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in particular and anthropologists in general. The Alaska Native Language Center is to be commended for a superb job of collection and publication. *Shandaa* is a testimony that can be savored and appreciated by people from all ethnic backgrounds. It is a memorial to the courage of long life in hard times, and, as such, it is unselfconsciously lovely.

Michael Dorris
Dartmouth College

Marxism and Native Americans. Edited by Ward Churchill. Boston: South End Press, 1984. 203 pp. \$7.50 Paper.

Ward Churchill, the editor of this volume, claims that "For all the thousands of books on Marxism in print and available in the contemporary United States, not one clearly attempts to assess the Native American relationship to Marxism." My review of the literature substantiates this view. For this reason the authors of this volume had an exceptional opportunity to study an important issue. They were not restricted by existing constructions or rigidly established theoretical frameworks. They were free to explore and develop new approaches to the topic of Marxism and Native American societies. The title of the book suggests that Marxism, as a social theory, is to be used to analyze and advance new ideas and insights about Native American societies. Unfortunately, the contributors fail in this respect. A major weakness of the book is that it has no systematic framework or organized plan. This apparently encouraged most of the authors to ramble into various irrelevant topics with excessive wordiness that often degenerates into absurdities and trivia, all of which makes the book somewhat incoherent and lacking in sound intelligibility. Another weakness is that the authors focus on extremely simplistic criticisms of Marxism. It is quite difficult for the reader to follow such prolix discourses. A random quote from a contributor will exemplify this fault.

From the perspective of American Indians, I would argue, Marxism offers yet another group of cowboys riding around the same old rock. It is Western religion dressed in economistic clothing, and shabby clothing it is.

In general the book lacks a consistent development of thought on the central theme. None of the authors make reference to pertinent studies by scholars who have explored Marxism in relationship to indigenous societies. The works of Claude Meillasoux, Maurice Godelier and Emmandel Terray are probably the most renowned in this respect. Yet, nowhere are they mentioned in the entire volume. It is unusual to discuss a topic of this nature without making reference to scholarly works on the subject. Meillasoux discusses the evolution and plight of indigenous communities from a Marxist perspective, explaining that such communities lend themselves to exploitation by capitalism. Relations of production and not kinship are determinative as to why a particular mode of production occurs in a society. The penetration of capitalism to the core of indigenous societies leads to progressive deteriorations and dependency on the dominant capitalist countries. It follows, according to Meillasoux, that the family will likewise be forced into the process of being weakened.

Godelier is probably the most contemporary Marxist social scientist to analyze traditional societies and their economies. In his work, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, Godelier establishes both history and anthropology as scientific methodologies but not merely as empirical disciplines. He shows how Marxism can yield a methodology for the analysis of empirical data, particularly from traditional societies. Such methodology is based on the Marxist hypothesis that the mode of production generates social, political and ideological life. He is concerned with the place of economics in social structures of traditional societies. He also brings Marxist principles to bear on the problems of myth, cultural symbols, religion and their relation to indigenous social orders.

The volume's contributors make no reference to the Californian Marxist who has published a book on "The American Indian Question." Steve Talbot, in his recent study *Roots of Oppression*, presented contemporary events of Native American society from the perspective of historical materialism. Basically he claims that state monopoly capitalism has been primarily responsible for thefts of American Indian land, resources and the disastrous consequences to Native American reality. He details and analyzes from a Marxist perspective the American Indians' struggles for justice in the United States. One of his major themes is that American Indians, as an oppressed minority are basically faced

with political problems rather than cultural or ethnic differences.

Russell Means's discussion in the first chapter of the book is probably one of the weakest, yet it serves as the back-drop for succeeding discussion by other authors. He defines Marxism as a ". . . new European revolutionary doctrine." ". . . it [Marxism] intends nothing less than the complete overthrow of the European capitalist order." "It is offering only to redistribute the results, the money . . . to a wider section of the population." Means describes Marxism as an evil industrial movement that crushes indigenous tribal Peoples. His discussion is an extremely unsophisticated and superficial analysis of Marxism. He fails to develop even the most rudimentary principles. The authors from the Revolutionary Communist Party writing in the next chapter criticize Means for adopting the "noble savage" concept. They reprimand him in a candid manner; claiming that his "speech is bogus." They accuse him of adhering to "rampant idealism;" and with ". . . idealist childish attempts to demolish Marxist materialism by vulgarly terming it gaining." The forthright criticism by these two authors is both accurate and valid. The contributors of the Revolutionary Communist Party show a good command of the principles of Marxism. It is, therefore, calamitous that they neglected to develop their ideas in relation to Native American societies rather than debating Means' speech.

In the attempt to be intellectual, the authors' writings are largely incomprehensible within the context of Marxism and Native Americans. For instance, C. Hale Sipe mentions the names of thirteen world renowned scholars, past and present, whose studies have little or nothing in connection with Marxism and Native American society. Yet he opens his discussion with the claim that "The time is ripe for a dialogue between Marxists and Native Americans." It is this type of pseudo-intellectualism that detracts from dialogue on the central theme. Vine Deloria states when questioned on the relationship of American Indian customs to Marxism, that "he preferred Harpo." Although Deloria intended this jokingly, it quite accurately indicates the intellectual level of his discussion that follows. He poses his own theme, namely, equating Marxism to Christianity. Apparently he felt competent in exploring this topic. He develops a lengthy superfluous argument that has little or no connection with Marxism and Native Americans. He further skirts the main topic with a rambling discussion on alienation that fails to advance any new ideas. He fails to incorporate the famous study on Marxist alie-

nation by Fritz Pappenheim in *The Alienation of Modern Man*. Deloria gives the impression that he deliberately evades discussion of the main theme which causes the reader to suspect that his knowledge of Marxism is lacking. Furthermore, Deloria is inclined to mislead his readers. He uses a quote from Adam Schaff's *Marxism and the Human Individual* in an incomplete manner in order to condemn Marxism and to suggest that alienation exists permanently in a communist society, rather than to state that alienation applies only to the first stage. Being an established and popular author, it is expected that Deloria's discussion would bring clarity and credibility to the book.

Black Elk's article can best be reviewed by letting him speak for himself. He states that

I've heard it said that Marx's greatest "achievement" was to completely secularize Christian dogma. I don't know if this evaluation is correct. However, I'm certain he accomplished this, and that it was a major theoretical turning point in European history. He set out to demolish the opium of Europe's people, and I'd calculate he succeeded. Whatever spirituality remained in Christendom died with Marx. The anal retentive complex which had always been sputtering in the Euro psyche became concretized as "dialectical materialism"; materialism has thus become the European religion.

The only chapter that has any real significance to the topic of the book is Bill Tabb's "Marx Versus Marxism." Tabb's excellent knowledge of Marxism allows him to analyze Native American societies in relation to Marxism in a flexible and coherent manner. It is unfortunate that this chapter did not appear at the beginning so that it could have served throughout as the basis for the entire discussion. Tabb develops a critical analysis of Marxism from a historical materialist perspective and applies it to an examination of the Native American societies. He does this in a logical manner that is readily understood. For instance, he shows that Marx took the view that barbaric races should be civilized and turned into workers, however, he explores this concept in its entire context, thereby making Marx's position clear. Likewise, Elisabeth Lloyd presents a superior discussion on the fundamentals of Marxist theories. She does not relate these principles to Native American societies, therefore, it falls short of a complete

analysis. Nevertheless, Lloyd and Tabb provide an excellent basis for elementary understanding of Marxism.

In conclusion, *Marxism and Native Americans* is a disappointing book. The title implies that a thorough analysis will be made of Marxism and American Indian societies that will bring new ideas and principles to this underdeveloped area of thought. The book fails seriously in its suggested aim.

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Moose-Deer Island People: A History of the Native People of Fort Resolution. By David M. Smith. Ottawa, Ontario: National Museum of Man, 1982. 202 pp. NP Paper.

Despite pioneering efforts by such scholars as Cornelius Osgood, John Honigmann and Richard Sloboden, it was really not until June Helm's efforts beginning in the late 1950s and continuing through to the present that the analysis of the cultural life of the Northern Athabaskans of the Mackenzie Drainage (or Dene) moved beyond speculative musings. Helm's research, in a sentence, pointed to the richness and sophistication of Dene responses to environmental and economic inputs and made plain that their bilateralness and socioterritorial organization was less a "broken-down" structure (like patrilocality) and more an adaptation in its own right.

Those of us who have followed Helm, at least chronologically, have for the most part built and enriched her analyses, rather than recast them as many thought that they had. Of the 'building' and 'refinishing', the most crucial shift perhaps concerns the organization of a post-contact chronology. In her analysis, the period from 1820 to 1940s was considered as a single time of incremental change. I would think now that it is commonly accepted that there were likely two periods: an early fur trade era that lasted from 1820 until 1870 or, in parts, until World War I and which was characterized by the continued reliance on hunting; and a later period (in which trapping was more important) that lasted until Dene moved into towns in the 1950s.

David Smith's excellent ethnography of the Dene and Métis who are defined as the Moose-Deer Island House people (or the Native people of Fort Resolution) provides enrichment to this