AMERICAN INDIAN CULTURE AND RESEARCH JOURNAL 16:1 (1992) 119–136

# COMMENTARY

# In Black or White, or through Marxist Glasses: The Image of the Indian in the Soviet Press and Scholarship

ANDREI A. SNAMENSKI

An essay like this usually deals with the ways through which people of one culture look at representatives of another. In such cases, authors generally discuss all aspects of culture, from literature and press to scholarship and ordinary people's opinions. My scope is narrowed intentionally and considers the influence of state ideology on social thought as it applies to a particular field: coverage of American Indian-related topics in the Soviet press and in Indian studies. The materials presented below certainly have historiographical character, and therefore I could not avoid describing what has been done in Soviet Indian studies generally, although it is an independent theme worthy of a special article.[1]

In the Soviet period of Russian history, social thought developed within the strict limits of Marxist methodology, with Marx-

Andrei A. Snamenski is a candidate in historical sciences and a senior lecturer in contemporary history of European and American nations at Kuibyshev Teachers Training College, Kuibyshev, Russia.

ism understood as the state ideology; and Indian studies has been a vivid reflection of the general state of things. Social scholarship and the press had to serve governmental interests, and much concrete research that had little or nothing to do with ideological matters also could not avoid this fate.

I have selected for my analysis four themes: modern and contemporary Indian history, social anthropology of Native Americans, and coverage of Indian matters in the Soviet press.

## LEWIS HENRY MORGAN AND SOVIET INDIAN STUDIES

Until the end of the 1960s, Soviet social scholarship showed little interest in Indian issues, which had been considered a matter of minor importance. The same was true respecting the press. Only a few anthropologists from the Moscow Institute of Ethnology and Ethnic Anthropology studied Indians as "applied material" for proving the Marxist theory of socioeconomic formations. Using that neat expression belonging to Ward Churchill, they employed "wooden Indians" for their Marxist stables.[2]

It was natural for the first USSR students of Indians to turn to Lewis Henry Morgan, who received a high appraisal in the Marxist tradition. During the 1930s to 1960s, the social anthropological approach in the spirit of Engels-Morgan prevailed in Indian studies. Only the Leningrad chapter of the Institute of Ethnology conducted research in Native American material culture on the basis of the collections of the Leningrad Ethnographical Museum (Kunstkamera). The history of Indian-white relations was not studied at all. The most popular subjects in Soviet anthropology connected with Native Americans were the development of Indian tribal systems, the transition from the matrilineal kinship structure to the patrilineal one, the disintegration of tribal societies, and their evolution into class structure.

The leading role here belonged to Julia P. Averkieva, long-time chair of the American Department of the Moscow Institute of Ethnology. She worked closely with Franz Boas in 1929–31 but did not share his conceptions. Her research, which mostly concentrated on the Northwest Coast Indians, served to demonstrate the correctness of the Marxist explanation of the historical process. As a result, from the 1930s onward, she became involved in defending L. H. Morgan and Frederick Engels in a long dispute between evolutionists and relativists.[3] Despite Averkieva's ardent and

uncritical partisanship toward the class theory of historical development, some of her concrete research relating to Northwest Coast institutions proved useful.

Trying to refute the psychological and cultural explanations of the potlatch, Averkieva viewed this phenomenon as a clearly economic and social one, a bright illustration of a society in transition from a classless structure to a society of ranks or classes, reflecting all the contradictions of a period when old institutions were dying but new ones had not come into being.[4] All her later works dealt mostly with this transitional period (called by Frederick Engels a "military democracy period"), with only the concrete materials on Indians changing. Despite the fruitfulness of her research into the economic sources of some Native American institutions, Averkieva's harsh criticism of psychological and sociological explanations of the same institutions hardly led to a full picture of Indian society in that transitional period. A combination of these approaches with the Marxist one could have given an objective description of reality.

Also, like evolutionists of the past century, in generalizing about Indians Averkieva arbitrarily compared native societies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with European and Asian societies of ancient times, which developed under distinctly different conditions. All of this was directed toward demonstrating unity in the development of humanity.[5] In this connection, both Averkieva and other scholars such as Mark Kosven and E. Blomkvist paid considerable attention to L. H. Morgan's conceptions that were praised by Engels. Kosven translated *Ancient Society* and *Houses and House Life* into Russian, and in 1933 he also published a biography of Morgan that tried to show his closeness to Marxism.[6] As is well known, Morgan lived and worked in an epoch dominated by social evolutionism. Marxism belonged to the period as well. Morgan formulated the laws of human development from savagism to civilization: "Man works himself up" was a phrase he used frequently. It expressed his image of the evolutionary process as a linear movement, the idea of natural selection.[7]

The strong criticism leveled at Morgan's evolutionary doctrine by American anthropologists since the early twentieth century was considered by Soviet scholars to be a direct or indirect attack on Marxism. This criticism, though indisputable in some respects, had been launched in the light of newly accumulated materials on Native Americans, and therefore it was the development of anthropological scholarship on a new basis. But Soviet scholars, and

Averkieva in particular, treated the historical school of Boas and later cultural relativism as a step backward compared to Morgan's evolutionism. Any innovations that differed from Marxist and evolutionist approaches were even labeled as reactionary and idealistic. Note the following passage from Kosven's book on Morgan: "The struggle against Morgan's teaching, this 'struggle of ideas,' is only a reflection of the class struggle."[8] Here is a similar view belonging to Averkieva: "Historically and philosophically, these scholars [Morgan's followers] represented more mature thinkers than American anthropologists of the 20th century."[9] It is not surprising that Indian studies were considered the defense of the ideas of Marx/Engels/Morgan, and any conclusions were being stated in this characteristic way: "Materials on the social life of the Northwest Coast tribes give us new indisputable arguments in favor of the Marxist-Leninist teaching on classes, on their historical conditionality and passing character."[10]

There is no necessity to point out that the Boasian school, then relativism, came as a new step, which, after all, supplemented the evolutionary doctrine. As Robert L. Berkhofer wrote, "Boasian anthropology particularly sought to replace the conjectural approach of evolutionary history with what its practitioners thought was a more scientific method based upon empirical research. Their own findings showed that the unilinear sequence so often presumed by evolutionism just did not hold for the tribes they studied."[11] On the other hand, when the historical school neglected the process of historical development, it found itself under just criticism on the part of neoevolutionists.

## "PAN-INDIANS," "HALF-PROLETARIANS," "FIGHTERS AGAINST CAPITALISM"

The wave of interest in the Indian situation at the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s led to a widening in the range of Indian studies to include issues of ethnohistory and Indian politics. A similar situation existed in the United States and probably in other countries where attention to Indian matters was primarily connected with an upsurge in Indian political activity and the publicity it received. Just after the Trail of Broken Treaties, Soviet newspapers and magazines started including Indian-related issues in their coverage of American events. When the Indian movement was on the rise in the first part of the 1970s, the Soviet

press even gave a detailed chronicle of Indian protests and other events in contemporary Native American life. For example, a note about the first issue of *Wassaja* found its place on the pages of the Soviet daily, *Pravda*, the number one newspaper in the past.[12] As for developments of larger importance, they were covered intensively and were given much space; in the 13 February 1973 issue, *Pravda* began informing Soviet readers about Wounded Knee, describing social unrest in South Dakota in connection with the murder of the Indian from Lakota. This newspaper dedicated more than ten articles to South Dakota Indians during the spring of 1973. Later Indian protest actions, such as in Menominee on the Kootenai Reservation, received proper attention in the press.

This upsurge in publications about Native Americans stimulated the development of Indian studies. Good evidence of the process was the appearance of scholars who began doing their research in the field of the Indian history. Former anthropologists also started writing on ethnohistorical topics. Much of this research was concentrated on contemporary topics. In the 1970s and 1980s, five dissertations were presented on Indian history and ethnohistory, and four of them dealt with contemporary Indian issues. A stable demand for literature on Native Americans also appeared among publishers.

Newspaper and academic articles dedicated to Indian political activities considered them in Marxist terms; from a socialist perspective, the Indian movement was viewed as a part of the democratic movement against the capitalist system. Thus Averkieva, analyzing the Native American movement, tried to find out its class roots. She explained different trends in the movement through the existence of a proletariat and a bourgeoisie in Indian society. She believed that many currents exist in Indian political and social organizations, from bourgeois reformism to petty-bourgeois democratism.[13] She also spoke negatively of the spiritual side of native political activities and considered that they prevented the development of the Indian political movement. The success of the Indian struggle was connected, in her opinion, with the mastering of Marxist-Leninist teachings by Indians and their transition to the position of the Communist party USA. "Regretfully," she complained, "not all leaders and participants of the Indian movement properly realize this and not all of them know the support program for Indian demands that was worked out by the Communist party USA."[14] (Incidentally, while working out their program on the Indian question, this party consulted Averkieva.)[15]

The above-mentioned approach to the analysis of the Indian movement was repeated like a carbon copy in other articles on the subject. The scheme was very simple: Indians were considered a force indirectly struggling against American capitalism. The future of the Indian struggle, according to Soviet marxists, depended on a union of Indians with the working class, labor unions, and on their joining the position of the communists. An article by I. Cherepanov, from the Kiev Institute of Economical and Social Problems of Foreign Countries, was written in the same spirit. Cherepanov believes that the Indian movement had two sides: On the one hand, it was a part of the general democratic struggle for human rights; on the other, it was a national-liberation movement.[16] He also thought that the United States' assimilationist policy led to the formation of the Pan-Indian ethnic entity, and this entity, according to him, perceives itself as a nation with a common destiny (a view that is not shared by current Soviet students of Indian affairs). It is for recognition as a nation that Native Americans carry on their struggle. Averkieva also was a proponent of that view.

Through detailed quotations, Cherepanov described Communist party proposals on Indian issues. Reading his work, one could get an impression that every success of the Indian political struggle depended exclusively on the Communist party. Here is a characteristic phrase that expressed this kind of mentality: "The Communist party is the vanguard of the progressive forces of contemporary America, and it pays constant attention to Indian problems. By all its efforts, it supports the just struggle of Indians for rights and helps Indian social organization."[17] Careful observation of the communist press in the United States shows that it actually paid considerable attention to the Indian movement in the 1970s, like all other leftist editions, but from the middle 1980s, all materials on Indians practically disappeared from the pages of the American communist press, because the Indians did not fit their schemes.

Until the present day, most of the materials on ethnic and national movements in the West have been written in that style. On the part of many researchers and authors, it was not sincere adherence to Marxist method; rather it was some sort of "ritual Marxism," in my opinion. Even articles on concrete subjects, such as the essay by Julia Kolosova on the work of the OEO and EDA on Indian reservations, had in the end the traditional phrase that only the Communist party USA possessed the real solutions to

Indian problems.[18]

In the popular magazines of the Soviet Communist party, all these evaluations were being exaggerated. For example, the *Agitator* magazine, answering questions from its readers about Indian demands and their character, wrote that those demands were concentrated on bettering health services and education and stopping repression against Indian activists; it concluded, "A much more important fact is that more and more Indians join the struggle of Blacks, Hispanics, Puerto Ricans, and other national minorities, the struggle of all working masses in the USA.... More often Indian representatives can be seen at the meetings of American communists...."[19] In Soviet periodicals and the daily press, the role of the communists was distorted beyond all limits. Each statement by the Communist party concerning the Indians got immediate publicity. One reporter, who, by the way, had rather good knowledge of the South Dakota Indian situation and was a witness of Wounded Knee, wrote that the communists were the most active among the groups that supported the Indians. "In contrast to communists, many large party and social organizations in the United States keep silent."[20]

In this connection, a few funny episodes from Soviet academic life come to mind. A colleague of mine who presented her dissertation on the Indian movement was proudly telling me that she had been able to find in some issues of *Akwesasne Notes* several statements made by Indian activists—members of radical groups—who spoke favorably about Marxism. Apparently, it was very helpful to her, since their words allowed her to "refresh" the dissertation with a few quotations showing that the Native American movement was moving step-by-step in the "right direction" to maturity.

To tell the truth, I myself have not been entirely free from such "ritual quotations" myself. I remember in 1984, when I was preparing my article on BIA activities from the 1960s to 1980s, I had to add at the end of the article a few finishing remarks (under the strong insistence of my academic tutor, a full professor) regarding "the only right answer to Indian questions" proposed by the Communist party. In those days, I always recalled Confucius's words, "Truth without a ritual is rudeness." It was considered "rudeness" in the Soviet academic community not to quote classics of Marxism or documents of the Communist party USA (if one wrote on United States topics) in every possible case.

## INDIANS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS POLEMICS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE USSR

At the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s, the tone of Indian-related materials in the Soviet press and in semischolarly magazines changed somewhat. That was a result of the fierce polemics on human rights issues between the two superpowers. Both sides practiced mutual accusation, employing examples of ethnic and national group situations.The Soviet articles, blaming the United States ideologically for human rights violations, were given accusatory titles (for instance, "There Capital Rules," or "The Rights of Man in the Rightless World"). These articles provided some statistics, based on solid documentary evidence, relating to the poor conditions of Native Americans. This part caused no objections. But then the author usually stressed that the capitalist system in the United States was to blame for that situation. Finally, as a contrast to the "grim American reality," he or she depicted in bright colors the "historic changes" in the life of the Soviet ethnic and traditional minorities in the USSR. That side of the articles was false from beginning to end and represented garbled facts or no concrete information at all.[21] False materials were meant to prove the so-called advantages of "advanced socialism" in the Soviet Union. Any negative statistics were either closed to the public or simply not collected. Those anthropologists or reporters who tried to ignore restrictions and gathered facts themselves soon faced KGB surveillance or harassment.[22]

Not only journalists participated in this hypocritical campaign. Historians and anthropologists contributed to it a lot. One monograph had a characteristic title, "Two Worlds—Two Destinies,[23] and contained comparative materials, if one can say so, on socioeconomic conditions among Native Americans in Alaska and Canada, as opposed to the conditions of Siberian peoples. Another typical essay, written by a *TASS* reporter (*TASS* is the governmental information agency), was aimed at criticizing an article in *America* magazine about successful Lummi oyster farming (*America* is the Russian language edition published by the United States embassy in Moscow). The reporter did not say anything concrete about the article itself but showed examples on the opposing side, which also could not be ignored, about the poor health, education, and home conditions of Alaska Natives and the Navajo. Later in the article, he asserted that "indigenous peoples can compare their conditions with those of their Soviet neighbors on the other side of the Bering

Strait" and followed with enumerations of "achievements," but without any substantial facts. Among those "achievements," he noted the appearance of indigenous writers, poets, and artists, and the organization of exhibits of Native Siberian art and craftwork.[24]

Until 1986–87, special attention was paid to the campaign for the liberation of Leonard Peltier, which received huge publicity in the press; approximately 60 percent of all the materials on Indians in 1983–87 was dedicated to the Peltier case. This wide campaign resulted in seventeen million signatures of Soviet people on petitions demanding freedom for Peltier. I do not doubt the sincere character of these signatures and their significance for getting public support of the Indian political prisoners, but the "applied" meaning of the campaign for the Soviet government was obvious. As a reaction to the massive protests in the West regarding the treatment of academician Andrei Sakharov, who was exiled in Gorky City, Soviet officials decided to use the Peltier case. The peak of the campaign came in 1984–86, when the western support movement for Sakharov gained its momentum. The Soviet Peace Committee, the huge bureaucratic organization serving Soviet governmental interests under the pretext of "fight for peace," provided funds and publicity for the campaign; the whole affair was monopolized by the state so deeply that one independent Indian support group from Leningrad hardly could talk with Stephanie Peltier, who was encircled by "peace fighters" on government salaries. In addition, the Peltier case overshadowed the cases of all other Indian political prisoners and problems of Native American sovereignty and cultural survival. I believe it was these things that Birgil L. Kills Straight, from the Lakota Treaty Council, had in mind when he said that the Indian support groups spent too much effort on the single case.[25]

Following is the text of a typical telegram sent in support of Peltier during the governmental campaign in the middle 1980s. In it everything was mixed—sincere sympathy for the Indian activist behind bars, as well as the traditional clichés of Soviet propaganda:

> We, young internationalists, angrily blame U. S. officials who imprisoned Peltier, and who kept behind bars a Soviet diplomat Vitalii Yurchenko [a KGB officer who fled the West and then miraculously appeared again in the Soviet Union]. Here they are—praised American human rights.
>
> — Club of international friendship from Ungen town[26]

At the end of the 1980s, materials on Peltier's fate practically disappeared from the Soviet press. This is more evidence of the hypocritical nature of the campaign. The work of building public awareness about the Peltier case currently is done by a tiny group of Russian supporters in Leningrad who continue their efforts for moral reasons.

Efforts to expose United States human rights violations regarding Indians have led sometimes to fantastic incidents demonstratiing the usual mixture of incompetence and distortions. Here is a casual selection from the Soviet press. Describing the loss of Indian lands, one *TASS* reporter wrote, "Today in Appalachia there are already neither Chippewa nor Apaches, nor other tribes. They were driven out from here in the last century.[27] It was also asserted in numerous articles that Peltier had been the leader of the Wounded Knee occupation.[28] Earlier, another newspaper wrote that "till the present time there is no single physician on reservations . . . ."[29] Such distortions could be considered unavoidable media mistakes or natural newspaper exaggerations, but there was another bias that did not begin to disappear until the end of the 1970s and still exists at the present time. I mean specific Indian demands concerning autonomy, sovereignty, and culture, which were often mixed with the demands of other American ethnic and national groups. Wrote *Pravda*, "Indians come out against the system of racial discrimination and do not want to share the fate of American citizens of second class."[30] A reporter called the proclamation of the Independent Sioux Nation during the 1973 Wounded Knee occupation simply a symbolic gesture.[31] The evident lack of understanding of the Indian problem on the part of the mass media sometimes led to the sort of mistakes that the *New Times Weekly* made in 1988. It reproduced a picture from *National Geographic* magazine that showed an Iroquois Indian displaying his Indian passport—the symbol of Iroquois sovereignty. The inscription that *New Times* placed under the picture was the following: "Indians from the Iroquois tribe: without these identification cards they are not allowed to leave their reservation."[32]

When the Soviet press began covering Indian actions connected with the struggle against the backlash legislation at the end of the 1970s, the issues of Native American sovereignty gradually became known to Soviet audiences through some informative articles, although there was a small number of these materials, compared to the information on human rights matters.The *New*

*Times* published a very informative essay by V. Razuvaev on the struggle of the Native Americans for cultural survival.[33] Another magazine, *Vokrug Sveta* (Around the Globe), was probably the only one in the 1970s and in the first part of the 1980s that participated very little in the ideological campaigns of the Soviet government and gave rather objective information about all sides of Indian contemporary life and history. It was perhaps the geographical character of the magazine that allowed it partly to avoid obvious distortions.[34]

To sum up the results of Soviet press coverage of Indian-related issues, it is obvious that the published materials may be divided into three phases: At the end of the 1960s and in the beginning of the 1970s, the national liberation character of the Indian struggle was stressed; then, from the end of the 1970s until the middle of the 1980s, materials on the Indians were connected with the human rights polemics between the Soviet Union and the United States; and finally, when the ideological restrictions were lifted, the Soviet press rushed to the other extreme, trying to highlight the "positive aspects" of Indian life.

## TWO TRENDS IN SCHOLARSHIP

As for the Indian studies themselves, there were two groups of researchers from 1960 to 1980. The first trend, which dominated in the 1960s to 1970s, was connected with ideological tasks: The researchers' approach to United States Indian policy was highly critical, and, as I mentioned earlier, they considered the Indian movement to be one of the forces fighting American capitalism.[35] Some of those scholars wrote many popular articles for the ordinary reader that were not always characterized by academic objectivity.

The second group, whose influence has been growing since the early 1980s, is more academic and objectivist. In their work there is also a place for Marxism as one of the methods, but, generally speaking, Marxism is being replaced by various ethnosociological methods. The concept of "ethnicity" is more actively used nowadays as one of the approaches to Indian-related issues.[36]

The first scholars who wrote on Indian ethnohistory in the 1960s were I. Zolotarevskaya (from the American Department of the Institute of Ethnology), A.V. Efimov (Institute of General History), and M. Demikhovsky (Azerbaidjan University in Baku). Efimov,

in his essays on United States capitalism, considered Indian history in close connection with the steps of evolution of American capitalism. In her turn, Zolotarevskaya, who in 1952 presented the first Soviet ethnohistorical thesis on Indians—*History of the Creek Confederation*—had written several historical essays on Indian participation in the Civil War and on Oklahoma tribes in the nineteenth century. She was the first scholar to give to Soviet readers a basic understanding of the general trends in Native American history, although she did it through strictly Marxist conceptions.[37] In nineteenth-century United States Indian policy she saw only "the first accumulation of capital." Zolotarevskaya also stressed the confrontational side of Indian-white relations, but in two articles she tried to show the Indian contributions to American culture; later, in the 1970s, using other methods, she began studying ethnic processes in contemporary Indian society.

Victor Kalashnikov, from Dnepropetrovsk University, shared Zolotarevskaya's confrontational approach and in 1977 presented his thesis, *Struggle of Indian Tribes of North America against American Colonizers (1776–1814)*. Considering the Indian a part of the national liberation struggle against American capitalist expansion, he believes that "the United States Indian policy never had a peaceful character" and presents the Indian side as a unified force opposing American expansion.[38] In his later work, he divided the Native American resistance into the following forms: armed uprisings, diplomacy, boycott of trade with whites, escape from colonizers to distant regions. Kira Tsekhanskaya's works also belong to this trend of research. It is worth noting that these researchers did a lot in showing to the general public the current popular materials on Indian history.

Viktor Gordeev, from the Institute of United States and Canadian Studies, was the first who gave a diversified, objective picture of contemporary Indian politics. Compared to other colleagues who wrote on Indian history and ethnohistory using primarily American books and articles, he based his judgments on congressional records and on materials of the United States press that covered a broad spectrum of political views. He concluded that the Indians and their allies struggled in the 1970s "for democratic ways of governmental handling of the Indian question." Thus, avoiding traditional remarks on "the socialist perspective" (although the article had been written in 1974), he gave a twofold evaluation of the results of the Indian political movement: On the one hand, it did not lead to considerable changes; on the other,

there were some achievements in economic status, health services, and education.[39]

Alexander Natarova, a research fellow from the Institute of Latin American Studies, wrote an interesting work on the spiritual and political significance of the Yellow Thunder camp. Departing from the traditional class approach, he considered that Indian protest an ecological alternative to the existing system of earth exploitation, and he did not view the Indian demands in the Yellow Thunder camp as utopian. He concluded, "It is the search for ways to a better future on the basis of using all that was valuable in the past and connecting it with the best achievements of the present."[40]

Another scholar, Vladislav Stelmakh, from the Institute of Ethnology, wrote a serious essay on the history of AIM, wherein he stated that the activities of the organization were among the reasons why the federal government was forced to reform its policy toward the Indians. The essay also was free from the clichés that were commonly used in such articles.[41] Writing on United States policy, Stelmakh believes that it was formed not only by the expansionist nature of wide economic interests but by paternalism as well. His colleague from the same institute, Sergei Cheshko, analyzed the ethnic processes in contemporary Indian society. He criticized the above-mentioned concept of the so-called pan-Indian entity that perhaps has some meaning for urban Indians but does not contain any ethnic character. It is rather a political phenomenon, in his opinion. According to Cheshko, the future of the Indian nations depends on the formation of strong Indian peoples into large groups, with the assimilation of smaller Native American tribes into these large entities or into the broader society.[42]

In 1982, when Professor Valerii Tishkov, a student of Canadian Indian ethnohistory, became chairman of the American Department of the Institute of Ethnology, the move away from the ideological approach in Indian studies became stronger. He sponsored two conferences on the American Indians in his institute, which were visited by most of the Soviet researchers and scholars connected with the study of Indian-related topics. The last conference was dedicated to the theme "Indians and Ecology." Speaking in March 1991 at the Moscow International Conference of the Students of United States history, he called on Soviet scholars to move away from the one-sided confrontational approach in the study of Indian-white relations. According to Tishkov, the ongoing intercultural communication that had occurred between In-

dian and white societies had been neglected in Soviet Indian studies for a long time.The latest approaches and methods of the Soviet students of Indian history and anthropology were summed up in a special monograph published by the Institute of Ethnology.[43] The new, broader scope of Soviet Indian studies is evident in the appearance of works on Indian literature, poetry, religion, and spiritual culture, while the previously emphasized topics of United States Indian policy and Indian resistance are still studied intensively, but mostly from a different angle.[44]

## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

Attempts to do away with the old image of the Indian also spread to the press, especially beginning in 1987, when the ideological clamps were loosened. This natural and gradual trend led to its own distortions but of another kind. Here we face a backlash situation where the sharply negative picture has been at once substituted for a positive one expressed in unlimited praise for United States Indian policy and its results. One author, who earlier interviewed Peltier in prison and exposed the United States on the Indian question, recently wrote, in an article entitled "Do We Need the Intellectual Help of the Iroquois Chief?" that he admires the scope of Iroquois autonomy and even proposes to use some elements of it in the Soviet Union. Sharing his experience of visiting the Onondaga Reservation, he writes, "Law and order are kept by their own Indian police. Federal ones may act only on permission from the council of chiefs. What sovereignty! Why wouldn't Rafic Nishanovich [chairman of the Nationalities Chamber of the Soviet parliament] and other experts in nationality problems study this experience? Maybe a new union treaty among republics would be signed in this case." In an attempt to be objective, he remarks that everything is not so simple. Further, he describes in detail the living conditions in Onondaga, an Indian leader's apartment—with video, audio, and electric kitchen stove—that reminded him of apartments of high party communist nomenklatura in central Asia, leading his reader to the conclusion that Indians' conditions are rather good. Stating at the same time that "the Indians' fate is tragic," he stresses the fact that "they look to the future with optimism." Then, with evident sarcasm, he writes about one Iroquois' clothes, which may be viewed by a Soviet reader as luxury, since in the present Soviet Union it is

difficult to get certain common goods. He adds that the Indian leader was "the personification of the material wealth of civilization" but that "he struggles against the interference of the same civilization in his people's affairs."[45]

Nowadays one has to face paradoxical speculations in the press concerning the Indians' low socioeconomic status compared to the rest of American society. For example, on a trip sponsored by the Soros Fund, Alexander Milovsky visited several reservations and wrote a few informative articles but believes that "the more persistently a tribe struggles for its territorial and civil rights and sovereignty, the poorer that tribe lives. And vice versa, where Indians are able to find compromises with federal and state officials, where they are ready to waive some of their aspirations and traditions and to accept the American way of life, they prosper."[46] In another, similar article with a characteristic title—"A Visit to a Prospering Reservation"—the author writes about the great achievements of the Menominee. Here we can find the traditional set of praises: well-paved roads (indirectly, it is proposed that Russian readers compare the conditions of the Soviet traffic infrastructure), good health services, and everything that may surprise an ordinary Soviet citizen—video, audio, automobiles. "Menominee is a kind of small sovereign state," the author, with satisfaction, quotes the words of a tribal lawyer.[47] In an earlier time, during an ideological confrontation, Soviet reporters selected very poor reservations as examples to expose American imperialism. Recently, it has become popular to admire everything "made in USA." The press tries to look only for positive examples.

As in the past, one also witnesses various funny incidents. Not long ago in a library, a colleague of mine told me about one. He had submitted an essay on the current socioeconomic conditions of Native Americans to one magazine dealing with American issues. An editor demanded that he shorten his negative examples of low Indian status ("it is an ideological survival from the past!") and stress the positive aspects and "bright" sides of Indian life. Nicolai Berdyaev, famous existential philosopher, wrote in his *Russian Idea* that Russian thought did not know any golden mean, only bIack or white. It was an accurate observation, especially in our case.[48] Although current students of Native American ethnohistory are moving in the direction of objective studies, the Soviet press has not yet been cured of the old ideological disease, since the old unlimited criticism and the present praises come from the same root.

## NOTES

1. It is my hope that this essay will not be considered pro or con. I only describe the situation that appears when a method becomes an ideology.

2. Ward Churchill, "Introduction: Journeying Toward a Debate," in *Marxism and Native Americans*, ed. Ward Churchill (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 10.

3. See Julia P. Averkieva, *Slavery among North American Indians* (Moscow: USSR Academy of Sciences Publishing House, 1941) (in Russian—subsequent references published in Russian will be indicated by [R]); idem, "Relationship Between Klan and Neighborhood Communities among North American Indians," *Transactions of the 7th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnographical Sciences, Moscow*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Nauka Publishers,1971), 84–90 (in English); idem, *History of Theoretical Thought in American Ethnology* (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1979) [R].

4. See, for example, her main work, Averkieva, *Indians of North America: From Klan Society to Class Structure* (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1974) [R], 23.

5. See Averkieva, *Indian Nomadic Society of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1970) [R].

6. Mark Kosven, *Lewis Henry Morgan: His Life and Teachings* (Leningrad: Institute of Northern Peoples' Publishing House, 1933) [R].

7. Carl Resek, *Lewis Henry Morgan: American Scholar* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 103.

8. Kosven, *Lewis Henry Morgan: His Life and Teachings*, 68.

9. Averkieva, *History of Theoretical Thought in American Ethnology*, 65.

10. Averkieva, "Indians of the Northwest Coast of North America," in *North American Indians*, ed. Julia P. Averkieva (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), 359.

11. Robert P. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 63.

12. *Pravda*, 22 February 1973.

13. Averkieva, "Indians of Yesterday and Today," *USA Economics, Politics, Ideology* 1 (January 1973) [R]; idem, "Native American Movement of the 1960s–1970s," in *National Processes in the USA*, ed. S. A. Gonionski (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1973) [R], 154–55.

14. Averkieva in her introduction to the Russian edition of William Meyer, *Native Americans: The New Indian Resistance* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974) [R], 13.

15. J. Chesnokov and I. Bazer, "She was named Huana!" *Pravda*, 5 November 1979.

16. I. F. Cherepanov, "United States Ruling Circles' Indian Policy," in *Governmental Policies and Straining National Relations in Capitalist Countries* (Kiev: Naukova Dumka, 1979) [R], 69.

17. Ibid., 71.

18. Julia Kolosova, "Planning the Development of the Indian Reservations in the USA," *Soviet Ethnography* 4 (April 1974): 132.

19. A. Shatorin, "America's Stepchildren," *Agitator* 23 (1973) [R].

20. Iona Andronov, "The Ash of Wounded Knee," *New Times Weekly* 21 (1973): 30.

21. Note, for example, the following figures and facts: Only three percent of the Siberian Natives' houses have gas, 0.4 percent have water, and 0.1 percent

have central heating; the social infrastructure of their settlements is not developed; in many villages there are no hospitals, schools, clubs, bakeries, and sometimes not even a single shop. Because of a high mortality rate, the population growth of the small ethnic groups of the North between the censuses of 1970 and 1979 decreased by a factor of five, but in seven out of twenty-six ethnic groups, the number of people actually decreased. See these and other facts in A. Pika and B. Prokhorov, "Soviet Union: The Big Problems of Small Ethnic Groups," *IWGIA (International Workgroup for Indigenous Affairs) Newsletter* 57 (May 1989): 124, 131.

22. Yurii Rytkheu, "White Silence," *Ogonyok* 17 (1989) [R]: 20–21.

23. V. G. Balitski, ed., *Two Worlds—Two Destinies* (Magadan: Northeastern Publishing House, 1978) [R].

24. Y. Sepichev, "What did *Amerika* magazine try to hide?" *Volzskaya Kommuna*, 7 October 1975.

25. Author's interview with Birgil L. Kills Straight during the Conference of European Support of Indian Groups in Zurich (Switzerland) on 8 August 1989.

26. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 12 November 1985.

27. A. Ljuti, "USA Indians: Outcast but Not Overcome," *Za Rubejom* 49 (1984) [R]: 12 , 25.

28. News in brief, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 15 May 1977; "To Save the Life of Peltier," editorial, *Pravda*, 14 June 1984; "Justice Must Win," editorial, *Pravda*, 16 October 1985.

29. News in brief, *Volzskaya Zara*, 25 March 1974.

30. Editorial, *Pravda*, 13 April 1973.

31. Iona Andronov, "American Indian Revolt," *Ogonyok* 18 (1973): 20.

32. *New Times Weekly* 20 (1988): 47.

33. Vladimir Razuvaev, "American Indians Today," *New Times Weekly* 36 (1988): 22–23.

34. See, for instance, Leonid Martinov, "Passport to the Iroquois Country," *Vokrug Sveta* 8 (1984): 44–46; idem, "Redemption Money for Sioux," *Vokrug Sveta* 10 (1982) [R]:14–17.

35. See the works by Averkieva, Cherepanov, and the following articles: I. Grigulevitch, "America's Indians—Ways of Oppression, Ways of Liberation (Theory and Practice)," in *Anthropology Abroad: Historiographical Essays* (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1979), 213–49; Kira Tsekhanskaya, "Indians in the United States' Cities," *Races and Peoples Annual* (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1980), 73–85; Svetlana Chervonnaya, "Anger and Pain of Indians," *USA: Economics, Politics, Ideology* 3 (March 1983): 70–74 [R].

36. See the book of theoretical character, *Foreign Ethnology Through the Eyes of Soviet Experts* (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1989) (in English).

37. A. V. Efimov, *USA: Ways of Capitalist Development* (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1969) [R]; I. Zolotarevskaya, "History of the Creek Confederation," *Short Papers of the Institute of Ethnography* 19 (1953): 94–102; idem, "The Fate of Indians in the USA," *Modern and Contemporary History* 4 (1966): 47–55; 5 (1966) [R]: 60–68 ; idem, "The Place of Indians in the Social and Cultural Life of the USA," in *Indian Culture* (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1963) [R].

38. Victor Kalashnikov, *Struggle of Indian Tribes of North America against American Colonizers* (Moscow: Moscow University Press, 1977) [R], 20–21; idem, *Liberation Struggle of Indian Tribes of North America against European Colonizers* (Moscow: Moscow University Press, 1986) [R], 26 .

39. Viktor Gordeev, "United States Indian Question," in *American Annual* (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1974) [R], 313–25.

40. Alexander Natarov, "Yellow Thunder Camp—Ecological Alternative of the Indian Traditionalists," in *Ecology of American Indians and Eskimo People*, ed. V. A. Tishkov (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1988) [R], 245.

41. Vladislav Stelmakh, "American Indian Movement: Two Decades of Struggle," *USA: Economics, Politics, Ideology* 7(July 1989) [R]: 21–28.

42. Sergei Cheshko, "On the Formation of a Pan-Indian Entity in the USA," in *Historical Destinies of American Indians: Problems of Indianistics* (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1985) [R], 339–48.

43. V. A. Tishkov, ed., *Native Population of North America in the Contemporary World* (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1990) [R].

44. See, for example, Alexander Vaschenko, *Epic Folklore of the North American Indians* (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1989); one of the characteristic features of current Soviet Indian studies is the appearance of specialized studies of some concrete tribes or regions: Galina Dzeniskevitch, *Athapaskans of Alaska* (Leningrad: Nauka Publishers, 1989), and the forthcoming book by A. V. Grinev, *Tlingit Indians in Russian America* from Nauka Publishers.

45. V. Simonov, "Do We Need the Intellectual Help of the Iroquois Chief?" *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 18 April 1991, 27.

46. A. Milovsky, "Keepers of Fire: Travel across Indian America," *Vokrug Sveta* 7 (July 1990): 21.

47. M. Kuznetsov, "A Visit to a Prospering Reservation," *Ekho Planeti* 36 (1989): 26–31.

48. Nicolai Berdyaev, "Russkaya Idea," in *About Russia and Russian Philosophical Culture* (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1990) [R].