

Last revised 2/07

"Domestic" Indian Society in Para, 1650-1750

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These observations are born of a search for routes of access to a history of Amazonia which can be of use to Amazonian Brazilians who are concerned with forging their own future -- a history that can inform the work of conceiving and struggling to build a just social order based upon a sustainable relationship between human society and Amazonian nature. Such a history for anyplace, I believe, must be centered upon the primary experiences of work, reproduction and communal life, and upon people's evolving understanding of themselves in relation to the social and natural orders within which they existed.

Very little history of that kind has, of course, been written for any people anywhere. Moreover, it is hard to imagine any peoples whose experience is less accessible to innovative historical study than that of the Indians of the Amazon Valley in their early modern subjection to colonial rule. Nevertheless, the search is worth pursuing, because leaving aside the ways in which Amazonian history is an exotic feast for the mind, the world's history reveals no social order more unjust, no patterns of relationship to nature less sustainable, than those registered by the tawdry history of European colonialism and neocolonialism and "internal colonialism" in the Amazon Valley. This history is therefore full of cases with which to stretch and recast the generalizations within which we customarily work, cases from which to ask ourselves fruitful new questions -- about colonial history, church history, working-people's history, family and community history, ethnohistory, eco-history and human history in general.

The search began forty years ago for me, with dissertation research on the Indian slave trade in colonial Amazonia. I learned then that that system of recruitment, while providing labor for the unique colonial economy of Pará, had destroyed the cultures and the physical persons of the great majority of the inhabitants of the vast Amazon valley. I learned that the trade had been made to seem necessary to the Portuguese colonizers of the valley by that process of depopulation, and by the chronic poverty of their settlements in Para and Maranhã. I learned too that Indian slavery had in large measure been made possible

by the active participation in it of Christian missionaries. It became clear that the holocaust of Indian slavery had been wrought on the region without so much as producing significant wealth for its few hundreds of European perpetrators. That peculiarly counterproductive system of exploitation ended up looking to me like nothing less than a previously unrecognized colonial Amazonian "mode of production" -- unique in its structural relationships to nature and to the world economy, and unique in its implications for the organization of life in society.

Finally, I was forced to the conclusion that the appalling mortality of Indians caught up in that system was due less to human depredations -- to war, brutality, forced relocation or even the starvation brought on by the disruption of indigenous production systems, awful as they all were -- than it was to the importation of Old World epidemic diseases to which the native Amazonians had no genetic resistance.ⁱ This made the study of Amazonian history, unavoidably, above all a study in the history of changing ecological relationships. Nothing was more painfully lacking from the literature I found there, than a series of monographs in historical geography such as had been produced years ago for several other regions of colonial Latin America by scholars of the Berkeley school.

While working on that dissertation, I had an eye out to the possibilities for future work on the society which the Amazonian Indian slave trade existed to provide with labor -- that of the State of Maranhão and Grão Pará, a Portuguese colony administered separately from Brazil right down until the time of Independence. So I would set aside the odd juicy fragment of information for that purpose. Core samples revealed that the Portuguese and Brazilian archives were quite rich in materials for the histories of Pará and Maranhão -- including for example, for the second half of the 18th century, some remarkable data series for production and population appearing together with detailed reports on daily-life matters from each rural community in Pará.ⁱⁱ Most of these materials appear still to have been little utilized by historians; and the literature on the history of Pará and Maranhão still seems to me to have too little to say to those involved in the struggles of the present and future. So it is tempting to try and persuade others to do make use of them, which is the purpose of this paper. For convenience, and because the destinies of Pará and Maranhão have diverged so greatly since their incorporation into Brazil (Maranhão having been endowed by the Atlantic slave trade with a large African population before the end of the 18th century, and connected itself decisively to the world economy much earlier than Para), these observations are limited to the history of colonial society in what is now the Brazilian State of Para, around the mouth of the Amazon -- though Belém do Pará and São Luis do Maranhão were in close communication in early colonial times, and though the experiences of the Indian working poor in those two colonies seem in most respects to have been quite similar.ⁱⁱⁱ

The full story of the Indian laborers of Pará during the colonial and early national periods, culminating in the story of the great caste war or Cabanagem which threatened to exterminate "civilized" society there in the 1830's, is one which will have many lessons for the Brazilians of today and tomorrow -- as they attempt to dig themselves out from under the ruins of the Amazonian development debacle of the last half of the 20th century. This is an important chapter in Latin American colonial social history. There is no social history of an Indian slave society anywhere in the Americas, so far as I can determine, because presumably of the ephemeral nature both of the trade, and of the unstable communities it established in other regions. But in Pará that society endured, by dint of the massive and relentless recruitment over a long period of time (roughly, 1620 to 1760) of Indian slave labor, *faut de mieux*, alongside and in intimate association with the all too similar recruitment of labor to the "free" Indian society of the mission aldeia in Pará, and of its successor, the state-controlled "Directorate village" production unit of the last decades of the 18th century. The "domestic Indian" society of Pará survive, indeed, until the processes of racial and cultural *mesticagem* had transformed that neo-Indian society into the independent but resentful *caboclo* peasantry of the 19th century.

The present remarks are limited to the first era of that long process of social transformation -- when an almost unrestricted Indian slave trade was in operation, and when the administration of Indian labor, whether slave or "free" was for in large measure assigned by the Portuguese colonial authorities to missionary priests. The period with which we are concerned ended rather abruptly in the 1750s, with the appointment in 1751 of the Marquis of Pombal's brother as Governor of Pará. Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado was charged with carrying out a drastic program of regalist reforms in the administration of the colony; and among his principal objections were the abolition of Indian slavery, the secularization of all missions, and the subjection of the surviving Indian labor force to the colonial government's authority.

Indian slavery and the exploitation of Indian slave labor were a feature of the early history of every colonial frontier in the New World.^{iv} Nowhere, however, did Indian slaving last longer or remain a more central feature of a regional colonial economy, than it did in Portuguese Amazonia. There, despite resounding denunciations by critics and a long series of efforts at legislative reform,^v a system for exploiting the involuntary and semivoluntary labor of Indians was established that was to be maintained staunchly by the local representatives of both Church and State as well as by the settler interest, and would prove remarkably resistant to substantive change, for a period of two and a half centuries. This system was

justified to its participants by clergymen and bureaucrats alike, as a means of civilizing the savage population of Amazonia, principally by teaching them to work to produce a surplus for others, and by converting them into Christians and dutiful subjects of the Portuguese King.

Hundreds of thousands of people (that is, a very few thousand men, women and children each year) were recruited into this Amazonian forced labor system by a variety of un-Christian and mostly illegal means, from nearly all parts of an expanding territory which reached eventually to the present frontiers of Brazil with Guyana, Venezuela, Colombia and Peru. Though often decried as inferior to the African slaves whom the down-at-the-heels Amazonian settlers generally preferred but could seldom afford to purchase, these Indian people were generally acknowledged by thoughtful observers, from the beginning of colonization until the arrival of steam navigation and an immigrant labor force to tap rubber trees in the middle of the 19th century, to be the indispensable agents of the production and transportation of goods in Para. The patterns of their subsistence, their community life and their evolving folk culture -- a new social fabric woven in the loom of the colonial economic order from fibers of many origins in three continents -- were the root stock from which Amazonian culture has grown to this day. Their Tupian lingua geral, first learned from missionaries, became the indispensable language of communication within the multi-ethnic, uprooted original population of every community and work-place in Para. It was the language which, as Governor Francisco Xavier de Mendonca Furtado once observed with horror, the newly arrived African slaves learned sooner and better than they did Portuguese! The lingua geral retained that position in rural Para until well into the 19th century (and in remote places into the 20th); and a sociolinguistics of it would therefore likely shed much light on the social history of this population. More generally, the ethnography of 20th-century caboclo communities seems promising as a source of questions to ask of the colonial documents. 6

The pioneer efforts to write the history of early Para have been based for the most part upon the study of legislation and official correspondence, supplemented by the descriptive accounts of educated European observers (primarily Jesuit missionaries).⁷ Such history has left most of the key questions of interest to social historians both unanswered and unasked. It has left even the richly suggestive Jesuit sources, with which it is familiar enough, unexploited for their lucid glimpses of the nature and processes of settled Indian society.⁸ As an example, it has customarily employed the categories "slave" and "free" to distinguish human conditions among the Indian laboring population of colonial times. The Jesuits themselves, who knew and thought about the Indians of Para better than any other Europeans, always insisted on doing this, as did the law. We read therefore of a Jesuit-inspired struggle for the "freedom" of

the Indians inspired by Antonio Vieira; we attempt to hold on to an ostensibly clear distinction, taken from the law and from Jesuit casuistry, between Indians captured in war, Indians obtained by legal purchase or resgate and Indians persuaded by gifts and promises of kind treatment to undertake descimento and relocate voluntarily in Para; we are given to understand that Indians resident in mission aldeias were "freer" than Indians held as "slaves"; we learn that Governor Mendonca Furtado "abolished" Indian slavery and the slave trade in 1755; there is even talk about progress in the 18th century towards the establishment of what historians of the liberal school like to refer to as a "free" labor market. Yet the closer one looks at the society of colonial Para, the clearer it becomes that law and theological reflection there were at least as seldom a constraint on practice as elsewhere in colonial America; and the less evidence there appears to be that these Roman legal categories (the meaning of which was fuzzy enough even to trained functionaries writing official documents in the Para of that day!) bore any relation at all to the actual conduct of social relations.

All Indians, slave or free, in colonial Para were obliged in practice to serve white people as needed, to toil endlessly and endure whatever humiliations or physical punishments their employers (whether settlers, missionaries or government officials) chose to mete out to them. They did this for bare subsistence rations and miserable wages often unpaid, generally for indefinite periods and often at a great distance from their homes, whether they chose to do so or not. The decisions about when and where they were to perform these services, and for whom, were always made for them by white men.⁹ So, one may reasonably ask, what was an Indian slave in Para? "Slave," like "free," was a category from European thought and practice which was deemed useful by contemporary European observers for discussing the Indian labor situation in Para. It has therefore been persistent as a category in scholarly writing about the period; and of course it seems to a modern reader as if by that token it ought at least to indicate something about the nature of colonial Indian life itself. But "slave" and "free" do not seem in fact to be categories which can be derived from the historical experience of Indians in that society.

So my first contribution to our discussion of "Slavery on the Colonial Brazilian Frontier" is to suggest that, however useful the terms "slave" and "free" may be for the history of Afro-American life in Brazil and elsewhere, they have little heuristic value for trying to reconstruct the patterns of Indian life under European administration in colonial Para. Difficult as we may find it to imagine, it is probable that no colonial Indian's employment status, family circumstances, standard of living, social comportment or self-conception was shaped decisively in practice by his or her legal standing as a slave or a free person in that society.¹⁰ One indication that this was the case is the practice of the disposition by the state of illegally captured Indian slaves who were taken from the canoe captains who sometimes attempted to introduce

them clandestinely to the city of Belem, and were subsequently examined to determine the "legitimacy" of their enslavements by the Junta das Missoes -- a commission comprised of the heads of religious orders and representatives of the royal government. Those found to be "legitimate slaves" were sold at public auction by representatives of the Royal Treasury; those found to be legally free were parcelled out to the missionaries for repartimento to the same settlers who might otherwise have owned them! There appears to be no record that any Indian brought to Para under any auspices was later allowed either to return to his home country to live as he chose, or to set himself up in Para as a person free of direct supervision by a European charged with his "spiritual and temporal administration."

In titling my paper, I have therefore refrained from using the term "slave" and preferred to translate the colonial term "indios domesticos" -- that is, Indians removed from what Roman and canon law viewed as the libertine "natural" state of life -- in which, as the colonialists liked to think, the Amazonian Indians customarily ate human flesh and practiced incest -- and placed in the disciplined "political" state of civilized life according to lei, rei e fe in which, though conditions might be harsh, they could at least become Christians and save their souls. An alternative procedure would have been to yield to the always great temptation to use the term "slave" more loosely and apply it to all of the decidedly unfree domestic Indians of Para, regardless of their legal status. The frequent contemporary references to Indians of any legal status as pecas would provide a justification for this. But it seems more mischievous than useful to use the term in that way, suggesting as it does that the legal status of these people was a decisive factor in determining the material circumstances of their lives -- which, I believe, it was not.

A more down-to-earth approach to the definition of categories for the social history of Indian laborers in this colonial economy is to distinguish the material circumstances in which they lived their lives and experienced their subjection to forced labor. Some Indians of 17th and early 18th-century Para lived in the aldeias presided over by Jesuit or Franciscan missionary priests which were spaced out along the narrow strips of fertile alluvial varzea which lined the banks of the principal tributaries of the lower Amazon. There they supported themselves and their missionaries with tropical forest horticulture, fishing and hunting, and the production of a variety of artisan products to be bartered for iron tools and other imported manufactured goods in the market place at Belem. The men and to a lesser extent the women of these avowedly "free" communities were expected to be kept permanently available for involuntary hiring out by the missionary charged by the state with their administration. Selected on a rotating basis in response to the settlers' demands or those of the colonial government, they were sent off for periods of forced labor on public works or in the the canoes, productive enterprises or households of the moradores. Men assigned to

canoe service in particular customarily spent extended periods of six months to a year or more at a great distance from their homes; and their families (if they had them) were obliged during these periods to fend for themselves under the missionary's stern guidance, never knowing when or whether their husbands and fathers would return, or whether when they did return, they would bring with them any wages.

Another large group of Indians, both slave and free, made their homes alongside the small numbers of African slaves in the servants' quarters of the widely dispersed small agricultural estates belonging to the religious orders (Jesuit, Franciscan, Carmelite and Mercedarian) of Para or to its very few hundreds of private settler-entrepreneurs. In addition to cultivating subsistence plots for their own maintenance, these people performed field labor in the largely unsuccessful commercial cultivation of sugar, indigo or cacao; they tended large herds of cattle; they worked in a variety of small manufacturing establishments producing roof tiles, cotton cloth, agoardente and other commodities of importance to the regional economy. In addition, like the Indians of the missions, they were subject to occasional drafting for service in the canoes of government expeditions to the Amazonian interior.

A third considerable group of slave and free Indians were residents of the small city of Belem do Para and the few other European settler towns of the colony. These were the servant members of the urban households of settlers, the servants of government and ecclesiastical bodies, and the employees of the few private artisanal enterprises that existed. Some served permanently or nearly so in the construction and maintenance of the giant sailing canoes which provided the only means of long-distance transportation for both people and merchandise in the colony. The domestic servants and employees of artisans in Belem and the few other small towns of the colony might hope to have stabler lives and spend more time with their families than did the Indians subject to forced labor in the transport canoes or the public works projects. But all were desperately and chronically poor, subject to a harsh physical discipline in the workplace, and in practice kept ignorant of any rights which might in principle have been enforceable in a court of law.

Another way of approaching Indian experience which seems likely to be fruitful is to examine closely the various kinds of work done by Indians, with an eye both to the details of evolving technologies and to the changing patterns of social relations which surrounded them. Generally speaking, the Indians of Para performed all manual labor that was viewed as unskilled -- including most operations involved in the production and distribution of all the goods destined for the European market. They and their mestizo children also performed most of the labor requiring training in the trades imported from Europe. Skilled workers of any hue were always scarce in Para, because the wages paid were too low to attract immigrants,

and because those who did come were quickly persuaded by the ethos of colonial society that it was better to arrange for some Indians to work to support them, than to put themselves out to hire.

Most Indian labor by persons of both genders was of course devoted to subsistence horticulture, and to the production of foodstuffs (primarily fish and manioc) for distribution in the Amazonian regional market. The next most common employment for men was as canoemen on collecting, slaving or military expeditions to the interior. It is clear that a useful social history of Indian Para will give central place to the canoe and to the social relations that existed around it -- relations that, for example, allowed a single white man to lead a crew, of forced laborers in the backbreaking work of paddling canoes upriver from dawn to dusk in the blistering heat and torrential rains, and more often than not to return alive with some sort of a lucrative cargo. Indian canoemen provided labor for the collection, in forests located sometimes hundreds of miles distant from Belem, of great cargoes of wild cacao and lesser amounts of vanilla, sarsaparilla and the Amazonian substitutes for clove and cinnamon -- all of them products which were indifferently marketable in Lisbon during some periods of the 17th and 18th centuries (though none of them enjoyed a steady enough production or quality or sales to allow for a significant accumulation of capital by any Amazonian entrepreneur).¹¹

Indian men also did the backbreaking work of lumbering and sawyering, provided the labor for all public works and construction, and served as armed auxiliaries on military and other government sponsored expeditions to the interior. They tended and slaughtered the cattle which proliferated after the mid-17th century on the great island of Marajo. They gathered in great quantities of fish year-round, to be consumed fresh or salted. They descended on the appropriate river beaches during the egg-laying season of the great Amazonian turtle, in order to render commercial quantities of the turtle oil in general use in the valley for cooking and as lamp fuel. They hunted the then ubiquitous manatee and reduced their carcasses to lard, preserved meat and leather for the regional market. They labored in the missionaries' brick and tile-yards, the settlers' indigo manufacturies and aguardente distilleries, the government's fisheries and lime kilns and salt pans.

For women, once the laborious production of the universal staple farinha de mandioca was completed, the chief extra-familial involuntary employment seems to have been spinning at home a crude cotton yarn and weaving from it, in workshops generally organized by missionary entrepreneurs, the *panno da terra* which for a hundred and fifty years served with cacao beans as the principal medium of exchange in the Amazonian market.¹² Women also manufactured the pottery, baskets and mats of everyday

household use, the hammocks in which Amazonians of every race and social station slept, and such homespun cotton clothing as was available for sale in the local market. They grew or gathered from the forests the great variety of edible and medicinal plants other than manioc which were to be found in Amazonian kitchens. Indian women also did such cleaning as was ever done in the settlers' humble dwellings, sewed and washed and mended their clothing, prepared their food and commonly breast-fed their babies. On occasion, they were put out to provide the wives of their employers with pin-money by working as prostitutes into the bargain.¹³

In most cases, Indian forced laborers whether legally slave or free were expected to provide the major part of their own sustenance by fishing and hunting, and by growing manioc on assigned plots in their home places. Wages for their labors were low to non-existent, and in practice difficult to collect. The standard rate established in the 1650's was two varas (yards) of panno da terra per month, which endured despite price inflation until being raised to three and later four vara between the 1730's and the 1750's. But there is no reason to assume that this small wage was paid to most workers on a regular basis. Panno was scarce, and employers were reluctant to hand it over to Indians. Jesuit missionary critics lost no opportunity to complain about the settlers' frequent non-payment of wages to their charges; and though such protests might perhaps have some effect on the authorities with regard to the occasions for which they were registered, no Indian worker was in a position on his own successfully to take legal action against an employer who refused to recognize the obligation to pay. Indians were viewed by the courts as minors, and as persons incapable by virtue of their social station of providing reliable testimony in a legal proceeding. Even assuming that wages were often paid, the government and church requirement that Indian women and men go about clothed as a sign of subjection to the civilized order must have meant in practice that the few yards of homespun cloth which a family member might hope to earn by a year's labor would barely meet the needs of those immediately dependent upon him. In this as in other dimensions of the social history of Para, it is more difficult than it might seem at first to be to make the leap from apparently factual information (a legal wage scale) to a rudimentary understanding of the nature of domestic economy of that Indian society.

One more determining, ever-present reality in the lives of the Indians of Para was severe, unfamiliar and apparently incurable sickness. Poor people there were seriously ill a great deal of the time, especially if they were Indians. Moreover, a great many people in Para were sick at any point in time. Most people were seriously and debilitatingly ill some of the time. Many people were sick most of the time. In Para as well as in Brazil, unlike the tropical colonies of the Portuguese in Africa and Asia, the natives were generally sicker

than the sojourners from Europe. This colonial economy in the American tropics was, moreover, unique in another respect. Here, because precisely of the great preponderance of Indians as distinct from more disease-resistant Africans in the laboring population, the workers were generally sickly and severe episodes of epidemic disease could be expected to produce an all but complete breakdown in the system of production. Foreign visitors generally thought of Para as a healthy place, and noted that Indians as well as others, if they managed to live through the various afflictions they faced, might hope to live there to what was for the 17th and 18th centuries a very advanced age. But most Indians failed that test, and succumbed to one disease or another at a very young age, or within a few months or years of their forced relocation from the healthy rain forests to the pestiferous settled communities of Para. Diseases -- predictable seasonal fevers, intestinal disorders, malnutrition, venereal ailments, but especially the terrifying, unforeseeable and untreatable acute crowd diseases such as smallpox and measles -- were the principal cause of their life's being "nasty, brutish and short."

This reality has proved remarkably difficult to incorporate into both narrative and analysis for the histories of other Indian peoples of the Americas. It is the definitive circumstance which somehow still remains marginal to our view of colonial Indian history¹⁴ -- a situation which will simply not be tolerable in the social history of Para. It seems likely in this case that research on the contemporary folk culture of disease, on the evolution of wisdom and remedies for understanding and dealing with it, may be more revealing of essential features of the fabric of early modern life here than it has been for societies in which disease is a more sporadic experience, less important as a determinant of social arrangements. More thinking needs to be done as well about the implications of general sickness and debilitation, of chronic population decline, of the frequent disruption by disease of family and community life, and of the existence of a remarkably short life-span for most people, for the conduct of work and the organization of society in Para.

The most spectacular dimension of the impact of disease on domestic Indian society in Para was the periodic devastation of communities by epidemics of smallpox sometimes accompanied by the measles, which might kill between 50% and 75% of the inhabitants of a settlement within a few weeks' time. This happened in 1621, 1644, 1662, 1695, 1724 and 1749 to speak only of the regional pandemics of the period with which we are concerned here. Epidemic disease then continued to function as the principal cause of the chronic decline in the Indian population of Para until well into the 19th century, when with the increase of genetic resistance associated with mesticagem, and the belated spread of vaccination and other rudimentary public health procedures, their impact on regional demography was greatly diminished.¹⁵

The few fragmentary demographic records available for the Indian population of Para suggest an astonishingly low rate of reproduction, one in which families with more than one surviving child must have been exceptional. There is some fragmentary evidence of the practice of abortion and infanticide among domestic Indians; chronic depression in large numbers of people may be presumed; and it is clear that most men and many women spent the greater part of their short productive lives at a great distance from the contexts for orderly reproduction which might have existed in their homes. Indian women in service were handicapped for providing full attention to their own children, who might be left with relatives or in the care of the missionary in their home villages.

Nutritional levels for Indians in service in colonial Para seem to have been as low as it was possible for employers to keep them. Most of the evidence that has appeared so far for this assertion concerns the conditions of life and work for canoe crew members. These unfortunate men, probably the majority at any given time, often ate nothing at all during weeks of very arduous labor except handfuls of dry farinha de mandioca washed down with water. It was a holiday for them when their cabos, generally under orders to travel fast and return to port as soon as possible with a pay load, saw fit to turn them out for fishing, or allowed them to hunt a few birds and camp for the night on a riverside beach around a small fire rather than sleeping fitfully on the wooden benches of their canoes, or broke out a ration of agoardente for each man which, if not nutritious, at least helped them forget the weeks of hunger. The names of these indispensable men for the operation of the colonial economy of Para never appear in the records of their employment (except for the occasional skilled pilot and rudderman who worked with his cabo on a steady basis and might be remembered as "Jose jacomauba" with the Tupian name for his trade as a surname). The missionaries who hired them out might keep track of their names; but their writings too evince little recognition or regard for specific persons. The many Indian crewmen who grew too weak to work or who died in service on an upriver expedition -- from illness, hunger, exhaustion, exposure or wounds taken in combat -- were customarily thrown overboard or left without ceremony on the nearest beach to be eaten (as critics of such inhumane procedures sometimes blustered in letters to the King) by the hideous jacares. Nevertheless, such people continued to serve. They moved all the passengers and merchandise that ever went anywhere in Amazonia before the 1850's. There is reason to believe that they even preferred this form of forced labor, with its relatively familiar work rhythms and its comradeship, to other duty. Most did not desert from service; probably as many of them survived their several years of erratic employment in it as died while serving. These Indian survivors and their families produced and consumed, maintained networks of human relationship, challenged authority, exercised authority in their own restricted spheres,

enjoyed themselves from time to time, reproduced themselves, formed the permanent majority of the population of Para.

The transition from "natural" to "domestic Indian" status in Para seems to have involved a serious deterioration in the quality of life. There was subjection to labor disciplines of a new and extraordinarily alienating sort; there was forced incorporation into artificial multiethnic communities under a harsh alien administration; there was a hobbling of the potential for normal family life and a severe handicapping of the normal human expectation of physical and emotional health; there was a narrowing of the range of available foodstuffs & the creation of chronic artificial scarcities of supply; there was more or less systematic indoctrination with an alien ideology devised to encourage the meek acceptance of such intolerable circumstances. Here, as elsewhere in the colonial world, the natural orientation of individual, family and community life towards subsistence in freedom ran afoul of colonialist "civilization's" requirement that the main efforts of most people be devoted to the production of surplus for the enrichment of a few foreigners -- even at the expense of health, emotional well-being, the very reproduction of the species. That this system of life was unbelievably hard on people there is no doubt; that there was any effective "justice" in such a society, even the sort of justice that was conceived for the colonized by a 17th century thinker like Antonio Vieira, the Jesuit reformer & reorganizer of the Indian slave trade to Para, would be hard to maintain in serious discussion.

If the history of working and poor people is to be useful to those who are living and struggling today and tomorrow, we must be willing to examine such sufferings, privations, traumas and oppressions closely; we must think about them both compassionately and incisively; and we must be willing to write about them clearly and unabashedly, even angrily, as the central features of human experience that they were. To do so is a great step forward from the complacent liberal view of history as the evolution of official policy illustrated with production statistics. But it is nowhere nearly enough.

The most useful history of the "domestic Indians" of Para and their caboclo descendents will not be the story of their oppressions so much as it will be the story of their selective adoption of, and their creative adaptation to, the institutions established by European colonialism amongst them -- a story of survival in the canoe crew, the workplace and the aldeia; a story of the construction of new and enduring social forms in defiance of the expectations of the colonialist authorities; a story of occasional resistance and rebellion and of permanent maintenance; a story of recreation and spiritual renewal in the midst of misery; a story of

perhaps flickering but undying hope. Such a history can be written, I believe, even for the despised and anonymous "subaltern" inhabitants of a God-forsaken colonial backwater such as Para.

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6. Key works for this purpose are Jose Verissimo's turn-of-the-century *Estudos amazonicos* (modern ed. Belem, 1970); Charles Wagley, *Amazon Town* (NY, 1953); and Eduardo Galvao, *Santos e visagens: um estudo da vida religiosa de Ita, Amazonas* (Brasilia 284; Sao Paulo, 1955). Eric Ross, "The Evolution of the Amazon Peasantry," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 10,2 (197?):193-218 is a most suggestive pioneering effort, working especially with the rich corpus of 19th-century European accounts of travel in the Amazon valley, to establish a historical connection between caboclo society and the colonial experience. Similarly helpful are the first two chapters of Barbara Weinstein, *The Amazon Rubber Boom, 1850-1920* (Stanford, 1983).

7. The classic secular accounts are those of ex-governor Bernardo Pereira de Berredo, *Annaes historicos do Estado do Maranhao...* [ca. 1720] (Lisboa, 1749) and Antonio Ladislau Monteiro Baena, *Compendio das eras da Provincia do Para [1823]* (modern ed. Belem, 1969). Still valuable for both information and interpretation are the sections on Para in two great 19th-century works: Robert Southey, *History of Brazil* (3 vols.; London, 1809-10); and Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen, *Historia geral do Brasil* (modern ed. in 5 vols; Sao Paulo, 1975). Late in the 19th century Joao Lucio de Azevedo, arguably the finest historian yet to have written about Para, contributed *Os jesuitas no Grao Para: suas missoes e a colonizacao* (2nd ed.; Coimbra, 1930) and *Estudos de historia paraense* (Belem, 1893), in addition to his better-known works on Antonio Vieira and the Marquis of Pombal. Among modern works, see the many contributions of A.C.F. Reis, especially *A politica de Portugal no Valle Amazonico* (Belem, 1940), *Sintesis da historia do Para* (Belem, 1942) and *O processo historico da economia amazonense* (Rio, 1944); Ernesto Cruz, *Historia do Para* (2 vols.; Belem, 1973); Manoel Nunes Dias, *Fomento e mercantilismo: A Companhia Geral do Grao Para e Maranhao (1755-1778)* (2 vols.; Belem, 1970); Charles R. Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil* (Berkeley, 1969), chap. II; John Hemming's essay in the *Cambridge History of Latin America* and the sections on Amazonia in his *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians* (Cambridge, Mass, 1978) and its recently published sequel, *Amazonian Frontier: The Defeat of the Brazilian Indians*. Valuable material is also to be found in the unpublished dissertations of David Davidson, *Rivers and Empire: The Madeira Route and the Incorporation of the Brazilian Far West*,

1737-1808 (PhD Wisconsin, 1970); and Robin Anderson, *Following Curupira: Colonization & Migration in Para, 1758-1930, as a Study in Settlement* (PhD California/Davis, 1976). The essential collections of official correspondence are Josue Montello (ed.), *Livro Grosso do Maranhao, 1647-1745*, special issue of the *Anais da Biblioteca Nacional* (Rio de Janeiro) 66-67 (1948); and Marcos Carneiro de Mendonca (ed.) *A Amazonia na era pombalina, 1751-1759* (3 vols.; Rio de Janeiro, 1963).

8. The Jesuit primary sources include Joao Felipe Betendorf, *Chronica da missao dos Padres da Companhia de Jesus no Estado do Maranhao* [1699], special issue of the *RIHGB* 72,1 (1901):1-697; Jose de Moraes, *Historia da Companhia de Jesus na extinta Provincia de Maranhao e Para* [ca. 1758] in Candido Mendes de Almeida, ed. *Memorias para a historia do extinto Estado do Maranhao...* (2 vols.; Rio de Janeiro, 1860).; and especially Joao Daniel, *Thesouro descoberto no maximo rio Amazonas* [ca. 1758], special issue of the *Anais da Biblioteca Nacional* (Rio de Janeiro) 95, 1 &2 (1975):1-437 & 1-440. The essential guide to Jesuit history in Para, and to a great deal more, is Serafim Leite, S.J., *Historia da Companhia de Jesus no Brasil* (10 vols.; Lisboa/Rio de Janeiro, 1938-50), vols. 3 & 4. Alongside Daniel in importance as published primary sources for the cultural and material aspects of Indian life in Para are Bishop Frei Joao de Sao Joseph [Queiroz], *Memorias* (Porto, 1869) and "Viagem e visita do sertao em o Bispado do Gram-Para em 1762 e 1763," *RIHGB* 9 (1947):43-107, 179-237, 328-375 & 476-527; and Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira, *Viagem filosofica pelas capitancias do Grao Para, Rio Negro, Mato Grosso e Cuiaba* [ca. 1790] (modern ed. in two vols; Sao Paulo, 1972-74)

9. The labor history of colonial Amazonia is explored in Colin Maclachlan, "The Indian Directorate: Forced Acculturation in Portuguese America (1757-1799)," *The Americas* 28 (1972):357-387 and "The Indian labor structure in the Portuguese Amazon, 1700-1800." in Dauril Alden (ed.) *Colonial Roots of Modern Brazil* (Berkeley, 1973), pp. 199-230; Sue Gross, "Labor in Amazonia in the first half of the 18th century," *The Americas* 32 (1975):211-227, "Agricultural Promotion in the Amazon Basin, 1700-1750," *Agricultural History* 43,2 (1969):269-76 and her unpublished *The Economic Life of the Estado do Maranhao e Grao Para, 1686-1751* (PhD Tulane, 1969); and Dauril Alden, "Black Robes versus White Settlers: The Struggle for 'Freedom of the Indians' in Colonial Brazil," in Howard Peckham & Charles Gibson (eds.) *Attitudes of Colonial Powers toward the American Indian* (Salt Lake City, 1969) and "Indian vs. Black Slavery in the State of Maranhao during the 17th and 18th centuries," *Bibliotheca Americana* 1,3 (1983):91-142.

10. An individual case is examined in my "Francisca: Indian Slave," in D.G. Sweet & Gary B. Nash (eds.) *Struggle and Survival in Colonial America* (Berkeley, 1981), pp. 274-291.

11. On the Amazonian cacao trade, see Manoel Nunes Dias, "O cacau luso-brasileiro na economia mundial -- subsidios para a sua historia," *Studia* 8 (1961):7-93 and Dauril Alden, "The Significance of Cacao Production in the Amazon Region during the Late Colonial Period," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 120 (1976).
12. Romer, "O Estado de Maranhao e seu meio circulante," *Anais Museu Historico Nacional (Rio de Janeiro)* 2 (1941):23-46.
13. Gov. Jose de Serra, Ordem (Para, 11 aug 1735), ms. in Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, Colecao Pombalina 642, f. 62-62v.
14. A notable exception is Murdo McLeod, *Spanish Central America* (Berkeley, 1973).
15. The basic source for the history of disease in Para is still Arthur Vianna, *As epidemias no Para* [1908] (modern ed. Belem, 1975). This subject is explored at length in my forthcoming *Epidemics and the Poverty of Colonial Amazonia*, edc 1989.
16. J.R. Amaral Lapa (ed.), *Livro da visitacao do Santo Oficio da Inquisicao ao Estado do Grao Para, 1763-1769* (Petropolis, 1978).

ⁱ David G. Sweet, *A Rich Realm of Nature Destroyed: The Middle Amazon Valley, 1640-1750* (unpub. PhD Wisconsin, 1974).

ⁱⁱ The richest collection of such materials is that of the Biblioteca e Archivo Publico do Para in Belem.

ⁱⁱⁱ For the colonial history of Maranhao, see Joao Francisco Lisboa's 19th-century *Cronica do Brasil colonial (apontamentos para a historia do Maranhao)* (modern ed.; Petropolis, 1976); Francisco de N.S. dos Prazeres, "Poranduba Maranhense o Relacao historica da Provincia do Maranhao...ate o anno de 1820"; *Revista do Instituto Historico e Geographico Brasileiro [RIHGB]* 54,1 (1891)9-194; Mario M. Meireles, *Historia do Maranhao* (Rio, 1960); Artur C.F. Reis, "O Estado do Maranhao," *Anais IV Congresso de Historia Nacional* (Rio, 1950), pp. 113-158; Manuel Nunes Dias, "Fomento e mercantilismo: politica portuguesa na Baixada Maranhense (1755-

1778)," *Studia*:7-110; & Jeronimo de Viveiros, *História do comércio do Maranhão, 1612-1895* (2 vols.; São Luis, 1954).

iv

4. For North America, see Almon W. Lauber, *Indian Slavery in Colonial Times within the Present Limits of the United States* (NY, 1913); William Snell, *Indian Slavery in Colonial South Carolina, 1671-1765* (unpub. PhD Alabama, 1972); Marcel Trudel, *L'esclavage au Canada française* (Quebec, 1960). The literature on this phenomenon in colonial Latin America is too extensive to review here. For Brazil, the best starting-place is Stuart B. Schwartz, "Indian Labor and New World Plantations: European Demands and Indian Responses in Northeastern Brazil," *American Historical Review* 83 (1978):43-79.

^v See for example, Mathias Kiemen, O.F.M., *The Indian Policy of Portugal in the Amazon Region, 1614-1693* (Washington, 1954).