently been made by Robert and Yolanda Murphy.

Manitsaua-Assu river with the Xingu.¹ They are the survivors of the powerful Juruna tribe which formerly lived at the mouth of the Xingu and there first clashed with civilization in the seventeenth century; this tribe has been retreating and shrinking steadily ever since.

Among the Aruak in permanent contact with Brazilian civilization there are five very little-known tribes of the Jurua-Purus area and two on the Rio Negro, and there is a Paresi sub-group, the Irantxe, in north-eastern Mato Grosso, who have not as yet been the subject of detailed investigation.

There are three Jê-speaking tribes in permanent contact, the Kayapó-Gorotire of Southern Pará, the Ramkókamekra or Canelas (perhaps the most thoroughly studied Indian group in Brazil²) and the Krahó who are still awaiting detailed ethnological investigation.³

Some sub-groups of the Taulipang and Wayana tribes, both Karib-speaking, are also at the stage of permanent contact, plus five Pano tribes and a Katukina group in Juruá-Purus, the Tukána and Baniwa tribes of the Rio Negro and the Witóto and Tukúna of the Solimoes.⁴

Others classified as at the same level of interaction are the Karajá, Boróro and Kadiwéu Indians. They have been dealt with in a series of published studies but are still of the greatest interest, particularly the Boróro who require thorough investigation to throw light on a series of questions raised by the ethnographic studies available.

A further and final group in the same category are the Maxakalí Indians of Minas Gerais who are the only group in Eastern Brazil preserving sufficient of their traditional culture for a study of the type under consideration.⁵

The Integrated Groups

These are so extensively involved in the economy and the principal forms of institutionalized behaviour of Brazilian civilization, and their languages and cultures are so debased, that they cannot be investigated from the same point of view as the other categories. Nevertheless, they are of interest in other connexions which are coming increasingly within the purview of ethnology and will be considered below.

We should now consider what are the prospects of the most urgent studies, as listed above, being actually carried out. The plain fact is that, if we continue at the present rate, it will be impossible to complete even a substantial part of them. In these circumstances we have to consider what kind of intervention would be most effective in promoting *new* research.

In recent years the study of ethnology has been accepted into the university system so that, though there are still deficiencies, the training of research

1. A purely preliminary study of this group has been made by Eduardo Galvao.

2. The reference is to Curt Nimuendaju's monograph *The Eastern Timbira*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1946.

3. Limited aspects of the ethnology of the Krahó have been carried out recently and photographs for ethnographic documentation taken by Harald Schultz.

4. Of all these tribes only the Tukúna are dealt with exhaustively, in a monograph by Curt Nimuendaju. Two further investigations by Paul Fejos (1941) and Irving Goldman (1939-40) respectively deal with Witóto and Kubewa.

5. Marçelo José Moretzsohn de Andrade has just returned from a long period spent on a detailed ethnological investigation of this group.

workers is a possibility. Actually, taking the world as a whole, there are many young men completing training every year who might well seek professional careers in the ethnological field. The chief difficulty lies in the small number of institutions in a position to offer openings for employment or prospects of finance for research. In Brazil, until recently only the staff establishments of museums and universities included a few posts for ethnologists. The Serviço de Proteção aos Índios now also employs some. Altogether, however, our numbers are very small for tasks so vast and it is improbable that they will increase to any noticeable extent in the immediate future. This being so, it becomes necessary to create increased opportunities of financial aid for independent research and above all to encourage still greater collaboration by ethnologists from other countries.

The most suitable action, in my view, would be to induce institutions sponsoring research to increase their appropriations for ethnological studies and to introduce a set of priorities giving special encouragement to the study of those Indian groups which still have a degree of cultural and linguistic autonomy.

STUDIES OF SOCIO-CULTURAL PROCESSES

Consideration of the prospects of survival of the Indian languages and cultures of Brazil suggests the desirability of giving the same degree of priority as above to another line of research, namely, the study of certain socio-cultural processes. This will be impossible for ever if not embarked upon quickly, because the human frames of reference within which the processes operate will have ceased to exist.

Areas of Inter-tribal Acculturation

On the border of the Brazilian part of the Amazon basin, in areas drained by the head-waters of certain of the main tributaries of the Amazon river, there exist six confederations of Indian tribes, each of which constitutes a sector of intense inter-tribal acculturation. Ethnological investigation of the separate tribal elements making up the confederations, on the lines discussed hitherto, would merely supply material for conventional studies of culture areas, based on records of factual observations and collections of specimens. The real opportunity presented here is for a first-hand study of the last culture areas still in evolution so as to secure a more accurate understanding of the growth processes of the 'client', 'partnership' or symbiotic relationships which grow up between the tribal units, cementing them into super-tribal confederations. The direct study of these situations would throw new light on the behaviour-patterns of the human elements involved and perhaps also on what are the adverse or favourable factors which can affect the evolutionary process at tribal level.

I append an annotated list of the areas which seem to me to be most indicated for this type of investigation:

1. Around the head-waters of the Xingu there are a number of tribes living together in close proximity and association, making up a veritable linguistic mosaic, with the Tupi language represented by two groups, the Aruak by three, the Karib by four, the Jê by one, and one allophyllous language,

Trumai,¹ in addition. In contrast to their diversity of language, there is uniformity of culture² ranging from the use of the same adaptive equipment by all tribes to common forms of social organization and a vision of the world identical in all essentials. Uniformity on this scale can only be the result of a centuries-long interplay of influence which has culminated in the establishment of a regular system of inter-tribal relations today essential for the survival of each group. The direct study of this system of interdependent relations between the Xingu tribes is as least as important as ethnological studies of each individual tribe in the area.

2. Two similar super-tribal confederations exist in the region lying between the sources of the right-bank tributaries of the Guaporé and the Pimenta Bueno river. Here too the interplay of reciprocal influences has brought tribes of completely different language to far-reaching cultural uniformity, as is clearly evident from an examination of their artifacts and of the ethnological data on them. The two groups in question consist respectively of the Kepkiriwát, Mondé, Sanamaiká, Guaratégaja, Kabixiána, Huarí, Masaká, Amniapé, Arikapú, Wayoró, Makúrap, Tupari and Arua, and of the Txapakura, Urupá, Pakaranovas, Arikên and Puruborá. Here, however, as the conservationist services do not intervene as powerfully as in the Xingu, all the groups have been deeply affected by civilization. The majority of the tribes have disappeared, and of the survivors few preserve their cultural autonomy or the minimum of population necessary for the functioning of their traditional institutions. Nevertheless, in view of the importance of the problem, an effort should be made to reconstruct their system of inter-relations as it was originally.
3. The upper Jurua-Purus appears to have been another area of intense inter-tribal acculturation. The ethnographic data on the Pano, Aruak and Katukina-speaking groups of the region show considerable uniformity and also indicate the probability of a system of interdependent relations between groups belonging to different tribes. However, it may already be too late for a direct study in this region, because of the violent nature of the wave of colonization which swept over it, putting an end to many tribes and causing a far-reaching disruption of cultural patterns among the rest.³
4. Around the tributaries of the Rio Negro—the Uaupés, the Tiquié, and the Içana and its affluents—there is another group of tribes which were originally quite unlike, but which by a long process of inter-tribal acculturation have reached a high degree of cultural, and at times even of linguistic, fusion. Here separate tribes appear to have arrived in a succession of waves: the Maku, with a relatively elementary culture, scattered round the periphery of the area; various Aruak groups, with a more advanced culture, who settled along the banks of the major rivers; and the more simply equipped Tukána tribes who entered into competition with the Aruak groups and must have adopted much of their culture.

1. According to information supplied by Claudio Vilas-Boas of the Serviço de Proteção aos Índios, there are two other typical Xinguan tribes which have not yet made contact with civilization. They are the Agavotokueng, a name which means 'other Ywalapiti', living between the Curisevu and Culuene rivers, and the Txikao or Tonore, as they are called by the Kamayurá, on the Jatoba river. The first may be Aruak while there are no data on the second.

2. Eduardo Galvao has analysed the elements common to the Xingu cultures and suggests that this area should be known as the Ulury region, for identification.

3. In Volume IX of the *Revista do Museu Paulista*, Harald Schultz publishes an account of a journey to the Upper Purus, reporting the existence of a number of groups so far not mentioned in ethnological bibliography, and giving information about the progressive extinction of several others.

Representatives of these separate waves can still be distinguished, and the process of acculturation continues. In our own times we have seen the adoption of the Tukana language by the Tariãna Indians who originally spoke a tongue related to Baniwa of the Aruak stock.¹ In addition to the possibility of direct investigation, there is abundant ethnographic documentation available on this area, and by using both sources in conjunction it would be possible to reconstruct the former pattern of inter-tribal relations.

5. On the Orinoco-Uaupés watershed, in the extreme north of Brazil, there is another set of tribes exhibiting a high degree of mutual cultural integration. They are the Xirianá, Waiká, Pakidái, Yabaãna, Mandawáka and perhaps many others so far unknown. This is in all probability the most thickly populated Indian area in Brazil, precisely because it is one of the least developed parts of the country. Only of late years have forest collectors of medicinal plants begun penetrating into it, but so far they have not built up the pressures on the inhabitants which in other areas have liquidated so many tongues and cultures.
6. Lastly, another area which can be strongly recommended for this type of research is to be found on the upper reaches of the Cumina, Trombetas and Cafuini rivers, on the Brazilian frontiers with Dutch and British Guiana. It is the habitat of a number of Salumá, Sikiana and Tirió groups (the last name comprising the Marahtxo or Pianokotó, Aramayana, Proyana or Rangu-Píqui, Aramiatxo, Okomoyana and Aramihoto) who also appear to have a system of inter-tribal relations on which field research could be conducted.

Integration and Acculturation Processes

Another category of phenomena, deserving special consideration as an urgent research task for ethnology in Brazil, is the process (at least in certain of its aspects) whereby the Indian populations become integrated into Brazilian civilization. Research of this kind has frequently been described as 'what has been left for ethnologists', with the decay of the tribal cultures. However, in view of the speed with which Brazilian civilization is expanding and overrunning the hitherto independent tribes, forcing them into integration, the time during which direct study of the initial stages of the acculturation and integration processes will remain possible is very limited.

In this connexion a matter in special need of investigation is what orders of pressures operate on the tribal system before the making of direct and permanent contacts. The data examined in this article already provide some indications on the point. Thus we know that an important part in the extensive disappearances of tribal entities and in the disintegration of tribal cultures must be ascribed to pre-acculturation factors such as those arising out of interaction at the biological and ecological level, e.g., the disruptive effects of the depopulation brought about by epidemics. Another dissociative factor is the abrupt and enforced transformation of tribal economy, originally directed to the satisfaction of the tribe's own subsistence needs, into an economy producing articles for trade, which appears to be a concomitant of the group's

1. Curt Nimuendaju, 'Reconhecimento dos rios Içana, Ayari e Uaupés', *Journal de la Société des Americanistes de Paris*, Paris, 1950, N.S. XXXIX, pp. 125-82.

entry into a state of permanent contact with civilization. These two points in the integration process can only be properly understood through the investigation on the spot of native groups at each of the stages of integration. As the isolated groups or groups in intermittent relation are becoming rare, their study from the point of view under consideration is a matter of urgency.

In view of the extent of the tasks facing us and the scantiness of the available resources, it may perhaps prove impracticable to carry out separate investigations for each of the above purposes exclusively. In that case the ethnographic investigations should be planned so as to include specific attention to questions relating to the survival of the tribal populations. This means that the work plans of the ethnological investigations must include, as questions of equal importance with the study of tribal mythology, of the kinship system, etc., a detailed investigation of demographic structure, birth rates, index of fertility, the dissociative effects of epidemics and other matters which will enable the features of the initial stages of integration to be determined.

This approach will not only result in ethnology concerning itself more with the fate of the peoples it studies but will benefit ethnological research proper by giving it greater insight. There are no groups—not even the most isolated—entirely untouched by the influence of civilization, and allowance for this fact is a condition precedent for any proper understanding of them. Instead of stopping short at the more or less straightforward presentation of evidence of what a tribal culture must have been at a selected time, the task of the ethnographer would then become the appreciation of that culture as it is at the moment of observation, or in other words, understanding how and why it has taken on the configuration it presents to the observer.

LINGUISTIC STUDIES

The most important contribution expected of Brazilian Indian linguistics is the production of a new classification based on more adequate material than that currently available. This material can only be collected with the necessary speed and uniformity by means of an extensive inquiry such as that suggested under the first heading 'Exploratory survey'.

As regards the basic tasks in the recording of the Indian languages, the priorities should be the reverse of those proposed for the ethnographic study. Whereas the ethnologist should preferably turn his attention to the most isolated groups in an endeavour to record the last surviving instances of cultures as yet unaffected by civilization, the linguist on the other hand must seek out the most integrated groups whose languages for that very reason are in the most immediate danger of disappearance.

This change of approach is only possible because language is the most persistent aspect of a culture and the Indian tongues survive, though modified in the majority of the groups, vanishing only with the death of the last members. Another reason is that the ethnologist, to do his work, needs to observe cultures in operation, whereas the linguist can, if necessary, make a fairly satisfactory reconstruction of a language with only one surviving speaker of it.

A mere glance at the material showing the groups which have become extinct between 1900 and 1957 gives an idea of the considerable number of tongues which have vanished. Unhappily, for the majority of these we lack even adequate linguistic material for genetic classification. However, as the

records indicate the groups which have disappeared as an ethnos and not necessarily the death of all the members of those groups, it is probable that in some of these cases surviving individual speakers may be found through whom the reconstruction of the original languages may be possible.

This last then would seem to be the linguist's most urgent task. It should be followed by study of the languages of groups already integrated, more particularly those which, being small in numbers, are in most danger of dying out.

Here an important practical problem arises. The bulk of the most competent field linguists today have been trained for the special purpose of translating the Gospel into the Indian tongues.¹ Such persons are quite naturally concerned primarily with those groups with good prospects of survival and capable of achieving literacy and one day profiting from translations of the Bible. In the circumstances it is precisely those languages most seriously threatened with disappearance which will have least prospect of being 'collected'. On all these grounds it would be desirable for learned institutions to provide some research incentive designed to make the study of these languages specially attractive.

The soundest means of starting an intensive programme of descriptive linguistic studies would, in my view, be to induce linguists such as members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Oklahoma, each to specialize in a given linguistic family, beginning with an exhaustive study of one of its variants and following this by less detailed studies of other representatives of the same family. In this way we could speedily obtain pilot studies of languages of the Tupí, Karib, Aruak, Jê, Pano, Katukina, Tukána, Txapakura, Xirianá, Mura, Maku and Makú-Nebodo linguistic stocks and of the Boróro, Karajá, Mbayá-Guaikúru, Nambikuára, Tukuna, Maxakalí, Fulnió (Yatê) and perhaps also Mirânia, Guato and Ofaié languages.

For this minimum programme of descriptive studies of the principal variants of the Indian languages of Brazil, at least twenty-two suitably trained linguists would be required. A task of that magnitude can only be carried out with the collaboration of scientific institutions in all parts of the world. This would indeed be fully justified, since what is at stake is a cultural heritage that is only incidentally Brazilian—the native languages and cultures here surviving are a legacy to science and to all mankind.

STUDIES ON THE NORTHERN SOVIET PEOPLES

ILYA GURVICH

Scholars have long been attracted by the history of man's conquest of the vast areas of Siberia. But only in the last ten years, through the efforts of Soviet specialists, has marked progress been made in studying the peoples of the Far

1. The reference is to the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Oklahoma, whose recent entry into Brazil is a most auspicious event for Brazilian Indian linguistics, and to the New Tribes Mission which has been concerning itself of late years with studies of the same type in Brazil.